A Phenomenological Approach to Understanding Printmaking Processes and Their Applications to Art Education.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis discusses the processes of creating visually coherent art objects by

means of engaging one's cognitive, intellectual and emotional faculties and experiences.

Its approach to art education based on an understanding of the art educator's personal

experience in the process of art making. Using phenomenological and experiential

methods of teaching to validate inquiry into one's personal subjective experience, it

functions as a qualitative research tool which can be applied to the investigation of

teaching methods.

This thesis is a documentation of recorded self-examination through five

progressive sessions of art making. Each session investigate different forms of

printmaking and their role in creating images. Session 1 investigates use of lithography

in picture making; Session 2 is an application of intaglio; Session 3 an application

monotype; Session 4 and 5 involves advance lithography and role of digital and computer

generated imagery in lithography.

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INTRODUCTION

I have worked and studied in the field of fine arts and related academic studies for the past twenty-five years. My career in art started as an artist. As a studio artist, I wanted to express myself in a meaningful way, and I felt my produced images lacked the visual potency I was seeking. On the other hand for many years the process of making art was beneficial to me intellectually, emotionally and academically. In this regard, I wanted to share this experience to others. I also felt isolated working in the studio by myself, and not having contact with other people and a larger intellectual community.

I entered the art education program after finishing my Master's in Art Therapy and gaining two years experience in the mental health field. My goal from the start of my art education program was to learn how to bring the experience of doing art to the public in a way that would be meaningful and beneficial in helping people understand and express themselves. In this respect sharing the benefits of the process of art making with others, without focusing on the quality of the product, became a salient direction of investigation for me.

I wanted to share my experience with people not by focusing on finished products but by helping them learn to use the language, knowledge and. principles of visual arts. Rydzewski (1967) makes a comparison between visual language and writers use of verbal language and explains

> Whereas writers arrange sequences of words to evoke emotion and atmosphere, define character and seek to achieve a flow of sentences which have rhythm, variety, unity and balance, so artists use their visual language to express the content of their ideas in works of art" (p. 6).

Developing images and visual language can be a means for people to express insights publicly and a way to encourage them to experience the benefits of the artistic process. This idea became a core source of research and investigation throughout my Master's in Art Education program at Concordia University.

Prior to the Art Education program, to understand my involvement in artistic practices, I had studied and practiced in the field of art therapy. I thought it might be a way to use art in a practical way, to better understand art making and its properties and possibilities. As part of my practice, I observed people making and utilizing visual art. Typically, people expressed a lack of confidence when they would attempt to engage in art making. The phrase, "I cannot make a straight line," was common. Visual language was foreign and difficult for people to use to articulate their ideas even though they seemed inspired to do so.

Using the process of art making in a therapeutic milieu was also frequently over-ridden by psychological and clinical limitations. Many art therapists face this disregard for knowledge of artistic process in clinical and therapeutic settings when attempting to apply the intrinsic quality of artistic practices as a way of self-understanding. Allen (1995), an art therapist and psychologist, wrote an article on the benefits of an "open studio" and explained how creative process inherent in artistic language and process has been defeated by the time limits and sterile settings of clinical context (p. 164).

After beginning my full time study in the Master's program in Art Education at Concordia, my studio courses permitted me to create art and communicate my ideas and concerns in visual terms. Through introspection, methodical observation and analysis of my art work, I became more aware of the processes necessary to create art objects.

Particularly helpful to me was the initial instruction of Stan Horner who instigated an investigation of my subjective experience and its expression through the theme of "exteriority and interiority" in first Studio Inquiry course. I felt that a close investigation of the creative process I used in making art helped me to understand what might be needed to encourage others to come to the same understanding and to some degree of confidence in their ability to express themselves through art.

This idea of "artist as teacher" and the effects of engagement in the creative process has been extensively researched and studied. One thesis study that strongly influenced my direction and caused me to focus on my own artistic process was by Caldareri (1996) who made detailed studies of her own art making and how it affected her ability to understand her students. She used a model of the experiential learning process by which subjective experiences were analyzed, and this, in turn, led to concrete results about in understanding herself and her students.

I worked closely with different instructors and realized how important it is to provide a method of teaching art that employs personal experience without over burdening people with prescribed instruction. As Nemett (1991) explains, the artist's conception "which is part of the creative process, refers to the intentions, ideas, and underlying emotions that generate a work of art" (p. 5).

The Phenomenological teaching philosophy, also supports personal experience as a valid venue to gather knowledge in a selected field of study. The systematic study of my art making processes throughout this thesis is a demonstration of my experience and involvement in my own artistic and creative process. I came to witness the progression and transformation in my art works. By responding to subtleties of my experiences, 1

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became aware of my subjective experience. These subjective experiences can be used as a creative source, perhaps leading to the acquisition of self-knowledge, a process that many people might find useful and worthwhile.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO ARTISTIC PROCESS AND EDUCATION

I decided to use phenomenology as a basis for my teaching method in art because it supports the use of subjective experience, introspection and reflective inquiry as an approach to pedagogy. In this paper, I create a working definition of this approach and elucidate how and why it can be applied as a research method for this thesis and for art education research more broadly. Next, I explain the basic tenets of this philosophy and its use in art-education. I also describe how the analysis of artistic process and the use of a recorded diary based on subjective experience can be used in phenomenological method of teaching.

Phenomenology

To fully elucidate the philosophy of phenomenology is beyond the scope of this thesis, and I note that a vast amount of literature has been devoted to this subject. Its advantages, however, as Paleologos (1976) points out, can be summarized as a "fresh and practical approach for dealing with concretely experienced phenomena as free as possible of hypothetical presuppositions" (p. 259). Paleologos sees the merit in this method residing in its use of experience as the basis for forming a particular concept.

Soren Kierkgaard founded this view; other principle exponents have included Husserl, Sarte, Merleau-Ponty and Louvain. These philosophers all question what is

human condition, and search for an ideal equilibrium. In describing existential

phenomenology, Luijpen (1969) defines this equilibrium in the following terms:

> This philosophy knows how to retain the values perceived by both the materialists
>
> and the spiritualists, without falling into the one-sidedness of either system. It is
>
> in the use of the term 'existence,' which expresses one of the most fundamental
>
> essential characteristics of man, that this balanced vision of man is, as it were
>
> crystallized. (p. 35)

According to Luijpen (1969) phenomenology "is a personal affair, a questioning

and answering of man himself" (p. 19). He further expounds as follows:

> A theory of knowledge is a philosophical conviction. He who proposes a theory
>
> of knowledge which is in principle 'complete,' cannot avoid proposing at the
>
> same time also a theory of reality which is in principle 'complete.' For no matter
>
> how one wishes to define knowledge, there is no escape from admitting that
>
> knowledge, unlike dreaming, fancying or hallucinating, is a disclosure of reality.
>
> (P. 18)

Phenomenological philosophy is an approach that examines the basic conditions

of subjective experience. Phenomenological philosophy is:

> ...best understood as a method of philosophical investigation, phenomenology
>
> seeks to articulate invariant structures of experience that govern the course of our
>
> awareness. Phenomenological philosophy examines present awareness, subjective
>
> experience within the sphere of consciousness is what we have to work with. It
>
> creates a structure that provides our basic abilities to know and act upon the
>
> world. (Chambliss, 1996, p. 450).

Phenomenology supports total human experience: physical, emotional and cognitive. Pappas (1970) suggests:

Phenomenology is the study of essences: and according to it, all problems amount to finding definitions of essences: the essence of perception, or the essence of consciousness, for example... The concept 'attention' as we will be using it is synonymous with word 'consciousness' as used by phenomenologists such Merleau-Ponty, Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre. If we take the basic tenet of phenomenology, i.e. 'Consciousness' is always consciousness of something,' and substitute 'attention' for consciousness,' we have the basic assumption 'Attention is always attention to something.' (p. 466)

Pappas (1970) further explains that this attention or consciousness is "subjective and objective". He states that subjective experience cannot be publicly expressed. He expounds that subjective phenomena reside in the realm of sensations, intuitions and emotions, while objectively one can share the subjective experience in the resulted objects produced, as with a work of art. Then subjective experience can be shared - and one's personal experience gets validated. This means the expression of that subjectivity is free from objective controls and self-consciousness (p. 468).

Art Education, Artistic Process and Phenomenology

The theory and philosophy of teaching, in general, are in constant change; the fixed component is one's subjective experience in response to objective and observed phenomena. This is what teachers need to attend to in regards to their teaching approach. With this in mind, an educator needs to have an up-to-date method supported by his/her teaching philosophy. The history of art education testifies to the constant shift of

ideologies which has evolved. Examples include aesthetic traditions such as: Mimetic (Learning is by imitation), Pragmatic (Learning is instrumental), Expressive (Learning is emotional growth), Formalist (Learning is concept attainment) (Neperud, 1995. P. 23). Clark (1996) labels this phenomena of paradigm shift as "post-paradigmatic" or "constant flux" (p. 65).

Teaching theory is a process that needs to be adjusted according to the needs of students and available context. One can revise one's approach by introspection and close attention to the dynamics of this situation. With regard to the phenomenological approach, Caldareri (1996) describes, as follows, her understanding of an experiential phenomenology teaching method by the way of reflective inquiry:

...A systematic process of looking at a sequence of actions or experiences, describing and outlining the events as they happened, recording what went on, recording the changes that were made in the process, and recording what the outcomes of interactive experiences were... until a satisfactory answer or result is found. (P.19)

McCoy (1970) explains how the existential-phenomenological teaching method in art education supports self-reflection and the awareness of the personal subjective experience of student and teacher. He explains that a teaching method derived from this theory has a "unique potential" for increasing the student-teacher "empathy". He suggests adopting teaching methods for the creation of art objects, which utilize an existential-phenomenological approach to create a total aesthetic event. This aesthetic event "expresses individually discovered value-truths as beauty in a communicative art product" (p. 1).

McCoy (1970) also writes that the phenomenological teaching method supports the use of subjective experience as a qualitative research method. Phenomenological description and reflective introspection offer an explanation of artistic process and creative activity and their place in art education. Such a method of teaching helps teachers assist their students in finding a deeper understanding of themselves through the actual experience of feeling and thinking. The teacher acts as a provocateur of those experiences, which helps students access the awareness of their own perceptions (p. 8). McCoy (1970), in this study of the phenomenological approach to art education, examines acquired knowledge on experiential investigation as such: "Knowledge, then, becomes comprehension of self-in-the world" (p. 83). He believes that the primal source of knowledge is one's inner self. He feels that the nature of knowledge is that it is never final and changes from moment to moment. He explains:

In contrast to the experimentalist approach to knowledge, existentialist thought prefers a solution originating in the aesthetic, moral and emotional self.... the existentialist prefers to cultivate the affective side of man his capacity to love, appreciate, become involved with, and respond emotionally to, the world around him. The existentialist is less concerned with gathering factual evidence because he knows the source of much of that evidence resting as it does in universals. He is more concerned with what individual man does with the evidence, even if he is condemned to live in constant anguish and doubt as to whether his choices were the right one. (p. 83)

He further explains that truth is a "positive affirmation of self" while the opposite would be conforming to predetermined norms and "following the crowd."

In this thesis, I intend to show how I made use of my art making and its related process to create a visually coherent art object. When I engage in the process of art making, I feel the intensity of my total experience engaging my cognitive, intellectual and emotional faculties. I believe that understanding my own process in making images can be a tool in my art teaching. Knowing that the phenomenological and experiential methods of teaching validate inquiry into one's personal experience encourages me to use these tenets as the basis of my research. The use of experiential description, in particular, allows me to document and analyze my creative activity; in the future, it will enable me to investigate my active teaching practice.

The use of self-examination during the progressive stages of my art making is similar to what Paleologos (1976) describes as " the method of perceiving and carving descriptive meanings out of a series of events" (p. 16). He explains that for understanding a series of events as they evolve, "Phenomenological description and reflective introspection can join together in providing the richest possible basis for analysis according to the contextualist categories" (p. 296).

As research tools, recorded diaries of picture making can be a way to have a close look at an individual's artistic process as a series of events. Artistic process and art making are based on subjective experience. The validity of subjective experience and its applicability have been explained through the phenomenological experiential investigation. This validity is related to a qualitative sense of perception and the possibilities of truth concerning values and affective relations of the individual's existence among others. Through self-investigation one becomes aware of one's existence in the context of contemporary events, society, and culture.

To provide a personal example, through my art making I became aware of the influences of my culture-of-origin and my identity as an Iranian woman. Living in Western society for many years, I had seemingly forgotten the rich imagery and art that I grew up with. My final picture discussed in this thesis, for example, is a testament of my experience of conflicting cultures and adjustment to my present cultural setting, which is a superimposition of past and present signs and symbols.

My study is structured in a manner similar to an article "Creating a Research in the Studio" by Herivel (1997) who explains how her autobiographical and personal subjective experiences, which were documented in her diaries, were a source for her research. She explains, "My objective was to discover what it meant to experience the process of being immersed in the discipline of visual art making" (p. 57). This leads her to the contemplation of her identity and deeper self-understanding. Her recorded notes become a source for her ideas and aid the development of concepts in her later images.

The artistic statement can similarly serve as a model for teachers to record their interaction with learners in teaching situations. Similar to Herivel (1997), Caldareri (1996) in preparing for her thesis uses, in addition to her diaries and self reflective inquiries, recorded notes of her students' creative activity in classroom; she makes a comparison between the two. These recorded diaries, also become a means to conceptualize ideas for her finished pictures. Using an experiential/phenomenological investigation, she deduces that, "the process I went through in creating an art work gave direct insight into what my students went through as they also created their own art work" (p. 3).

She explains how her disposition influenced her pictures. In addition to documenting her techniques and materials, her journals document her experiences of artistic process and include her sensory data, feelings, intuition and imagination. She explains that "these data helped her better understand her students' activity, which would not have been possible from a theoretical point of view, but from understanding the experience of creating art" (Caldareri 1996, p. 4, 7). She also explains how subjective and autobiographical awareness enables her to authentically embrace and transcend her background. This, she claims, enriches her practice as an art-teacher and artist. "Curiosity about self can empower curiosity about the world" (p. 8, 9).

While I have used a phenomenological approach to my own studio practice I have yet to apply it to teaching art. Caldareri (1996) did have experience using phenomenological approach applied to studio practice and experiential teaching. She found that:

> Existential learning theory offers a fundamentally different view of the learning process from that of the behavioral theories of learning based on an empirical epistemology or the more implicit theories of learning that underlie traditional educational methods, methods that for the most part are based on a rational, idealist epistemology. From this different perspective emerge some very different prescriptions for the conduct of education, the proper relationships among learning, work, and other life activities, and the creation of knowledge itself. (p. 16)

The phenomenological theory applies to the particular activity of an artist who, through his/her creative actions, gives an objective form to their inner experiences

leading to understanding and knowledge of a task at hand. A teacher-artist elicits these responses from students; this in turn encourages attitudinal changes toward self and others. These subjective experiences can be a source of investigation as well as a research tool.

In the field of art education, one needs to make the experience of art, as Prentice (1995) claims, "the heart of study of art education" (p. 9). A prominent aspect in making art used by artists is to develop their work by the extensive doing, redoing and reflective inquiry. This generates an image that is different and reveals a unique view of the world. It is the reflective or experiential element in art making which helps an artist progress in making statements about contemporary events or experiences. Read (1956) in his book Art and Society explains:

> Ideas, and all the rational superstructure of the mind, can be conveyed by the instruments of thought or science; but those deeper intuitions of the mind, which are neither rational or economic, but which nevertheless exercise a changeless and eternal influence on successive generation of men--these are accessible only to the mystic and the artist, and only the artist can give them objective representation. (p. 95)

In the process of artistic activity one can concretely express the totality of one's inner life experience of phenomenon. This inner life includes emotion as well as cognition and intellectual faculties. The artists present to the viewer social and historical constructions of their personal observations. Dewey (1934) in Art as Experience addressed the relationship between idea and the means of expression:

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What most of us lack...is not the inceptive emotion nor yet merely technical skill

in execution. It is the capacity to work a vague idea and emotion over into terms

of some definite medium...between conception and bringing to birth there lies a

long period of gestation. During this period the material of emotion and idea is as

much transformed through acting and being acted upon by objective material as

the latter undergoes modification when it becomes a medium of expression... the

physical process develops imagination, while imagination is conceived in terms of

concrete material. (p. 34)

In support of artistic process, Schaefer (1950) explained that in typical

educational settings, a person's need for creative experience is annihilated in favor of the

accumulation of knowledge and intellectual materialism. He stated that artistic activity is

based on a person's visual conception and uses the whole personality engaging all

physical and mental energies in balance and coordination. He further explained:

With the growing ability of visual conceiving, the work to be achieved grows

also, within its structure, organically, stage by stage, from simple to more

complex organizations of form. As each phase of development matures, it

prepares thoroughly the ground for the manifestation of the next phase; that is, the

principle of natural growth underlies the entire pedagogical procedure. (p. 27)

By using the artistic process as a teaching methodology the artist/teacher avoids

falling into a stereotypical teaching method that relies solely on what has been done

before. An artistic statement is an individual's unique perception of the world that cannot

be generalized, a point that distinguishes art from some other academic disciplines.

Every person who engages in artistic process develops a personal theory about their understanding of their surroundings that needs to be acknowledged.

A pedagogy that is based on one's personal artistic practice leads to a methodology that encourages transformation of personal subjective experience into creative expression. Sacca (1989) discerns that historically "art educators develop few typologies of their own. They borrow primarily from the social sciences, in which types have been developed for purposes other than art education" (p. 58). She sees as a problem art educators' use "of types irrelevant to artistic worth and artistic experience" (p. 58)

Artistic activity has the important characteristic of allowing development and practice of individual creativity. Brady and English (1993) explain that creativity stems from the process of creation itself, which is generated within the intuitive faculties (Brady & English, 1993 p. 39). The authors further explain that:

> Creativity is fundamentally an individual act in which images generated through distillation from the world of experience are internalized as mental concepts and then project outwardly toward realization as material manifestations of these images. This process resides within the intuitive mode of knowing as a process of distillation, internalization and intention at the tacit level of the conceptual; the essential. The tacit nature of intuition within the creative process is emphasized because at the conceptual level there exists only formal intention, while form itself remains silent; form is not expressed or declared openly, but is implied. (p. 40)

They described two faculties functioning in creative process: intuition and intellect (or critical thinking). In the experiential-phenomenological mode of learning and teaching the emotional, intellectual and personal understanding of the individual is encouraged. By facilitating the use of emotional and critical faculties as the basis of creative activity, the educator can apply the basic tenet of this theory, which is the use of personal experience. According to Prentice (1995):

> The profoundly personal nature of the learning process has generally gone unrecognized in traditional educational accounts. Concomitantly, traditional teaching methods tend to ride roughshod over the delicate, vulnerable human responses involved in truly personal learning. A practitioner of experiential methods cannot, of course, disregard these features, since the basis of such methods is an assumption that meaningful learning is integral with the personal identity of the learner. (p. 24)

This self-revealing artistic experience, as I came to realize through my own process of art making, is a documentation of creative process that would be worthwhile to promote in the field of art education. As Abbs (1989) states:

> One of the terms essential to any understanding of education must be that of creativity. The word has come to denote a disposition of mind, which is experimental, engaged, a particular kind of teaching and learning where the results cannot be comprehended in advance of the process. Isn't the educated mind the creative mind? (p. 1)

PROCESS OF ART MAKING

As I investigated phenomenological processes and their application to art education, I discovered the MA thesis by Seewalt (1999). A student of Stan Horner, Margaret Seewalt expounds on the process of her art making through a series of photographs that formed a narrative of her personal experience. Seewalt's (1999) personal narrative was first the theme of her photograph exhibition, and later it became a method that she used to encourage her students to follow in the process of book making. Her work provided me with a point of departure. She states:

> Explaining the importance of narrative enables students to tell their story through their creative process. This allows for the existence of a 'guest ' and ' host' relationship, between the teacher and student, and between the student and the art piece that is being created. (p. 40)

Exploration of Artistic Process

The investigation of my own artistic process and its analysis began while I was taking Stan Horner's Studio Inquiry courses. I decided to use printmaking as a way of approaching the series of pictures I produced. In this thesis I divide my art process into five sessions; the discussion of each session is then subdivided into the following four topics: a) forming theme and idea, b) application of a particular media, c) use of a technical medium and d) reflective process or critical analysis.

SESSION 1

Forming Theme and Idea into Visual Expression

The first image I produced came as the result of instruction I received from Stan Horner at Concordia University. He phrased it as "Interiority and Exteriority", a theme

that I heard for the first time in the course I was taking with Stan Horner, called Studio

Inquiry at beginning of my Master's in Art Education program. The first thought that

occurred to me was to become the impetus of all the images that would pop into my

attention. Even though these images were transitory and non-substantial, they had the

definitive characteristic of a projected picture. I felt I could concretize these pictures by

elaborating their presence. These pictures resembled fleeting images in my dreams, with

the difference being that I was in control of what I wanted to do with them. I became

conscious of their existence by reflecting on Stan Horner's instructions.

While commuting from Vermont to Montreal I tried to pay attention to one

particular picture that would come to my attention. A picture of mother and daughter

walking toward an arch like structure (Figure 1.1). I tried to project other accompanying

images. The child was holding a doll. Then I visualized flashes of color as if looking at

old picture that would shimmer with retouched fluorescent blue and red coloring.

Horner's (1989) instruction regarding interiority/exteriority is a paradigm that he

developed through many years of teaching and artistic practice. This induced a spark of

imagery that goes through eight phases. Phase 1 Seewalt (1999) explains: "...the

dialogue of the 'inner/outer images', inner being anything imaged and outer being what

can be materialized." (Horner, 1989, as cited in Seewalt p. 6) She elaborate further

"This initial idea is obtained by allowing the flow of one's desires and being as open to

all possible ideas, thoughts, images and impressions. It is during this stage that the inner

image is formed" (Seewalt 1999, p. 6).
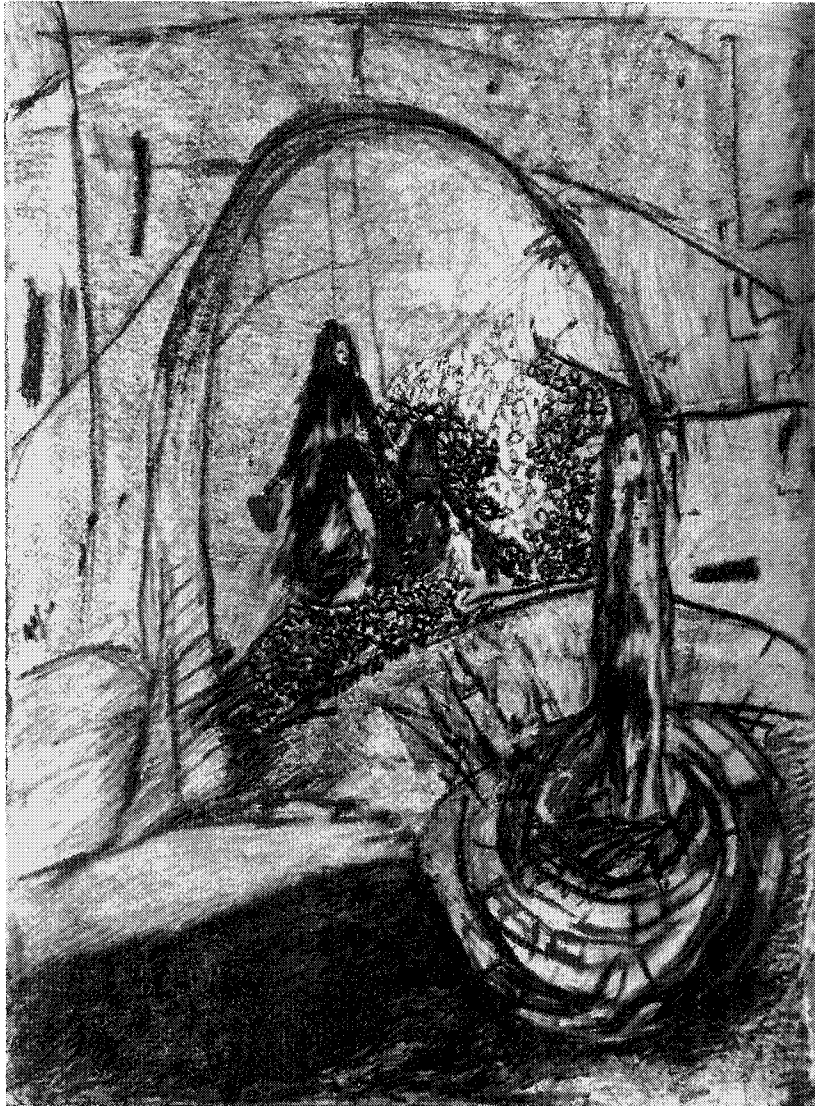
Figure 1.1 Untitled

Phase 2 , "Remembering", is a projection of "inner image into the exterior world",

Horner (1989) explains "It is this remembered inner object/image/event as experienced

that can now, in the second phase, be transformed through haptic/auditory/visual

language into an outer object/image/event". Phase 3, "Reflecting", a process of

distancing from an inner experience and engaging "with object and/or event as a

mirroring process". Phase 4, "Revealing", it is a process of releasing a work of art into

the public domain (Horner, as cited in Seewalt p. 7).

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Phase 5, "Describing", is a more objective understanding of the work whereby a work of art is named and decontextualized. Phase 6, "Structuring", Horner (1989) suggests that "structuring tries to reveal the underlying patterns of space and systems of time, to make explicit the context that lies hidden behind the proliferation of surface details". Phase 7 "Interpreting and/or Conceptualizing", refers to a work of art works as "social discourse" or an objectifying of the subjective experience (Horner, as cited in Seewalt p. 10). "Retro-activating and/or Theorizing", phase 8, Seewalt (1999), explains as follows: "At this phase work is not judged, but rather the interpretation made by other viewers is considered in relation to one's own. It is at this point that a viewer's personal response in a culturally context validates or transforms their own reading of the work." (p. 10).

I tried to project my inner images to my paper with drawing materials. The images of arched architecture and Middle Eastern "bazaars like" structured formed to engulf the two central figures. The mother was looking at daughter and they both walked with a purpose. The whole surface became animated and was charged with intensity of interaction of black rich material on a rag paper. The clothes of both figures were flowing, the profile of mother looks at the child with longing and seemingly the child is following with unconditional trust. I felt hesitant and tried to fill the rest of the surface with different marks to express the intensity of emotion that was provoked.

This initial picture became an inspiration for the remaining series of drawings I produced in that session. Being a parent, I started becoming interested in the visual impact that other parents portray, the way parents position themselves in relation to their children. The whole playground scene became visually vivid and a source of artistic

visual expression (Figure 1.2). The way parents wait for their children and the way they hold them and carry them. I found a common human experience among all the parents' behavior in relation to their offspring that formed a unified universal ritualistic experience.

I tried to form a collage of various imagery that I felt drawn to. Later I used the sketches, and edited the pictures to create lithography. The subsequent ideas included a self-portrait, the picture of classical Raphael-like Madonna holding a child in a triptych, Venus of Willendorf, Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa (Figures 1.3,1.4) and finally Michelangelo's David (Figure 1–5). All the images became somehow related to each. Aside from Michelangelo's David, who stands apart, all the other images evoke theme of women-hood in different roles.

The prominent background in each of pictures contained a vaulted arch structure possibly an archetypal form. I spent hours try to find these images at the library regarding their symbolic implication. These internal pictures contained in each became sources of aesthetic, physical, and objective projected art forms, that is many elaboration as that my imagination could develop. I can see how each one of these pictures could lead to further investigation and implication that could last for years of art making.

Figure 1.2 Untitled

Figure 1.3 Self Portrait
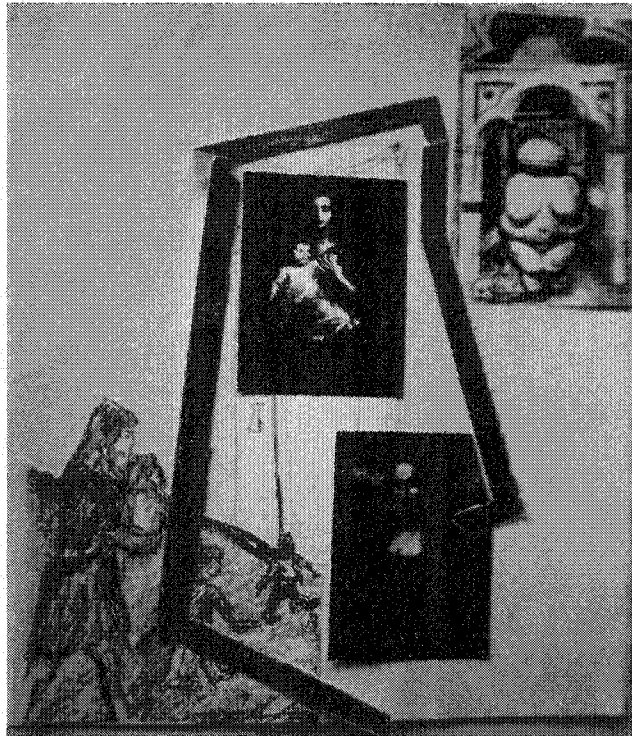
Figure 1.4 Untitled

Figure 1.5 David

I can relate this sequential process of objectified internal imagery, to Horner's

(1967) itemized artistic in process, which includes:

1. The experience of life enables the 2. Perception of existing art which may lead

to the 3. Creation of new art via the 4. Visual elements combined according to 5.

Structural principles to give 6. Ideals, imagining, truths, realities a metaphoric

existence in an actual physical 7. Art objects which stores the potential interaction

that is 8. Visual form latent until 9. Funded perception accumulates to enable the

10. Aesthetic experience, reaction to, participation in, identification with, the

metaphoric transformation this time forming the 11. Aesthetic structure which

persists even after into the 12. Experience of life. (p. 5)

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Application of the Medium: Drawing

The emotional intensity of the initial image in this thesis manifests itself in two animated figures placed centrally in the middle of an 18 x 24 inches paper (Figure 1.1). The picture seems unfinished; the marks are random and playful. The forms are not developed and lack definition even though the surface is energized by pressured black oily marks. An arched vaulted structure does not have the definition I was looking for. The pictures seemed flat. I felt hesitant as how to treat the visual element, and I saw myself as out of practice.

In these pictures I wanted to, as Langer (1957) describes, create "a pictorial space." Her definition is stated as, "Pictorial space is a symbolic space, and its visual organization is a symbol of vital feeling" (p. 35). Langer points to virtual space that she calls primary illusion as applied to painting. "...it is what the artist makes first, before he creates forms in it—it comes with the lines and colors, not before them--but because it is what is always created in a work of pictorial art" (p. 35).

The configuration of this series of drawings became a means of investigation for my work in this medium, that has a parallel in the work of Kenneth Beittel (1973). He created a drawing lab where he ;encouraged individuals to examine their drawing series along with their notes to explore their progression or process. Beittel describes the individual's artistic serial as:

> Within existential or experiential frame of reference, are a historical, cutting across patterns of a lineal time stream. The artistic serial seen as proactive [and not a reduction of need], concatenates a crazy path, evokes a dream-like vision which we can interpret, if at all, only in humility and with trembling, and I have

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argued, only face-to-face with the artist in a relationship wherein he can evoke his own peculiarly a historical memory of his stream of consciousness in the expressive act. (p. 56)

With regard to the series of drawings I have shown (Figure 1.1 through 1.8), I simply was dissatisfied with their quality. I felt rusty in developing the visual language that would express the content of my ideas. Rydzewski (1967) makes a comparison between a poet and visual artist. A writer or poet uses verbal language, while, visual artist employs visual language to evoke emotion and atmosphere. She explains that visual grammar referred to as form includes: line, shape, color, tone and texture (Rydzwski, 1967, p. 6). The visual language seemed tentative in my pictures, showing a lack of practice in the method of drawing. The lines and marks are random, and shapes are not developed. The texture and tonal values seem incomplete.

I tried to resolve this problem and understand my drawing by sketching and attending model drawing open studios that were provided by the Studio Arts Department, I spent more time on observational drawing. Paul Klee's theory of pictorial form and pedagogy encourages close contact with nature's observation and discourages " a collection of stylistic and technical rules." He believed in a theory of "introspective analysis, which the artist engages in during his work and in the light of the experience of reality, which comes to him in the course of his work" (Spiller, 1978, p. 11). This is the kind of analysis I was attempting, and I continued this work in my exploration of lithography.

Use of Lithography as Medium

The series of pictures discussed in the previous section became the subject of my practice in printmaking. Being dissatisfied with my drawing, I tried to enhance quality of these series of drawing through the use of lithography. The yellow lime stone and black oily litho-crayon enhanced the feeling that I wanted to express in the image I was attempting to create. "It is a good size stone," the instructor said. I felt tentative, I was doubting that I could get a print by combining this rich black with wet stone to produce final image. The instructor assured me that I would remember the whole process, that I learned at undergraduate level, particularly because I had specialized in printmaking, and my major studio work was lithography.

The instructor guided me as to how to handle the medium to achieve a positive result. She instructed me on how to mix the combination of nitric acid and gum arabic in order to preserve the deep black and gradation of gray hue.

For the first image, I used a small yellow limestone that was 9 x 12". The size and format of the stone helped me to have more control over the marks I was making. I did not feel overwhelmed as how to treat the different parts of my image, as lithography crayon has the same properties as a drawing material. For this picture, I made a direct drawing based on my sketch. The final outcome became the reverse of my initial picture and visually made more sense (Figure 1.5). Because I am Iranian and my written native language, Persian, reads right to left, the design of my picture somehow looked better in reverse.

For the remainder of the series, I combined photocopies of found pictures. Then I created a collage and tried to sketch it on my stone (Figure 1.7). I felt more confident

about handling of the medium in lithography and played around with the ratio of nitric

acid to gum arabic, creating texture by this handling of the lithographic process. I tried to

work directly on the stone by scratching and honing the stone, a way to create unexpected

and accidental marks in lithography. Finally, I partially abandoned the sketches and tried

to work directly on the stone. I particularly liked working with the highly oily black

crayon and its resulting

Figure 1.6 First Litho Interpretation

Figure 1.7 Untitled

effect. Very soon I was able to recall most of the technical aspects involved in handling

lithography.

Reflective Process

The first picture (Figure 10.1) is the most dynamic and expressive, and it is

closely related to my experience when I started my graduate art education studies. I was

commuting many hours every week and I had to be apart from my daughter, which

created questions and conflicts for me. These initial and subsequent pictures are related to

my motherhood and also my role as an educated woman who is striving to break away

from traditional roles.

The centrally positioned figures are the most developed and defined in this drawing. The feelings of conflict are most visible in the handling of lines, which are jagged and placed diagonally. The contour of shapes are not by tonal values but separated by lines, and the juxtaposition of shapes do not define each other.

The sketch of my self portrait is left half-finished in a vault like structure (Figure 1.3), the surface of this structure defined by lines not by texture and tonal values. The collage seems to say a story by juxtaposition of several different images that evoke motherhood and femininity (Figures 1.3 and 1.4). The Venus of Willendorf (Upper right in Figure 1.4) is the most defined image showing the archetypal female element. The central theme of mother and child can be seen in the picture of Madonna and child placed in the middle. This central figure is surrounded by other contemporary mother figures, Mona Lisa, my self-portrait and Venus of Willendorf (Figures 1.3 and 1.6).

I was able to manage the visual elements in my pictures by reducing the size of the surface of my drawing. This gave my picture greater aesthetic cohesion. The final picture, inspired by Michelangelo's David (Figure 1.8), I felt drawn to for the mere aesthetic pleasure that is contained in its ultimate visually unity. However, I could not relate this final image in my series, to any significant event in my life; its configuration seemed to have moved ability my reason of knowing. Moving beyond my ability of knowing is similar to Langer's (1958) description of an artists' process:

> He contemplates a work of art, inhabit(s) a world with an intense and peculiar significance of its own; that significance is unrelated to the significance of life. In this world the emotions of life find no place. It is a world with emotions of its own. (p. 38)

Langer (1958) further explains the aesthetic experience " The aesthetic percipient is interested in colors and shapes, sounds and tunes and harmonies, because they appear to him to express what cannot literally be contained in their make-up as mere existents" (p. 43). To me, Langer's description is related to my new phase of engagement.

SESSION 2

Forming Theme and Idea into Visual Expression

In this next session, the process of my art making, regarding approaching the theme and ideas of these series of pictures, is directly related to the previous session. Responding to the inquiry of my instructor, I carried on the work that I already had in progress, which was to further develop my last print from lithography, the image of Michelangelo's David (Figure 1.8) and the one picture from my collage lithograph. In the collage I was mainly drawn to the Venus of Willendorf (Figure 1.4). I made several photocopies of this figure, and I placed it centrally in an enclosed, vault-like structure, similar to a shrine. This structure changed the figure into something more like an icon. Michelangelo's David, to me, represents an archetype male figure. I used this image along with the Venus of Willendorf throughout this session and tried to modify and repeat it with the aid of a photocopy machine and computer aided drawing.

As an undergraduate I had completed several credits in intaglio. Since I had not worked in intaglio since 1980, I was out of practice in using this technique independently. I worked with the instructor who was teaching an undergraduate course in the intaglio studio. With the permission of the instructor, I participated in this class for the purpose of re-familiarizing myself with this medium.

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Figure 2.1 Venus

Therefore, the process of my art making was affected directly by the structure and the outline of this particular course. Along with the other students, I used a large 24x 48 inch sheet of copper plate and divided it to four sections and then systematically created images that were related in terms of ideas. The main focus in this intaglio course work was creating different marks through experiencing and experimenting with the technical process of this medium.

In the Visual Arts Building at Concordia University, I felt like a child with toys since I could take advantage of all the facilities available. How prints can be multiplied and how to use an edition as part of art work became questions for me. I wanted to use the concept of the edition in printmaking as a concept related to development of my images, rather than trying to reproduce the images accurately This gave the process of

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my printmaking less of an industrial orientation; the multiplication of images could have a new rationale, that being the development of visual effects. I used these multiple images to accentuate the themes of my overall final images.

The reproduction of this same image through the process of printmaking edition brought to my attention the idea of a reflection in the mirror. One of my most prominent nocturnal dreams has frequently involved my reflection in a mirror. I thought about a three-way mirror and the infinity of reflections created if two mirrors face each other (Figure 2.2).

As an undergraduate, I had stretched canvas on the third floor of the Visual Arts Building. Therefore I accompanied my prints with three panels of separated canvas, and I used the print edition of Michelangelo's David on the canvas to portray the idea of reflection, which related to one of my significant nighttime dreams. This also allowed me to find a use for the multiplication of images, combining individual art objects related to each other on a created space, such as a canvas.

My final project (Figure 2.2) evolved to a multi-media triptych that incorporated the print edition of Michelangelo's David along with the elements of painting. This work was the result of two things: my sensitivity to uncensored inspiration, and my interest and fond memories of my undergraduate studio work that built my confidence in personal expression. I felt this final art object expressed vividly my inner life, resulting in a comprehensible appearance to viewer; this comprehensible appearance could not be found in external reality.

Figure 2.2 Mirror

The method I used in developing this work closely relates to similar inquiries in experiential and phenomenological teaching practice. As Pappas (1957) explains:

...Rather than working toward a predetermined or teacher established goal, `a practice that is not uncommon in many of our creative courses' ... the artist would rather follow his work and allow it to inspire him during the process of development. (p. 134)

Application of the Medium (drawing), Multi-media

The definition of drawing in these series is implicitly experimental; I did not limit myself to any traditional drawing material. I was more interested in creating lines and marks using the etching process (see Figure 2.3). I drew directly on metal plates using

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engraving tools. In many ways etching emulates a drawing process which uses variations of line to create tone, texture and shape on a two dimensional surface. The properties of this medium allowed me to experiment with marks in a way creates effects which would be hard to obtain by using a regular drawing tool.

Figure 2.3 Venus and David

My marks were more experimental than they were in earlier work; the imprints of my interaction with material have not had a predetermined purpose of defining the content of my picture. Since I was not trying to make any exact facsimile, a chaos of agitated marks appeared and was contrasted with certain solid shapes (see Figure 2.4 and 2.5).

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Figure 2.4 Beginning

Figure 2.5 Varital David

This contrast of line and mass resulted more from an innate desire to create balance, which seeming had a more unconscious origin.

My formal art training as an art student (1978-1982), which was more expressionistic rather than formal mimetic, is evidenced in these pictures. Neperud (1995) explains the mimetic approach as a form of pedagogy:

...based on the idea that art is a an imitation of nature which depends for its 'acquirement' on the 'faculty of imitation'...compositions based on such principles as 'repetition,' 'variation,' 'opposition,' or 'transition.' ...grounded in formalism, the belief that works of art are composed of elements and principles, and that sensitivity to this underlying structure enables one to understand, appreciate, and apprehend the beauty of form. (p. 26)

I was trained to be more concerned with innovation rather than relying on a particular formal ideas about drawing or painting. For this reason, I did not plan formal aspect to generate a whole from parts. I was, instead, trained to make pictures that expressed originality. Seigesmund's(1998) explanation of this expressionist mode of teaching and learning visual arts is:

Expressionists contend that the primary mandate of art education is to protect and nurture the autonomous, imaginative ... Free expression is the desired outcome of art instruction. The expressionist stream has its roots in the 19th century American Transcendental tradition that, in the works of Emerson (1849) and Thoreau (1854), advocates personal realization through reflective solitude. It has also been influenced by the popularization of Freud's (1930/1961) concepts of the conscious and the unconscious. (p. 201)

During my graduate studies in art education and studio practice, the term "artist-as-genius" was questioned. Studio instructors in both Fine Arts and Art Education programs encouraged students to incorporate and learn from images of past artists, not to treat them as untouchable. Thus unleashing my expressiveness from predetermined standards of quality, and gave a freedom to my expression. I felt justified in using

images of past traditional artists such Michelangelo and Leonard da Vinci to try to find out how these pictures make aesthetic sense. This aesthetic is also apparent in <u>Venus of Willendorf</u> which was created centuries earlier.

Using significant historical art objects, revealed to me an aesthetic contrast between the formal qualities of <u>David</u> and <u>Venus of Willendorf</u>, for example <u>David</u> is a result of a more recent artistic expression while the <u>Venus of Willendorf</u> belongs to prehistoric art. The subjective experience of these works and deep reflective process of individual in process of art making can have significant role in discovering ideas and concept that has been denied by popular notions. My involvement with <u>David</u> and the <u>Venus of Willendorf</u> show clearly my conflicting feelings toward the conceptual ideals involving art making. Langer (1958) investigates this problem of artistic form and explains:

>...Creative artist often has difficulties in freeing himself from this orientation towards a `movement,' a one-sidedness that probably goes hand in hand with the intensity of his inner development, mainly under the spell of technical experiences and preferences, from which he finally advances to firm aesthetic demands. Assuming or accepting without reflection the inner experiences which are part of artistic creation, as creator he aims at clarity and intrinsic balance in his work. The obstacles he encounters in his work force him to seek solutions. (p. 72)

The obstacles I encountered in these two art works forced me to seek such new solutions.

<u>Use of Etching as Medium</u>

In these etchings, the medium applied is mostly engraving with very little preparatory drawing and sketching. There are three principle ways to create lines in

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etching. The first is dry point in which lines are incised directly by hand into the metal using engraving tools. The second uses a sharp tool incised by a needle penetrating the hard ground coating on an acid-resistant covering, allowing the exposed metal to be etched by acid. The third way of making line in intaglio is by use of soft ground, which creates wide and gray tones similar to a litho or soft lead pencil.

The second method is the most popular way of creating lines because the resulting plate is more stable, as compared to dry point, in which lines can be too fragile to sustain the pressure of the engraving press. In this acid etched process, artist does not have as much control over the nature of the line created as over the duration of the etching process and strength of the acid in the solution. To create tonal value, I used a fourth process called aquatint. In using an old aquatint technique, one covers the metal with rosin particles, and, by placing it on a hot plate, one melts the rosin on the metal. This plate is subsequently placed in acid.

A new process has mainly replaced the old rosin box due to its toxic fumes. With the aid of an air brush tool and an acrylic coating new method, one can get the same result as using the rosin box and the hot plate. The new method, takes longer and the deep velvety black that rosin creates using the older technique is harder to acquire. In order to define mass and shapes, a burnisher can be used to flatten the dots to create light tones and textures, which define planes of shapes and line (see Figure 2.6).

In the first image of this series, the lines are faint and random, and the shapes are suggested but not defined (Figure 2.1, and 2-3). This is due to the strength of the acid and its ability to bite through exposed metal. By use of a two-color process, I was able to mix two separate plates to create one picture (Figure 2.6). The end result was a unique

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effect that it is hard to create in any other art medium. I was able to manipulate and edit

the end result by taking out some of the marks by burnishing, bringing the different parts

of the picture together.

Additionally, the inking and the wiping of the plate created an overall tonal value

that contrasted with the darker lines deposited in the scratched marks or the marks
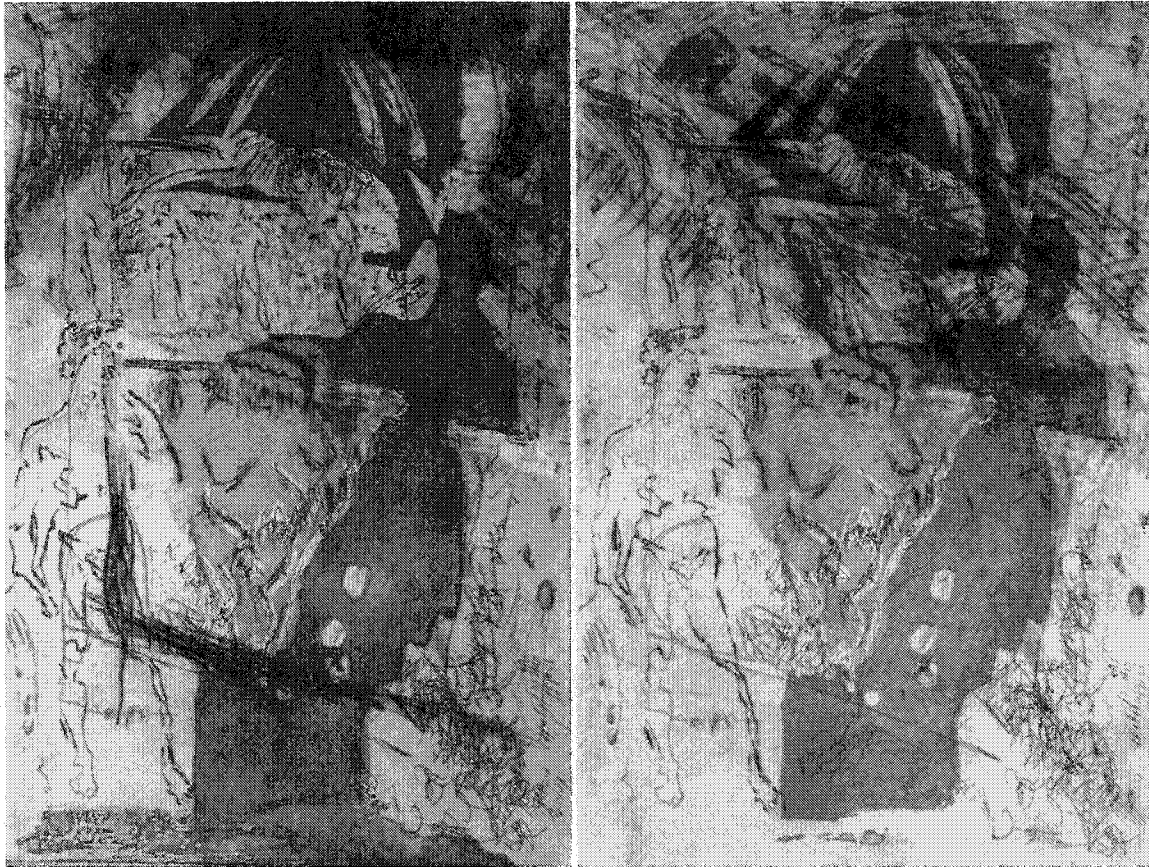

Figure 2.6 Untitled

bitten by acid. An experienced etcher can control the desired effect by various methods

of wiping and taking the ink away from plate before printing it using the etching press.

This is an indirect approach, as Van Laar (1980) says comparing the processes of

printmaking to other ways of making of art:

In printmaking actions do not have immediate effects, surfaces are built in layers...Printmakers become very sensitive to and appreciative of all the mysteries of their materials. The print is created through the interaction of surfaces, plate against paper. And the print comes in to existence in a secret action hidden from their eyes. (p. 99)

Due to my lack of experience in this medium, I had very little control over the outcome of my pictures. I made these pictures by trial and error and mixed several different techniques in one image, such as use of three different plates using dry point, engraved lines (Figure 2.8), aquatint and soft ground. Etching offers more than one singular approach to form and create marks, so I allowed the process to become the end in itself. Through experimenting with the material, I was trying to experience more about the nature and existence of this medium (Figures 2.3 through Figures 2.9), its unpredictable nature in picture making, and how I could apply it in the field of art education.

By its nature printmaking is unpredictable and therefore not conducive to creation of preconceived images. Van Laar (1980) explains:

Yet, despite this burst of activity, contemporary artists have not articulated a philosophy of printmaking. Not only have artists failed to place this medium into current social and aesthetic context, but contemporary critics have also neglected to investigate thoroughly the ontology of printmaking. Seldom does any broad critical discussion of the nature of printmaking take place.... But if we are to understand how this medium functions within the concerns and goals of

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contemporary art, we must question descriptions and definitions of printmaking

and search for the hidden potentials of this particular set of materials. (p. 97)

Figure 2.7 Venus of Willendorf Modified
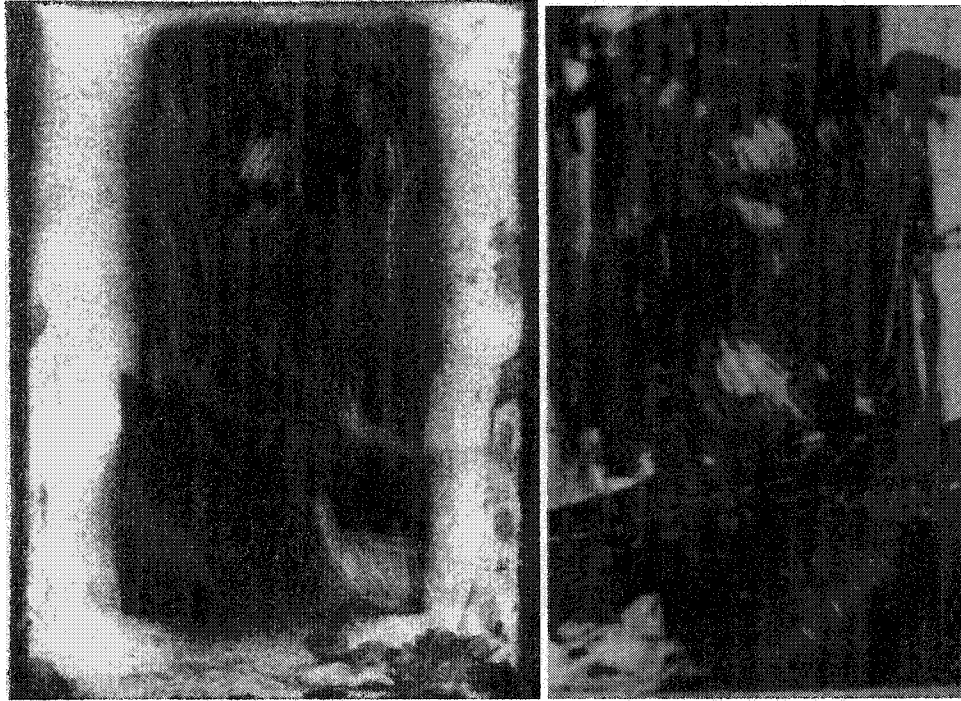
Figure 2.8 Three Plate B&W

Figure 2.9 Varietal-Mona Lisa

The accidental nature and unpredictability of the printmaking can produce marks and effects that trigger the imagination as was the case for me in Figure 2.9. The discovery of new possibilities in creating visual phenomena through playing with material nurtures further creative activity and allows freedom from preconceived ideas about picture making.

Reflective Process

In the multimedia and etching series, which I developed in this session, my images evolved from faint lines to definite art form. The contents of these pictures are constant; they are gender-related subjects. My image of David (Figure 2.4) became more developed in its artistic form throughout the series of pictures that I made during the second session of my printmaking. I repeated this figure in a mirror image on the same picture in which the Venus of Willendorf (Figure 2.5) is placed in the center. This Venus

is less visible, but its primitive and abundant figure, though placement in the background, draws the viewer's attention. Immediately above her head is the repeated image of David reduced in size using computer generated images (Figure 2.4).

I experimented with the David figure by placing a silhouette that loses its definition across from an outline of the more explicit figure of David. All three figures, two image of David and one of Venus Willendorf, are placed in the middle of many random marks that I produced playing with the intaglio process (Figure 2.3).

In the first plate, I experimented with the image of David in several different ways to come to the desired aesthetic and unity (Figure 2.5). I was searching for a way to represent my unconscious desire for understanding between men and women and a quest for harmony between the sexes in relation to one another. The obscurity of the woman and her import in a couple's relationship is portrayed in the figure of Venus of Willendorf. Perhaps her domination is expressed by its central placement, but the significance and the effectiveness of her role sets her position in the background (Figure 2.4 and 2-5).

I devoted a plate to the Venus of Willendorf (Figure 2.6); this figure's voluminous female form has been defined by wide contrasting thick lines from a deep black background. The soft wide lines are created by burnisher against small dots of aquatint. The structure around this figure has been treated in same manner symbolizing a feminine quality.

The face is undefined, but the gender of this figure is shown by the voluminous breast that gives it a universal character, and the structure in the background emphases the iconic symbolism of this figure. The lines again have an uncertainty and agitated

quality in them, and the undefined face presents the question of place and the role of women in society, perhaps presenting the same question for me.

For the final work (Figure 2.2), a multimedia piece, I did my first experimentation using the three-plate edition. This was an attempt to understand the role of multitudinous edition. I tried to relate the work to infinite reflections and possibilities of reflection as when two mirrors face each other. This series of pictures is more related to my understanding of the process of art making than to a final concrete art form. As Langer (1958) point out,

> ...the emerging image will always be characterized only from the outside, and relative to the stages of an increasing insight. Yet it is essential for the aesthetic view that all external elements are felt directly as an embodiment of something internal, as expressions of a certain condition of inner life as a state or as an action, in rest or in motion. (p. 74)

The images that materialized in this session are projections of my subjective experience in dialogue with the complexity of the printing techniques. In responding to the subtleties of my reaction to the material, I was able to draw meaning for the pictures I produced. The engagement in artistic process through the use of this highly technical medium encouraged and allowed me to see and question its effect on creativity. Through out this session I was trying to understand how technical medium affects and is affected by creative process and how this applies to art education.

Forming Theme and Ideas

I made the Session 3 series of pictures at the University of Massachusetts (UMS) in Amherst. I decided to use the summer to continue my art making, as UMS was offering a three-week course on making art in monoprint for art educators. We were encouraged to use the process of art making in monotype in order to build a curriculum based on our personal experience. I felt this course was specifically congruent with my philosophy and approach to art education. In this class I worked with two teachers, a Fine Arts instructor and a Ph.D. art education professor; their team teaching was aimed to help educators create portfolios to renew their teaching licenses. This course also was intended to improve skills and to develop innovative ways of teaching art through self-inquiry in art making.

The monotype studio class was held in the department of printmaking at the UMS Fine Arts building. This department included many different printmaking studios located on the same floor, and rows of printmaking spaces were connected. We worked in the etching studio because the adjoining room had an offset press that we later used for monotype printing. The main art activity was mono-print by use of an etching press and inks, water-soluble mono-print paints, crayons and an offset press. In this process, we painted on different sized pieces of Plexiglas with a 1/8 inch thickness using the etching press; the pressure needed to be adjusted in order to acquire optimal results. Later we used an offset press.

The teacher asked us to come up with an initial idea and continue to use it throughout our art making process for the remainder of the course. I developed my

initial idea by using a technique called scribble drawing. In this technique I scribbled

freely before the lines got too tangled; then I tried to find an image. This technique has

been used extensively by art therapists; first introduced by Florence Cane (1983). Her

objective was to liberate her students' expression through kinesthetic and tactile

experience (p. 44).

In my scribble drawing, I found a voluminous seated woman's figure, (Figure

3.1). I drew first, and then I discovered a woman's figure. Zurmuehlen (1990), speaking

from an existential and phenomenological point of view, calls this process "praxis"; she

explained that praxis "grounds the relationship between humans and their world". It is

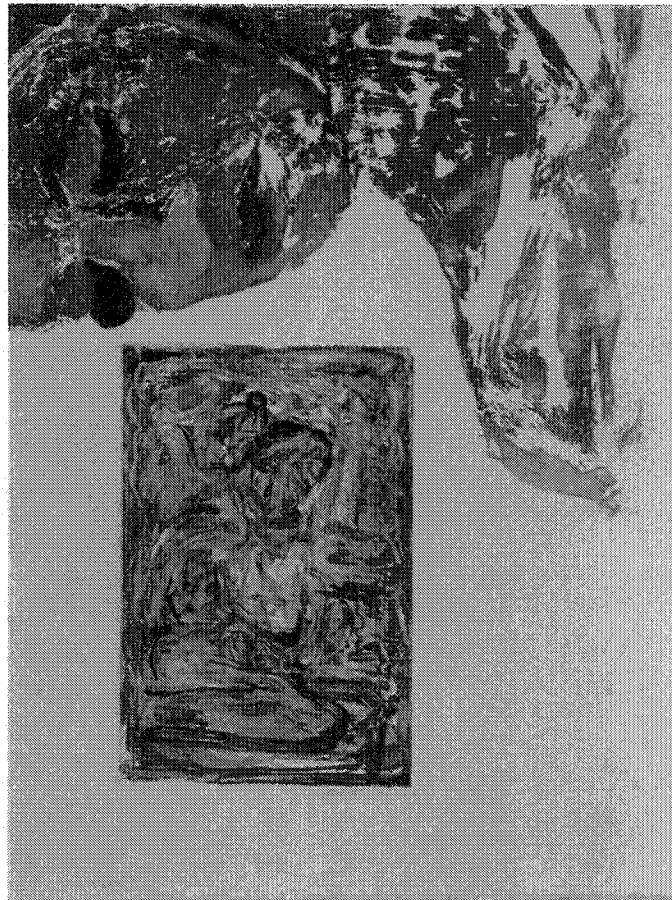the "conviction that some form of action precedes or grounds conception." (p. 9)

Figure 3.1 Seated Woman

The first image of the seated figure reminded me of Picasso's paintings of well-rounded women entitled Two Nudes. This image reminded me of the similar one in my nocturnal dream. This dream included me looking into a mirror, and also me relating to other people in various situations. I drew an image from the Picasso's Two Nudes (Figure 3.2). I wanted to give the figures in my dream a concrete existence by developing them in the process of my art making.

The places where I found the most access to visual representations of human forms were in works of various artists contained in fine art books. Going through a variety of art books, I came upon pictures that evoked immediate responses from me. All the pictures I made in this session had human figure elements in them. Their pictorial existence is either dream-like and symbolic or related to human relationships or community in tangible, observable situations.

The evolution of the primary picture of the seated women (Figure 3.1), starting with finding her form in my scribble drawing and what followed, reminded me of Horner's (1967) sequence-process theory. In this theory of art-making, Horner concludes that art is a process, and he points to three major process-sources which he defines as:

The creative transformations process of `making and matching' via media and schemata. The artist is concerned not with the physical world of natural science but with our reactions to it. He learns to make pictures from pictures, sees the world through scheme. (p. 6)

Figure 3.2 Untitled

Horner (1967) categorizes the other source-processes as "the interacting processes of visual form stored in the art object" and "the re-creative processes of aesthetic experience, i.e., the perception of visual form and the organization of individual percepts into aesthetic structure" (p. 6).

I knew I had to use colors in the particular method of printmaking I had chosen. I felt that, because colors greatly increase the complexity involved in creating coherent

objects, I wanted to limit their complexity through either using observational drawing or relying on previously completed art objects.

Artists like Picasso, Matisse, and Van Gogh are represented as masters of colors and painting. All of the artists' paintings, from which I drew my ideas, happened to be from the Expressionist period and partially related to the Fauvism movement that was aimed at the liberation of color and form. Britt (1989) explains the stylistic context,"…expressionism in painting often implies an emphasis on color at the expense of line, largely because the effects of color are less patient of a rational explanation than are the effects of line" (p. 109). In this series in a similar fashion, I focused on the effects of line and color, as opposed to their rational use.

Application of Medium: Painterly Drawing

The medium I used in these pictures seemed undefined, as they were on the border between drawing and painting. Drawings define pictorial elements in terms of lines creating light, shadow, texture, shapes, rhythm, pattern and movement. The picture that I produced started with lines of different color, created using a thin brush to arrive to a concrete object; these defined a seated human form (Figure 3.1). On the other hand, the textures are created by the motion of the brush, and plains of shape are created through a use of color that resembles painting.

Lines used in subsequent pictures merely define shapes, and lines separate the forms from the background. Through juxtaposition of these forms, an object is defined. The volumes of the figures were again defined by lines, but the textures were explained by brushstrokes and splashes of color. For this reason, I call these pictures drawings since shapes were enclosed by contoured lines. I call them painting because of the use of

colors which are enclosed within these contours, and textures which are created by brush strokes.

The print that followed the scribble drawing of the seated woman is from Picasso's picture of two nudes which he used as a strong stylization of primitive art regarding the full human figure. The image (Figure 3.2) of full women figures and the primitive rendering of the initial figure is very similar to the Venus of Willendorf, on which I unintentionally focused.

The picture I drew of the two figures is not about two women, but is, in fact, about a single woman looking into a mirror. The planes of shapes on these figures are defined by a thin brush dipped in black etching ink, as opposed to being separated by variations of tonal values in colors. I tried to use a more monochromatic color combination to avoid disharmony in the colors applied. The color schemes in the subsequent prints are all well calculated since these are inspired from works of different Expressionist painters.

The figures that I made in these images (Figures 3.1 through Figure 3.9) allude to the human form rather than providing a realistic rendering of it. The definition and identity of the figures are vaguely implied. With regard to the predominately blue picture of the couples and priest (Figure 3.4) which was inspired by Picasso's "La Vie" painting, the colors define the pictorial elements more so than the application of lines. Progressively the pictures in this series became painterly, culminating in Figure 3.8 and Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.3 Man

Figure 3.4 Life

Figure 3.5 Impression

Figure 3.6 Figures in Parallel

Figure 3.7 Community

Figure 3.8 Man and Nature

Figure 3.9 Man and Nature 2

Other pictures that I completed were inspired by a number of artists because of the pictorial schemes they used. Figure 3.7 was inspired by Matisse's painting of <u>Dance and Music</u>; Figure 3.6 by his <u>Bathers by a River</u>, and Figure 3.5 <u>Zulma</u>. In this last painting of a female nude developed from <u>Zulma</u>, the picture is most painterly and its linear quality is minimal.

The final image in this series (Figure 3.8) is from the painting of the German Expressionist Heckel, <u>At the Pond in the Wood</u>. The image I developed has very little of the drawing element in it except that the human form is alluded to by the movement of one brush stoke. The natural setting is separated by colors, which progressively move away from the contour drawing of my earlier pictures, on which I used a thin brush dipped in black etching or lithographic ink.

Use of Monotypes as Medium

I found the use of the mono-print technique most suitable for interpreting the Expressionist paintings, as it lent itself easily to the application of color. In this technique, an amount of ink is applied to Plexiglas, and, when put in the etching press, pressure creates accidental marks of colors. This is related not to the refined rendering of local colors, to the typical results of the technique used by expressionist painters, who even applied paint straight from tube to the canvas (Britt, 1989, p.112).

In monotype, the quality of the paper used is one of the most important elements because of its level of sustenance through the process of printing. The highly contained rag paper needs to be soaked in water then put against a Plexiglas and finally run through an etching press. The novelty of the technique to me and its unpredictably made me even more cautious about experimenting with its properties. The prominent characteristic of

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this method is that one can reproduce the direct interaction of the artist with the material at hand. Brushstrokes that one uses in painting along with pure colors can be easily recreated.

The monotype has fewer technical steps, and the result is more immediate. The initial artistic interaction can be easily recorded, and there is less chance for images to lose their freshness through the process of printmaking. I used two methods to produce monotypes one of which it is by etching press and the other by off set press. Prints made by an etching press are more prone to accidental marks because the pressure needed to reproduce exact marks painted on Plexiglas is hard to control. The offset press is more predictable because it reproduces the marks on the plates/Plexiglas more accurately.

The offset press in mono printing is most suitable for the reproduction of direct painting. In this process, one paints directly on a large sheet of Plexiglas, and the painting can then be reproduced at least five times. The ink used in this technique is etching or lithography ink. Although the image (Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8) inspired by Heckel's painting, I felt that the outcome became a separate entity, and the nature of the media used remained hard to define. The brush stroke is even more prominently visible, and the colors are most vivid. This can be suitable for expressing inner feelings by means of a simple plasticity.

In comparison to other printmaking, the mono-print process adds a complexity and intensity that is more compatible with the primary sources of inspiration and other subjective expressions, such as one's dream. This made me question the suitability of different media for one's expression of subjective experience. In an extensive studies

done on monotype from Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century (1980) Rouault demanded

that this medium "fervently ...express his highly personal view of life's pathos" (p. 204).

Reflective Process

The most noticeable effect in these monotypes is the intensity of colors. These

pictures can be a homage to expressionism; as Britt (1989) comments on the movement

as follows:

> Expressionism in this sense involved ecstatic use of color and emotive distortion
>
> of form, reducing dependence on objective reality, as recorded in terms of
>
> Renaissance perspective, to an absolute minimum, or dispensing with it entirely.
>
> Above all else, it emphasized the absolute validity of the personal vision, going
>
> beyond the Impressionist' accent on personal perception to project the artist's
>
> inner experiences. (p. 110)

The theme of female form and undefined people is predominate in these

monotypes; this theme directly relates to my previous prints in Intaglio. Both the first

picture of the seated nude (Figure 3.1) and the following image involving a women

looking into the mirror (Figure 3.2) have a close resemblance to the Venus of Willendorf.

I drew this latest concept (Figure 3.1) mainly from a scribble drawing showing my

preoccupation with femininity, which somehow raises questions about feelings about my

gender and about women in general. Cane (1983) believed images seen in this method

(scribble drawing) reveal one's conflicts, problems or aspirations, and can be "a way to

stimulate and arouse the mind to various inventions" (Cane, 1983, p. 57).

I was inspired by pictures of women in varying dispositions, as if I was trying to

study womanhood from different perspectives. The reflection of a voluminous woman

looking into the mirror was immediately followed with a picture of a man holding a horse in an infinite pasture of grass, displaying a great sense of freedom (Figure 3.3). The nude female derived from Picasso's work, in which he was strongly inspired by primitive art, and my work is a similarly monumental woman's form showing an primeval feminine element.

The next print I made (Figure 3.3) was based on the naked Boy Leading a Horse, a painting which symbolizes freedom and the impartiality of the male figure, which contrasts with the print of the naked women shown in color and the confinement of space. The immediate picture was of a couple standing naked in front of a priest who is holding a child (Figure 3.4). This may reflect my unconscious preoccupation with relatedness and the bonds between men and women. Picasso's painting of La Vie was the point of departure for this print. His La Vie comes from his Blue period which is about "Love, mother love, sexual love, platonic love, self-love and perhaps even more specifically about the unhappiness of love" (Wertenbaker, 1967, p. 43).

My preoccupation with relationships between people in different environments and also with femininity drew me to the three paintings by Matisse, Dancers by a River, Dance and Music, and Zulma. In these paintings, the women and undefined people lack facial definition and point to a universality of human identity rather than presenting a specific group or person.

My final picture contained an observation of people and their relationship to nature (Figure 3.8 and Figure 3.9). The painting by Heckel, an Expressionist artist, made me conscious of how people mold themselves to their surroundings. It is a picture of people on the beach whose forms are molded and integrated into the surrounding foliage

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and landscape. There, three people form a circle which echoes the roundness of the body of water nearby. In the same print, people who stand between trees almost blend with nature; their colors, forms, and texture are conceived inseparable from those elements of the woods.

The images in this series also took on a symbolic meaning. Zurmuehlen (1990) suggests "By interposing symbols between our perceptions and our responses, we construct order from the chaos of direct experience, and by means of symbols we can add the experiences of other people to our own" (p. 11).

These pictures evolved to make a social commentary about relationships between people and their habitat and these relationships became the formation of my final idea. This final conceptualization of my initial idea of social commentary is what Zurmuehlen calls "presence". The idea is derived from the existential view that ideas are "grounded in the primacy of precognitive perception" (p. 16). In my case, the perception that arose had to do with my sense of being as a woman attendant with an attempt to represent my feelings of relatedness in society.

SESSION 4-5

Forming Theme and Ideas

To further pursue my study of artistic process and the role of printmaking and its varied techniques, I decided to also attend an independent study class. In this course, I tried to develop my images using the technique of lithography and working one-to-one with a master printer and fine artist at Concordia University. After reviewing my artwork from previous sessions, I became aware of the interests and preoccupations in my artwork, in particular, the idea of the human figure and its multitudinous forms of

expression. It appeared that human form is a theme or tool I used to express my feelings toward my subjective and objective experiences. I decided to pursue this idea by composing a picture of human figures (Figure 4.1). I felt it would help me further understand what it is about the human form that interests me.

The instructor advised me to develop the human forms more concretely rather than using any highly stylized means of representation. I spent hours sketching human figures in order to use them in a picture I was developing in lithography, (Figure 4.2 through Figure 4.10).

I asked permission of a drawing teacher in the Fine Arts department to attend her live model drawing. I also attended a workshop that was provided with live models for fine art students. I spent many hours in these studios and accumulated a body of live model drawing sketches. I used these sketches of live models as the source of my subsequent pictures.

During the first 6 weeks, I tried to develop these figures on a large lithography gray stone 24 x 36 inches using a variety of lithography media. Images of men and women appeared in my drawings (Figure 4.1), and I also incorporated drawings of human figures from a book called Identity and Alterity: Figures of the Body 1895/1995, an exhibition catalog at the Venice Biennal. Its picture of a child and lactating women among other pictures related to motherhood and childhood inspired me. I mixed these pictures in with the live drawing sketches. I produced a two-color lithograph from this picture in the first 12 weeks (Figure 4.11).
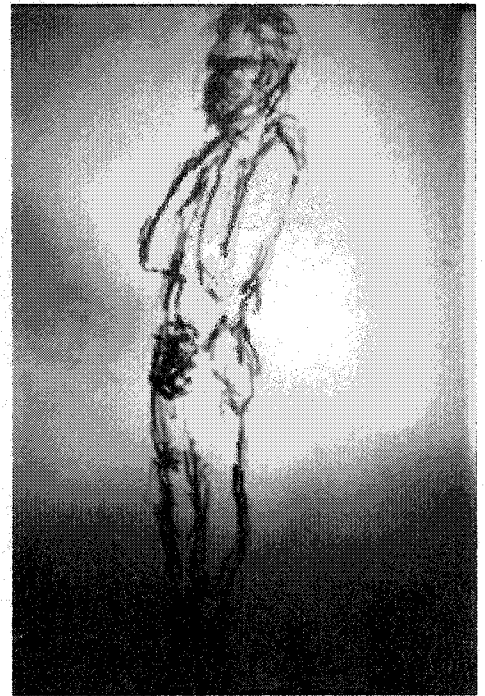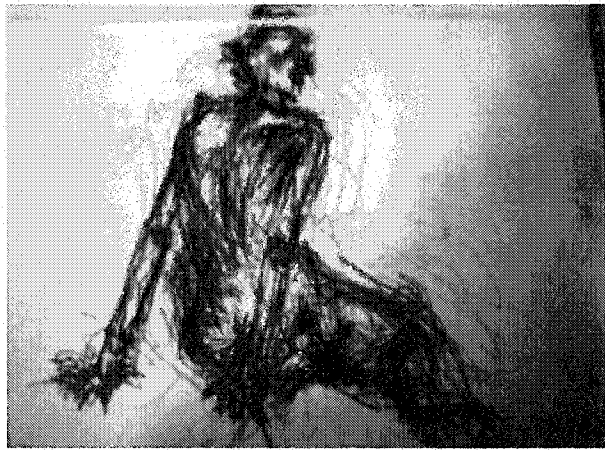
Figure 4.1 Field of Human Body
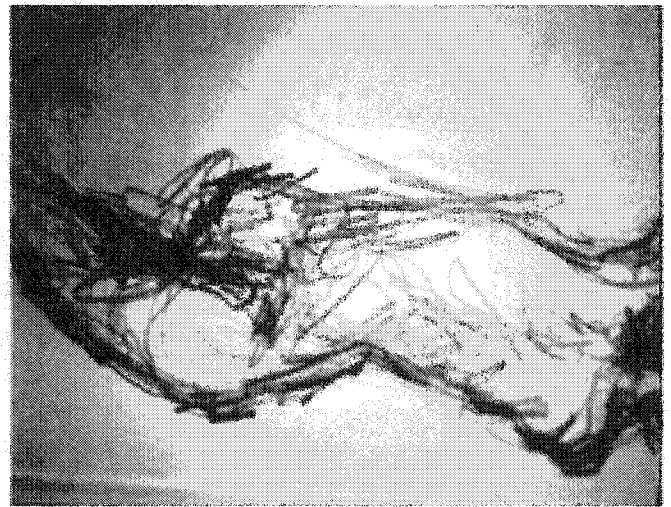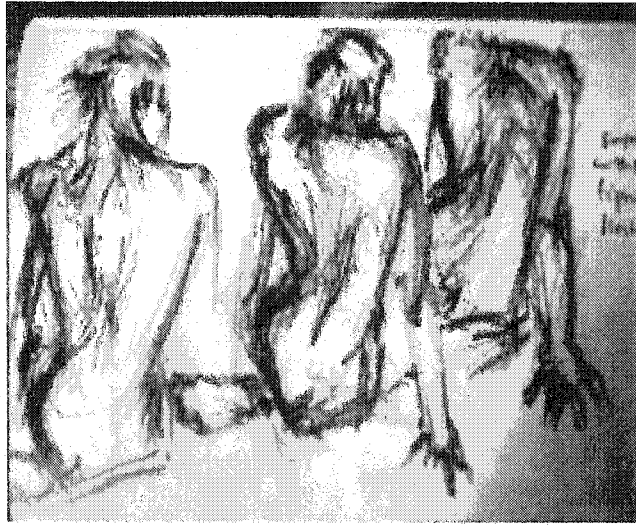
Figure 4.2 Through Figure 4.5 Figure Drawing

Figure 4.7 Through Figure 4.10 Figure Drawing

Following the independent studies program (my second time), I focused on

studies of different facial expressions, and finally I focused on the symbolism in my

native culture, mainly studying motifs in Persian carpets (Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.8).

During the last 12 weeks of my independent study, I attended a more advanced

lithography course. This course focused mainly on digital printing and computer

generated imagery. I was able to manipulate the images to mix pictures from my

previous session with digital printing techniques (Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2). I was able

to form a tapestry of human bodies and their relatedness by combining them into Persian

carpet motifs (Figure 5.1).

These ideas resulted from the reflective process I shared with my instructor. She

noticed that the format of my initial drawings (Figure 4.1) was proportionately longer in

length than width, and she suggested that it reassembled those found in Persian tapestries

or carpets. This comment triggered my fascination with Persian carpets, which I have

long admired.

For my final picture I created an image from 4-aluminum plates by means of

photo-digital process. This needed to be separated by colors to form a whole picture

(Figure 5.2). The photo digital and computer-generated process allowed me to

incorporate a variety of Persian motifs into my imagery and also to easily elaborate any

immediate flashes of images that triggered my imagination. The public display of

commercialized erotic imagery had been a source of artistic inspiration for me, and I

explored this theme along with my idea regarding motifs in Persian carpet (Figures 5.4

through Figures 5.5).

Figure 4.11 Second Color
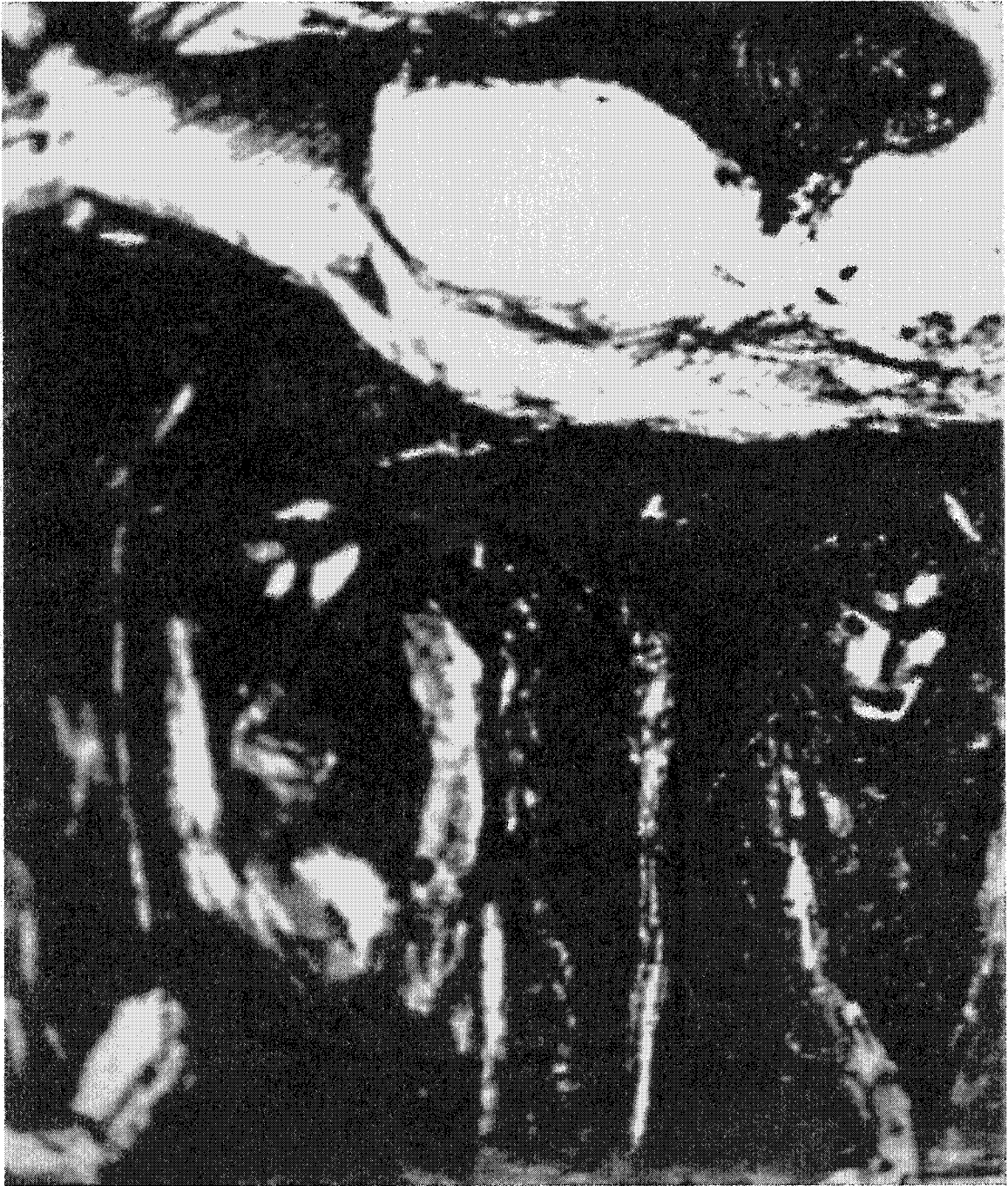
Figure 5.1 Detail

Figure 5.2 Four Color Separation

Computer generated imagery was useful in creating and formulating my ideas. I
was able to formulate pictures which expressed my mental processes simultaneously with
images that came to my attention. I was able to design and manipulate old Persian motifs
using what I was working on in terms of developing the human figure. The capability of
computer inspired images became a novel way of conceptualizing my ideas.
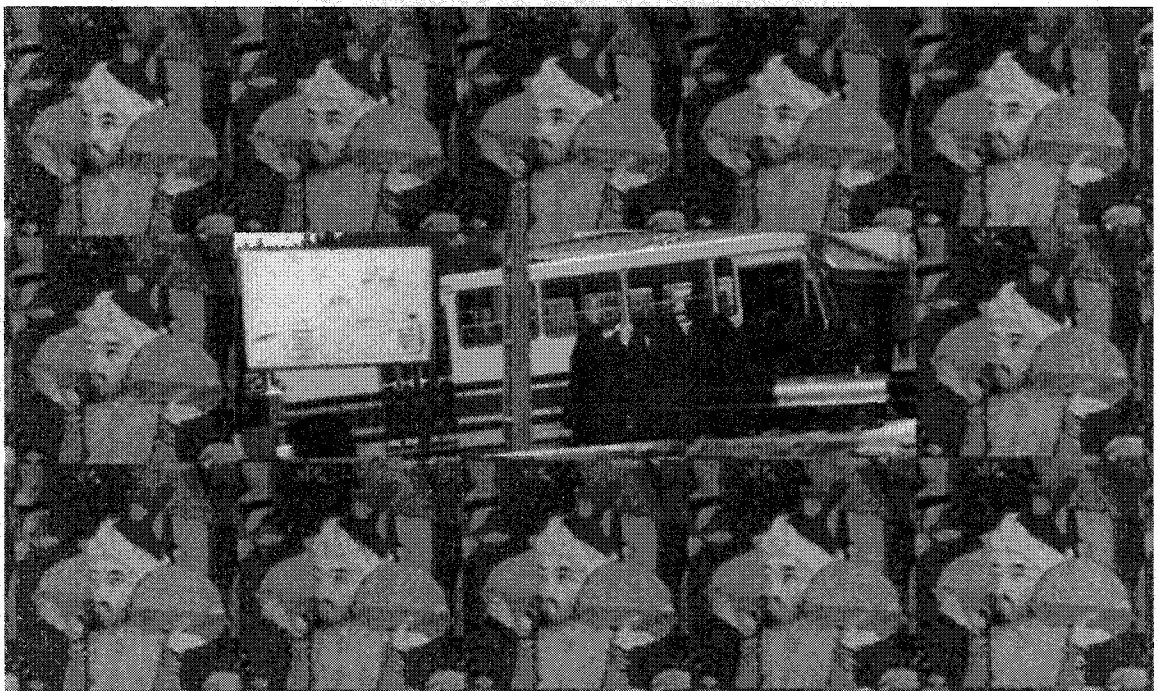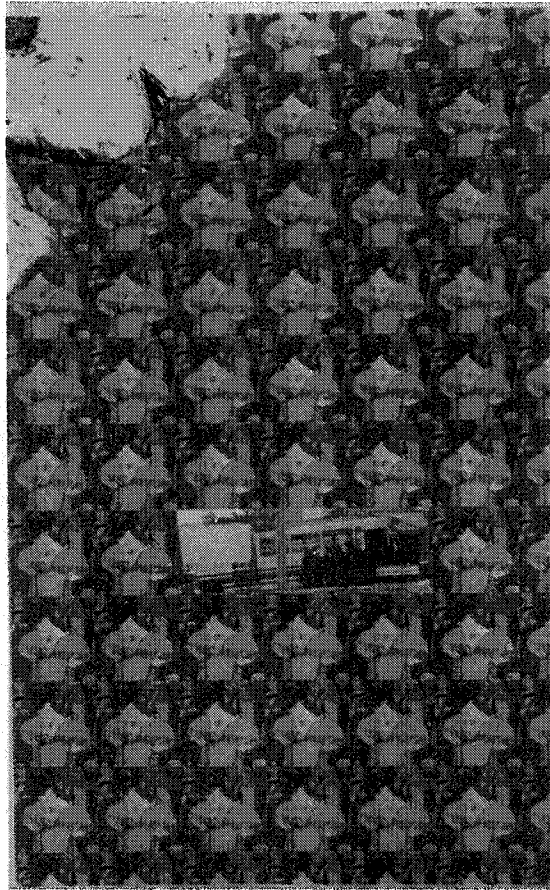
Figure 5.3 Repeated Motif
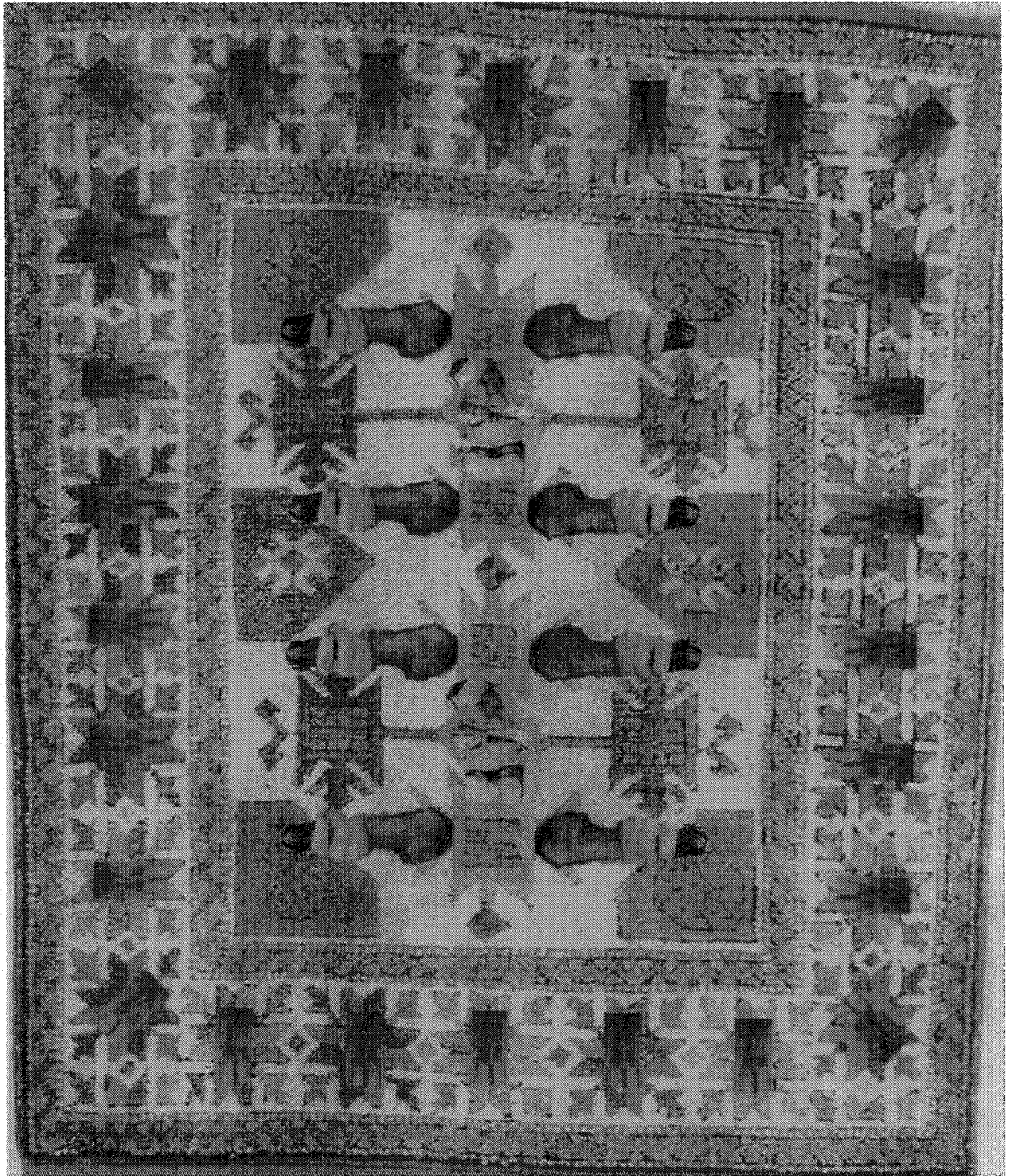
Figure 5.4 Carpet & Motif
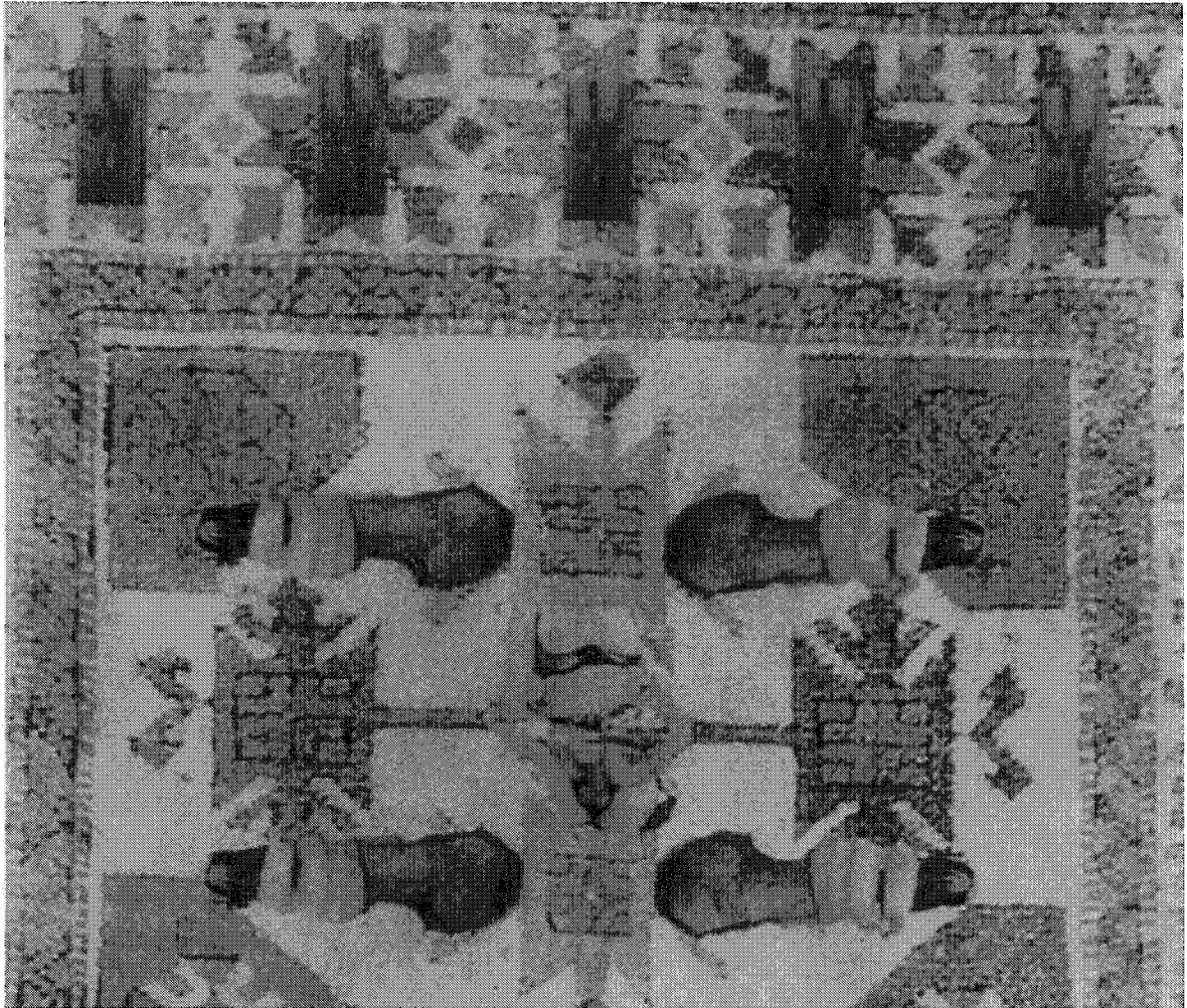
Figure 5.5 Detail of Carpet & Motif

Lovejoy (1989) writes about electronic media, and she elaborates on the
Constructivist ideas of the Bauhaus School. The Bauhaus promoted a synthesis of the
arts to produce art objects and aesthetics by craftsmanship, and they considered machines
acceptable as a means to produce beautiful commodities for the public (Lovejoy, 1989, p.
53). She explains,

> Whereas mechanical servants hitherto rendered services, which were essentially
> `physical,' automatons generated by computer science and electronics can now
> carry out mental operations. Various activities of the mind have consequently

been mastered... But in so doing... the new technology forces this project to

reflect on itself...it shows that man's mind, in its turn, is also part of the `matter'

it intends to master, that ...matter can be organized in machines which, in

comparison may have the edge on the mind. Between mind and matter the

relation is no longer one between an intelligent subject with a will of its own and

an inert object. (p. 156)

<u>Application of Medium – Drawing and Photo-Digital.</u>

To express my ideas, I had to improve my technique in lithography, which is

closely related to drawing. The figures in my drawings lacked volume and were not

expressing what I was envisioning. This reminded me of the importance of knowing how

to work in a specific media in order to express ideas. In my case, that would be knowing

how to use the drawing material in lithography and how to process them using the

techniques applicable to this medium.

Nicolaides (1975) in his book <u>The Natural Way to Draw</u> explains that the only

appropriate approach to drawing technique is by "correct observation". He states, "My

whole method consists of enabling students to have an experience" (p. xiii). He sees that

learning drawing does not occur through understanding theories, but he stresses that

"much practice is necessary". He outlines a series of detailed exercises intended to help

develop right observation skills. I experienced this, for example, in following an exercise

called "contour drawing". I felt at some point that I experienced the volume of a model's

body, instead of merely copying its outlines (Nicolaides, 1969, p. xiii).

The problem of representation of the human body and face became the subjects of

my drawing. I needed to draw the bodies figuratively, the final outcome of my drawings

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were surrealistic fragments of human and body parts (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2). Creating patterns of human bodies realistically, or understanding how one human form explains another and representing them in terms of context was still unclear to me.

I looked and observed the representation of human figures throughout the hundred-year period covered in Identity and Alterity: Figures of the Body 1895/1995. Nicolaides (1969) suggests an approach to the study of pictures: "An intelligent and active study of the great paintings of all times is absolutely necessary. Every great painter has taken advantage of it just as doctors and chemists take advantage of previous work in medicine and chemistry" (p.180).

To define the drawing of the patterns of the human figure, (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.11) in two color litho, I made a second drawing using shapes and lines to emphasize or add some accent to the visual field of this drawing. I was able to edit or add more figures to this image using different stones from the first human field drawing (Figure 4.11). The second drawing (Figure 4.2) was intended add more definition to the initial drawing by adding a second color.

The next image in these series began with me playing with the lithographic crayons and pencils until I formed a woman seated with her head down and her face hidden (Figure 5.6 through Figure 5.7). I worked on different aspects of this figure to give definition to her hair and clothing. I tried to use different drawing marks to differentiate the varying textures of her body, clothes, hair and skin. I added two heads with starkly different expressions: one was a skeleton head for which I used liquid base materials such as touch. Thick lines defined the shapes and expression of faces. The other figure's head appeared as a woman expressing pain, anger and elation. In this

image I was again inspired to incorporate the visual motifs that can be found in Persian carpets.

One of the final pictures that I produced involved computer-generated imagery. In this process I used the print that contained the pattern of human figures and scanned several different segments of this image. With the help of software program called Photoshop, I was able to adopt and integrate Middle Eastern images found on the internet and created overall patterns (Figure 5.7). I included a picture that I photographed in my country, Iran, that show group of covered women wearing the chadur (a black cloth that covers the whole body). I placed this picture centrally in a pattern which comprised a traditional Iranian male face (Figure 5.7).

In the next picture, I created a background like a Persian carpet; I scanned segments of my human figure drawings and superimposed two scanned pictures (Figure 5.6). I had to create four color separations on four different aluminum plates to create one picture, and each plate needed to be a different color to create a coherent final image.
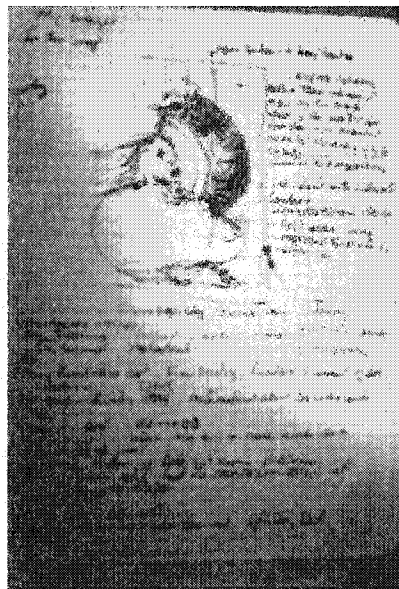

Figure 5.6 Preliminary Studies

Figure 5.7 Passion Aggression and Ignorance

Figure 5.8 Passion Aggression and Ignorance 2

<u>Use of Lithography and Digital Lithography as Medium</u>

The most salient aspect of my lithographic material that appeared in my picture is the use of autographic ink (Zincographique ink). This agent is highly greasy and through the process of lithography appears as a deep black. It also has the consistency of regular ink and can produce variety of washes in different hues. In drawing the facial expressions, (Figure 5.7 and Figure 5.8) the fluidity of this ink created movement and drama in these faces and accidental marks around my prints expressed emotional and subjective experience.

The other process that I found useful in order to express my mental process was the use of digital printing and computer-generated imagery. In this process I was able to express the simultaneous images that would come to my attention. I was able to express my internal experience and felt conflicts by superimposing, manipulating, and multiplying certain images that I felt spoke about my past and present experience. I was able to focus on part of my drawings, and by reflecting on it, brought to my attention my unconscious and underlying conflicts (Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.5).

Through the photo-digital technique, I was able easily to explore the theme of child rearing, motherhood and its effect on my life and career. This medium and its capabilities assisted the manipulation of the images to enhance my expression and ideas.

<u>Reflective process:</u>

This final series of pictures is the extension of the very initial image of mother and child that started with the idea of interiority and exteriority in session I, (Figure 1.1). The subject is womanhood and motherhood and my subjective feelings towards this experience. My pictures convey emotions related to family and child rearing. The

women figures in these drawings illustrate a contemporary woman as opposed to the archetypal shape of the <u>Venus of Wallinford</u>. The male figure is more immediate-looking, taken from actual observational drawings.

In one of the final pictures (Figure 4.1), the cherub-face repeated itself, and the child's head and shoulder are centrally located and scratched out from a deep velvety dark background. The cherub-face appears prominent and almost ghost-like. This image was located immediately under a most developed figure of a woman. This juxtaposition implicitly illustrates birth. This configuration of pictorial elements raises questions about the process of gestation and human birth. I developed segment of Figure 4.1 in Figure 4. 6. The buttocks of the woman seem to touch a phallus, suggesting an expression of the dynamic of eroticism, which leads to birth. This picture (Figure 5. 1) has been taken from part of my initial drawing (Figure 4.1) of field human figure, that I focused on scanned and produced a four color separated imagery.

The organization and lack of depth in this series accentuates Persian tapestry, carpets, and miniatures, implying my ingrained cultural background. This component taken from Persian motifs was present from the very beginning in my picture-making (see Figure 1.1) during my graduate studies in art education and was the focus of my last pictures, (Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.5). The initial image of mother and child seemed to be the most potent subjective experience and may be the ground for all the artwork I have produced in that two-year period. In the very last image, the mixture of scanned images from commercialized erotic western magazines such as Penthouse illustrates my cultural conflict, based in my separation from the taboos and norms of traditional Muslim Persian culture (Figure 5.4). It can almost be seen to demonstrate my rebelliousness against the

oppression imposed on women in that culture in which they are either being objectified or denied.

The highly valued Persian carpet's traditional motifs were replaced by scanned images from Penthouse. Feeling deeply displaced from one culture into another, I raise questions about how women are valued in both Western and Middle-Eastern civilizations. I suggest the essence of womanhood is symbolized by the primitive form of the <u>Venus of Willendorf</u>. This essence is devalued In Western culture by treating women's body as an erotic display and as a goods for sale; and in much of the Middle East by the veiling of women's physical sensuality. Opposing this, in a different place in the social hierarchy, man appears free-standing and unaffected by societal ties.

In the processes of making art I analyzed and questioned my femininity and womanhood. In one of my pictures the face of a traditional male became the overall pattern that contrasted with the bare buttocks of a woman's figure partially exposed (Figure 5.3). A picture of a cluster of Iranian University women waiting for a bus covered in black cloths called chadurs breaks the background motif. This evoked the vivid memory I have of my mother telling me how discouraged she was to have three daughters and no sons.. I was born a girl, I was rejected by my mother knowing the difficulty a women faces in a Persian's cultural hierarchy. My unconscious concern about the cultural values imposed on specific genders became a central theme in my art for two years.

As an art educator I can see how my personal experiences in my process of art making can be a fertile resource for the expression of insight into the human condition. Hausman, in order to explain the content for art education, writes: "For just as an artist

must deal with the realities of his 'present' the art educator must conceive of his role as part of the dynamics that mold and shape contemporary ideas and values.... Today's reality [with which teachers must contend] is characterized by dramatic and continuous change" (Hausman as cited in Pappas, 1970, p. 26).

The initial dialogue that I experienced became a social commentary. This occurred through recalling and being intrigued by images and through introspection. I was able during my investigation to experience my inner images and share that with my viewers. Horner (1989) describes this phase of art making as "Remembering" and explains:

> It is this remembered inner object/image/event as experienced that can now, in the
> second phase, be transformed through haptic/auditory/visual language into an
> outer object/image/event. ...When it is Remembered it is not just a translation, or
> the same thing merely expressed in social language. Rather it is a new work born
> out of the dialogue of language as a fluid system of social interaction. (p. 10, 11)

CONCLUSION

Through using a reflective process in art making, I was able to make use of my responses to subjective and objective experiences. I noticed the universality of my condition as a woman, a professional and a mother, a theme that appeared repeatedly in my art -work. This reappearance made me aware of the struggle that many women face in contemporary society. The theme of parenthood became a shared experience with other people. The societal issues and my experience of immediate cultural events as well as my personal history became a subject of my studies in art making. Choosing a

technical medium such as printmaking made me realize how important it is to master a craft in order to express my ideas effectively.

One of my initial goals in attending graduate school in art education was to investigate the role of art and how it communicates ideas and brings to focus personal and societal predicaments. Clearly my personal experience making art as an undergraduate, as a practicing fine artist, and in graduate school have made me aware that the knowledge in teaching art and nature of aesthetic is in constant change. The fixed component is my personal experience that responds to shifts in trends and the incorporation of new ideas.

Efland (1979) in his article on conceptions of teaching art makes a detailed investigation of aesthetic orientation and its history. He draws our attention to the origins of aesthetic philosophies which started with Plato and Aristotle. Efland then presents the trend of artistic practice and pedagogy. He draws from writings of Abrams and points to the salient theories of art, which are: "the work of art, the creator, the audience and the universe represented in the work" (p. 32).

Goodman believed that "art is a form of inquiry which discovers, creates, and enlarges knowledge" (Goodman as cited in Siegesmund 1998, p. 205). This approach finds an empirical base for art education. The knowledge is based on aesthetics, which is the philosophy of art and beauty. This aesthetic knowledge is known to be different from logical judgment. Beardsley (1966) related this theory to Kant's (1790/1987) philosophy and explains: "aesthetic deals with phenomena exhibiting subjective qualities that cannot be described using propositions. The faculty of taste becomes an agent through which we

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may seem to know and evaluate these objects even though their essential qualities exist in a sphere outside of formal reasoning" (Beardsley as cited in Siegesmund 1998, p. 205).

Although the idea of subjective aesthetic response is valid for my research as Siegesmund (1998) explains, aesthetic perception cannot be separated from the cognition that is believed to be prerequisite to a critical thinking. As Broudy (1987) posits:

> An illusionary base knowledge that serves as a metaphorical reference that is a prerequisite to critical thinking...an illusionary base for thinking...a realm of informal logic, co-existing alongside prepositional logic...Within informal logic, aesthetics is an essential part of cognition. (p. 18)

I felt I made a deep connection with some precognition of my experience, which is my cultural and forgotten identity. I had thus used reflective-inquiry, the concept that is closely associated with critical thinking. As Caldareri (1996) explained, "reflective-inquiry is a mental process that is made up of close observation, analysis and evaluation" (p. 12).

I assumed through reflection I had discovered elements of my cultural identity in my images. I saw the connection between my experience and Zurmuehlen's (1990) comments on Irwin' model of thinking, namely "how our useful conceptual structures become hidden orthodoxies" (p. 16). Perhaps I am representing some unique perspective of the world to the viewer. In order to produce a finished picture, I had discovered strength, weakness, and forgotten identity. I realized the importance of developing the concepts in my images, and what it takes to build a picture that speaks to a viewer. In another words, I became familiar with an artist within.

The phenomenological and experiential teaching philosophy and its support of

qualitative research methods validates one's personal experience and allows the

formation of a continually updated philosophy. The artistic process and close

investigation of art making has been used as a qualitative research tool. This process is

not limited to the acquisition of a perfected medium to produce an art object; rather it is a

process that encompasses a wide range of cognitive and emotional activities.

The artistic process has found its basis in the artistic statement or "shop talk".

This is a systematic revelation of introspection on art making, artistic diary and discourse.

Ecker (1966) explains: "The artist may be concerned with qualities of his personal

experience or he may be preoccupied with the unique character of his artistic production"

(p. 284). Ecker goes on to say how this statement and its unique production can be seen

as an example of the stylistic movement, lending commonality among work of many

artists (Ecker, 1966, p. 284).

The systematic study of my art making is the statement about the steps I needed to

take to produce art that express the universality of my conditions and personal insight.

Just as Ecker (1966) considers, I found that my artistic process can be a tool for

qualitative problem solving and acquiring knowledge about art making. I feel I can use

my understanding of my own artistic process for building theoretical methods for

teaching. Ecker postulates:

> My interest in artists' discourse is methodological. By this I mean to indicate that
>
> my problem is one of formulating, warranted generalizations about the controlled
>
> process of artistic production...A close examination of the shoptalk and the work
>
> of the studio will provide certain data about the process of constructing an art

object.... I will call the latter qualitative problem solving. It is my contention that careful study of what painters do when ordering their artistic means and ends, as well as to what they say they are doing, will provide the bases for significantly improving our generalizations about the plastic art and our conceptions about education in this area. If it is possible to describe the artistic process as a series of problems and their controlled resolution, the ensuing generalizations may be of no small consequence to the teaching of art. (p. 287)

Through self-retrospection I came to realize how art is closely linked to cultural context. I always believed my art could express critical views about the human dilemma. I considered artists as social critics, and Kuspit (1984) made a note that artists are critics. Like critics, he states that artists do not accept "the established modes of discourse that aim to institutionalize a dominant system of style". He explains: "The true critic...is as creative and imaginative as the true artist, and must be if art is to survive its own making and immediate history, its marketability and entertainment value" (p. xi). I believe that through critical analysis of my art making, I can identify cultural and social issues, which leads to personal understanding and growth.

In this era of paradigm shifts regarding art education, I believe that in order to reach a philosophy that addresses contemporary issues in education, one needs to rely on one's personal subjective experience. It's important to see that an individual knowledge is a process rather than a fixed molded system of thought. It is true that one always is situated in a stream of thought established by tradition, but this does not mean one needs to abandon the claim to personal thought (Luijpen, 1969, p. 23).

Just as an artist's statement about the development of their art-work can become the basis for qualitative research, so too is the art teacher's statement about conducting an art class and the logging of their interaction with students. Carvalho (1986) reflects on Wachowiak's (1977) method of teaching, and Wachowiak himself shows what he thinks is a successful teaching:

The special quality that distinguishes high-caliber teachers of art from the average instructor is their ability to respond intelligently, sympathetically, and purposefully to the children's creative, artistic efforts, to talk to children knowledgeably, sincerely, and honestly about their art work, to evaluate it, giving it importance and significance in the children's eyes by paying serious attention to it. (Wachowiak as cited in Carvalho 1986, p. 13)

In conclusion I believe my teaching approach draws from both artistic process and the phenomenological and experiential teaching methods. It includes:

An action oriented philosophy, to help the student discover himself, and value-truths deduced from the discovery, in spite of lack of funds, facilities, space, time, and all the other physical inadequacies, he has solved the educational problem to which all efforts should first be addressed...because, essentially, what education is all about is learning who one is and one's existence in the world is justified. (McCoy, 1971, p. 27)

As McCoy (1971) describes, the "self-hood/self-realization" of art education fosters for students a discovery of personal identity, a private, authentic existence, in dehumanizing, impersonal society (McCoy, 1971, p. 6).

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In considering all aspects of the artistic process, my emphasis in teaching is to encourage learning the formal aspect as well as technical mastery of the medium used. The technical aspect should lead to development of a concept which reflects a student's persona through a critical analysis of the image produced. As McCoy (1971) explains:

...art education can have little significance for the individual students unless, somehow, it points the way toward actualization of potential inherent in his unique perception and choices of possible values and truths discovered in his existence, and expressed as beauty in his art production. This perception can only be realized through knowing who he is, how he feels, and in what way his existence as a unique entity in the world is justified in relation to other unique entities. (p. 1)

Artistic process allows reliance on self-investigation and introspection. The focus of this process in art education and its emphasis on creativity, is conducive to true and full experience of the phenomenal world. The visual sense is a powerful tool that can provide a true communication with others. This sense can be used for self-actualization and bring some sense of human commonality to public attention. The most prominent aspect of fine arts in addition to its societal function is its conviction on personal statements which empower every human being and enable each individual's personal expression.

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