

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA**

UMI[®]
800-521-0600

**(RE)visualization: A Pedagogical Journey through
Black and White Photography**

Margaret Seewalt

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art Education

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

March 1999

©Margaret Seewalt, 1999



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-47740-1

Canada

ABSTRACT

**(RE)visualization: A Pedagogical Journey through
Black and White Photography
Margaret Seewalt**

*My searching voice
ventured
into inhabited space
through the love of looking*

My primary goal in the following research is to examine my own meditative motion of investigation of a quiet searching that perpetuates itself and is its own reason for being. The exploration of an enigma: a visual artist on the cusp of losing my sight and photography as a vehicle to carve out an artistic and a personal identity. This thesis discusses and converges the above. This is done through incorporating two distinct voices, a documentary voice (academic) which is interwoven with a personal poetic voice (phenomenological).

Acknowledgments

I first would like to express my respect and appreciation to the Montreal Association for the Blind. For without the use of their technology this thesis could not have been completed.

I wish to express my gratitude to the members of my committee. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Elizabeth Sacca for her inspiration and continual encouragement. I would also like to thank Prof. Stan Horner for the feedback and insightful comments and suggestions that were invaluable, and Prof. Paul Langdon for support in the studio.

Special thanks to Karen Lund and all her vital comments and encouragement throughout the process of writing this thesis and for proof reading the final manuscript.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my mother, Rita Seewalt, for her financial support and silent encouragement during the duration of this project

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vi
	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	4
PROPOSAL PROCESS	6
ARTIST TEACHER	11
A RESPONSE EXPERIENCE	13
(MY)STORY	27
A (re)telling of a pedagogical journey	27
My first photography experience	38
RELEVANCE TO ART EDUCATION	39
Remembering a teaching experience	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY	42
EXHIBITION: <i>IN(TO)SILENCE</i>	
Artists' Statement	44
Prints & Drawings	

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Horizon of Stories	15
Venture Into	16
Shadowy Peace	22
A Body of Buildings	33
Solid Structures	34
The Hand has its own Eyes	35
A See of Blur	37
A Passing in Life	38

INTRODUCTION

**If the dear faculty of sight should fail
Still it may be allowed me to remember
What visionary powers of eye and soul
In youth were mine. James Joyce (Trevor-Roper, 1988, p. 34)**

James Joyce gradually lost His sight, and still he continued to create.

Eight years ago, I suffered from a medical condition called glaucoma and uveitis, leaving me with impaired vision, losing the total vision in my right eye, and leaving only 20 – 30%, of the vision, in my left eye. Being unable to see things clearly I rely on landmarks to guide me through the city. The details I once was able to admire are completely gone. The world, which I exist in, has a continuous haze covering it.

It was at this point that I decided to give up photography to pursue another form of studio art. I had taken a variety of studio courses for the past six years, at Concordia University, focusing more on painting and drawing. During this time I struggled to find an identity through my artwork, which I was never capable of accomplishing. Two years ago I returned to photography realising that with this art form I was qualified to represent what I wanted to convey my thoughts, using the camera to become my eyes. Whether this issue was a pivotal turning point for me as an artist or as a photographer I am not quite sure, but it was through my thesis research that I discovered the impact photography had on my creative process.

Through this process I was able to comprehend the significance of my photographs and understand what role they played in my life as an artist and educator. There were many questions that I needed to answer in order to continue as an artist. Through this inquiry the questions I needed to address were: Why are place and space so important to me? What is their significance? Why do I choose these images to represent me? What role does it play in my work as an artist and in my life as an art educator?

Asking myself these questions gave me an understanding about my artwork and my creative process, putting forth the journey of creating research in the studio. (Herival, 1997). As I continued researching I realised that although the image in my photographs may have changed, the same essence of thoughts, feelings and emotions always remained the same. "As we journey inward toward the Center, we encounter more and more truth. Each step awakens us to new discoveries about ourselves" (Couper, 1992, p. 6).

I started reviewing and researching the concept of my photographs, dealing with my personal process and creating an identity through space and place. This led my research into a personal direction and keeping a 'Daybook' (Truitt, 1982) allowed me to be expressive through my personal poetic voice, which will be presented in *italics*. Also I deal with an understanding of myself through a phenomenological self-inquiry, a geographical imagination of experiencing the power of space and place and through storytelling an autobiographical narrative.

I also recontextualized Stan Horner's paradigm practices of the inner and outer imaging. In this paradigm Horner designed eight phases, in which a viewer reflects upon and responds to an art piece, or an event. I use this approach as a guideline, not just for viewing my own artwork, but also for viewing what I was going through before I took the photographs, while I was taking the photographs, and after the photographs were developed. Each of these phases represents a stage I went through to reach the final process of my artwork.

This artwork has been presented in an exhibition entitled *In(to) Silence* and consisted of a selection of photographs from the Saskatchewan prairie, Montreal back-alleys and an empty warehouse. It entailed a series of photographs that were taken after my last eye surgery in 1998, along with a collection of eight charcoal drawings, which were created in conjunction with the latter photographs. It is this particular body of work that I exhibited in a solo exhibition March 20th 1999 at 3999 St. Dominique in Montreal. I have chosen 12, 11 X 14 inch prints for the gallery show.

LITERATURE REVIEW

My inquiry is based on two stages, the first main element being a phenomenological - self inquiry and my artist/creative process, and the second part an autobiographical narrative/educator, (my)story.

Before being able to address these two stages, I first needed to synthesise two elements, myself a 'sighted person' and my relation to the 'outside' world. Trying to understand these elements led the way to a new phenomenon, one of situating the 'self' within the architectural surroundings, the 'other'. Heidegger's notion of 'phenomenon', is stated "that which shows itself in itself" (Evernden, 1993, p. 62). Phenomenon signifies that something can be encountered or related to. As a sighted person I go forth to explore my new surroundings and in return create an understandable dialogue between me (my body) and its surroundings (the buildings), one encountering the other. The "architypology of the imaginary" (Buttimer & Seamon, 1980, p. 285), makes metaphors and symbolic thought of the body and architecture possible. Identifying one's understanding of their body and interpreting this understanding with the buildings that surround them, allows for an acceptance of the body. For example the "Melanesians 'live' their bodies by identifying themselves with trees" (Buttimer & Seamon, 1980, p. 288).

Understanding and positioning oneself in the environment allows inhabitation to take place. Inhabitation is that in which everything has its potential place, a coming together.

a built up and constructed image of an inside and an outside, a self and other, a presence and an absence. This inhabited space, a “threshold” according to Jager (1997), opens up a dual relationship between the guest and host. The invitation and the acceptance of the essential differences creating a unity. Therefore, the vision/guest and me/host allows an acceptance and understanding of a loss and a rebirth. Loss-of-sight gives new meaning to vision. “To truly see always means to accept less than absolute . . . to delight in differences” (Jager, 1987, p. 130).

Now that I have set a foundation for my research by situating myself in relation to my creative process, I am ready to follow through to the two stages that I mentioned at the beginning of my review.

The first part of my research is based on Horner’s paradigm. This paradigm consists of eight phases that deal with a ‘response’ and a ‘reflective’ practice towards an art piece and/or event. Through these eight phases Horner (1989) discusses the dialogue of the “inner/outer image” (p. 3), inner being anything imaged and outer being what can be materialised. Although all eight phases create an inner/inner imaging and an outer/outer imaging, it is through this developmental journey that one is able to explore, understand, create and conclude. Even though the journey is continuous, accepting and transcending the event, one empowers oneself to ask and answer the question “What?”

I have added yet another view to this paradigm, one that enables me to adapt these eight phases as a guideline for my creative process. Each phase has helped me to understand, create and document my own art.

PROPOSAL PROCESS

Forgetting, Phase 1

It is at this phase that the 'journey' begins. The viewer is encouraged to view and fuse with the work of art privately and silently, creating a dialogue. This dialogue 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.

... the Journey we experience is not just the work telling us what to see, nor is it just our inner image telling us what the work already is; response can be defined as that which emerges out of the fusion-dialogue between them. (Horner, 1989, p. 9)

Through venturing out and discovering new spaces and/or places a fusion/dialogue takes place, creating a journey, allowing for the moment of forgetting to take place. Bachelard (1964), describes this journey as **"the poetic imagination, being receptive to the image at the moment it appears"** (p. XI). Buttimer & Seamon (1980), classify it as a **"spaciousness of existence"** (p.285), a non-verbal communication between the space and the body.

When the viewer has completed his/her journey and exits from the illusion, what has been attained through forgetting the exterior world, will remain in the memory of the inner-image experience, and will proceed into the next phase.

Remembering, Phase 2

The viewer takes his/her experience of the inner-image into the exterior world, although most of this journey is still an inner experience, the viewer needs this inward journey to recall the memory in order to verbalise and share to others what he/she has experienced.

Horner (1989), states,

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. (p. 10)

He continues to state that,

. . . 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. 11)

Through this experience one, as viewer, can distance oneself from the object or event and distinguish the 'other' from oneself. Distancing oneself from the object/image/event allows one to play with what they have experienced in the inner image.

Returning to the space and/or place I will be documenting, I recall the inner image experience and allow the space to create a dialogue with the camera.

Reflecting, Phase 3

Reflecting; invites and involves viewers to distance themselves from the experience,

although still extremely personal, and engage with the object and/or event as a mirroring process. In drama this is called 'role-playing', it allows a person to create **“another self that we can ‘see’ as outside, as over and against our continuous self; we can even propose an ‘other’ who is able to look back and gaze at us”** (Horner, 1989, p. 12).

At this phase of the journey I distance myself from the place and/or space and allow the other to enter. This is the photographing process, the actual event of constructing the image I am photographing.

Revealing, Phase 4

It is at this stage that Horner suggests the need for a 'sense of closure': viewers can imagine a revised version of the object and/or event different from the one that has been experienced (if the viewer chooses to do so). Horner (1989), states that, **“It is at the end of this process that we may be ready to release extensions as documents of a process, or extensions as works of art into the public domain”** (p. 13).

In my process, it is at this point the camera has documented the space and/or place that I have experienced. What I experienced and reflected on during the journey, is revised according to what the camera has viewed. Therefore the picture of the space and/or place is the extension of what has been experienced. According to Bachelard (1969), **“The space we love is unwilling to remain permanently enclosed. It deploys and appears**

to move elsewhere without difficulty; into other times and on different planes of dream and memory"(p. 53).

At this point Horner categorises the first four phases as interior dialogue; the last four phases as exterior dialogue.

Describing, Phase 5

At this point the shift of orientation moves towards a more objective understanding of the work. This process allows the viewer to isolate each of the elements of the work and/or event and identify them, name them and decontextualize them.

Horner (1989), states, **"To describe as understood in our present context is to focus on the "bits and pieces", to look at each moment in time and each object in space as if it were a whole in its own right" (p. 14).**

Returning to the darkroom, the process of developing my photographs enables me to distance myself. I view my negatives objectively. I categorise each negative and begin to piece together an understanding of the images. Hoogland (1996) states that, **"The perspective required for self-awareness which physical distance makes available is also available through imaginative distance" (p. 19).**

Structuring, Phase 6

Here the viewer compiles the data and reconnects the pieces to make the experience

whole again. 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" (p. 16).

During this phase I become an objective viewer by analysing the photographs and what form or configurational pattern they convey to me.

Interpreting and/or Conceptualizing, Phase 7

At this stage of the process the viewer articulate their understanding of the art object as it is seen. Here the viewer connect their inner (subjective) experience with the outer (objective) experience to give meaning to the context through social discourse.

". . . if seen more as a process than as a method . . . is a form of social discourse.

Even if one dialogues alone, one unveils the particular social infrastructure that one interjected while growing up" (Horner, 1989, p. 17).

It is at this phase that I allow my photographs to speak for themselves raising issues that must have concerned me in the process of a space/place search.

Retro-activating and/or Theorizing, Phase 8

This is the final phase of the journey; it is intended to bring a sense of closure. 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

Within the illusion that in a Meta-modernist paradigm, we can only let go of an experience when we have a sense of what has transpired, when the process as experienced unveils itself to us, gives us permission to move out and on. (Horner, 1989, p. 18)

Placing my photographs in a gallery space allows me to distance myself from the work.

This event in turn opens up new interpretations for viewers to encounter, allowing a closure for the process that took place and empowering me as the viewer/artist.

ARTIST TEACHER

My second stage, (my)story, is a narrative telling of my own pedagogical journey, a (re)telling of my experience after losing 70% of my vision, learning to visualize without seeing. This storytelling of my personal experience helped create meaning in art and teaching.

McGuire (1999) concludes that,

Marilyn Zurmuehlen set out a philosophical framework that . . . image emerges alongside story in a generative praxis of idiosyncratic meaning, artistic causality and intentional symbolisation so that art making gives meaning. (p. 2)

Storytelling as a part of the creative experience allows one to understand and reflect on the artwork that has been created. When an artwork represents ourselves through our memories of these experiences, it allows us to share with others and create an understanding of the present. To ignore these experiences is to deny our memories, therefore; living in a non-imaginative world. Bachelard claims that in order to live in an inhabited space, one must accept their imagination and “revisit their own experiences” (Martinez & Thiboutot, 1999, p. 45). McGuire (1999), states “ . . . when we recognise ourselves in our artwork . . . an image is given meaning through lived experience and then story” (p. 10).

I continuously refer back to McGuire and Zurmuehlen on the importance of lived experiences, and art-making as a foundation for myself as artist/educator. This reflective practice opens up a dialogue between the artist and the art being made, but it also creates a dialogue between the teacher/student, the student/art, and teacher/artist. Going back and remembering as teachers our first art experience gives teachers an understanding of their students. It also helps teachers to relate to and understand their own art process.

This latter part of my thesis is based on lived experience and art-making in conjunction to teaching.

A RESPONSE EXPERIENCE

Forgetting

Meaning does not pre-exist in an art work; nor does it exist in a viewer. Rather it emerges in the journey along the road to meaning and its subsequent spin offs, in the inner imaging dialogue. . .

(Horner, 1998, p. 16)

When I first moved, to Montreal from Saskatchewan, I found myself wandering the streets in search of a familiar element. I found myself lost and confused not understanding why I was feeling this way. Memories of my childhood rushed through my thoughts. Why was I feeling the same way I felt while growing up on the Prairies? I was now living in unfamiliar territories. I had never been to Montreal before, and I couldn't understand why this city was provoking the same thoughts and feelings that I had experienced while I was growing up in Saskatchewan. I struggled against these thoughts and started to compare these two places. Montreal was not flat and vast like the prairies. There was also no silence amidst this urban landscape. The sky did not venture into the abyss like it did on the prairies. I found myself struggling with questions that I could not answer. I didn't feel there was a linkage at first and I continued to wander in the city for days trying to understand and develop a sense of belonging.

Then I discovered the back alleys in Montreal and the empty warehouse spaces that exist along the canal. I started spending more time in these spaces and found myself having thoughts and memories of my past that reminded me of the prairies. These spaces in

Montreal like the back alleys and empty warehouses are basically secluded areas where people never were. These places became a security blanket for me and I found myself feeling safe.

There can be no doubt that when we enter into a forgetting experience, we are in a very vulnerable position. . . .

(Horner, 1998, p. 16)

I found myself being attracted to the natural elements of the prairies and the architecture of Montreal. To me these spaces and places represented bodies and figures, through which I was investigating. These spaces became a body that I communicated with. To me these places were alive. I would have the same dialogue with the space that I would have with people.

. . . not truth as we now mean it, not as correctness or as an impression matching an original, but as a revelation of inwardness.

(Evernden, 1993, p. 71)



Horizon of Stories

Space to me is freedom of thought, freedom of emotions and freedom of feelings. I think it has to do with being who I like to be in these spaces, which are usually away from the rest of society; I guess the place where I can feel the freedom to think anything I want to.

Wandering on this endless road of the back alleys made me feel free. I would enter this place and allow myself to think, feel and explore any thoughts that entered my mind. I felt the vastness and longing that was so familiar to me on the prairies. I could be anything I wanted to be in this place and nothing and nobody would stop me.

To immerse oneself. To be swallowed up. The space around us becomes gigantic the body shrinks.

(Carter, Donald, Squire, 1999, p. 298)

I remember exploring a back alley near St. Viateur, in Montreal. It was cold and had been snowing for days. I started to trudge on through the drifts to get to the interior of the alley where no one would come. People around me watched and asked if my car was stuck. I thanked them and said, "No, I'm just out for a walk." I felt a strange look come from them, but off I went. I was in no-where-land, allowing myself to experience the beauty of my surroundings. I knew I was going to photograph this place so I wanted to explore and discover what this back alley really meant to me. As I entered, snow up to my waist, I longed for a pair of snowshoes that would help me along this quest I was embarking on. Once in amongst the buildings, I sat on the snow, and allowed the silence, like the northern lights, to overwhelm me.



Venture Into

While we enter the world of solitude we re-experience the loss and vulnerability of our own existence. And yet, in fully accepting the precarious solitude we find as a response to the decision, that risk and that sacrifice, an inviting world of metaphor and image that awakens us to the grace of an intimate intersubjective life. (Martinez & Thiboutot, 1999, p. 43)

I felt like I was in a Giacometti painting, looking into a painting. I travelled and journeyed inward succumbing to all exterior thoughts.

... the closest we can come to it is to enter a sort of dream time/space. . . (Horner, 1999, 15)

I go through this inward journey and explore this experience before I photograph the prairies and the empty warehouse spaces. This inward journey has created a connection between all three places, which enables me to join these images through black and white photography.

This inner experience occurs when we are in the 'palm of repose', that is, withdraw into oneself. . . the intimacy of the room becomes our intimacy. . . the room is very deeply our room, it is in us. We no longer see it. It no longer limits us, because we are in the very ultimate depths of its repose . . . (Bachelard, 1969, p. 226)

A blissful tranquillity and a solid sense of being grounded and secure were felt while I was on my journey. I don't really recall an actual event, but the moods that I experienced, inwardly, through this journey, are to me extremely eventful. It is these moods that I try to document through black and white photography.

Remembering

Can be characterised as a practice that gives inner virtual, technic/linguistic order the processing of time and the shaping of space of an experience than, that already embedded in the pre-verbal memory bank of the inner body/ inner ear/inner eye, it can subsequently be given outer image manifestation. (Horner, 1998, p. 19)

Once I have entered the space that I will be photographing, I allow myself to journey back into the inner memory of what occurred when I visited the space for the first time. I walk around the space and allow this memory to overcome all my thoughts and feelings. I relax and breathe in its beauty, vastness and silence, recalling the inner journey and transforming myself, in the space, as an outsider. Then I pull out my camera. I continue to walk around the space, waiting for the inner journey/memory to transpose itself through the camera lens.

Even though, the inner image I obtained while I was on a journey the first time I entered this place, I re-enter it representing myself as (an)other. I create a dialogue with my camera and communicate what I experienced through the lens not the experiences of an event or story, but the moods and emotions that engulfed me while I was there.

... is itself a dialogue, a transitional experience: on one side the memory of the dream, the ground event, calls for an authentic account of itself, on the other, standardised use of language calls for a careful use of syntax so that the words make sense as sentences. Each side has its unique demands, only together do they constitute remembering.

(Horner, 1998, p. 18)

It is at this point, during my photographing of the place or space, that I step back and allow the inner journey to take place between the space and the camera. I have recalled the inner journey and have communicated as a photographer what I want to capture, but now the journey is reborn through the camera lens.

I am always trying to capture something that I'm going to lose or lose sight of anyway. I think that is what plays a major role. That is why I take pictures, just because I want to keep a hold of something that I feel or see, and I cannot paint it or sculpt it, it never comes out exactly how I feel it, so I guess my only means is through photography. It is also my way to communicate and have a dialogue to the rest of the world. I use my camera to have this conversation, it's my form of communicating what I have experienced.

**. . . image has touched the depths before it stirs the surface.
(Bachelard, 1969, p. XIX)**

Reflecting

**In our present context it is the inner image, the memory, now of many layers, that is the ground for the new inside/outside experiences. . . .
(Horner, 1998, p. 21)**

Journeying inward has created a balance between 'me' and the 'place or space' that I am documenting. As I step back and allow the camera to 'do its job' I am forced to reflect on what is transpiring through the lens and the space. Even though it is apparent that I am still a part of this stage, I find myself asking the questions, "Why is this empty

warehouse space so important to me? Or why is this road and back alley so significant? How does it all relate?"

By asking myself the question, "Why is this empty space so important to me?" I am thrown back to the memories of my childhood, remembering walking across a field of wheat and succumbing to the vastness of silence. Afraid for what it might do to me and yet secure in all its offerings. Looking out into the horizon and feeling the freedom of my existence, where no boundaries were placed on me, this is how I felt in the empty warehouse space.

There is nothing like silence to suggest a sense of unlimited space. Sounds lend colour to space, and confer a sort of sound body upon it. But absence of sound leaves it quite pure and, in the silence, we are seized with the sensation of something vast and deep and boundless. It took complete hold of me and, for several moments, I was over-whelmed by the grandeur of this shadowy peace.
(Bachelard, 1969, p. 43-44)

The second question: why is this road and back alley so significant? This brings me back to the journeys I have travelled on the prairies and have yet to travel, a never-ending voyage.

While taking the photographs and reflecting upon the questions and answers about interior space, the exterior of vastness, and the exterior of urban. I reflect upon myself as an artist and a photographer. I realise that by distancing myself, I have created yet another process within the journey. It is this process that allows me to view the space from a different perspective. Distancing myself enables me, at this stage, to understand

the linkage between all three elements interior/warehouse, exterior/urban, and exterior/prairies.

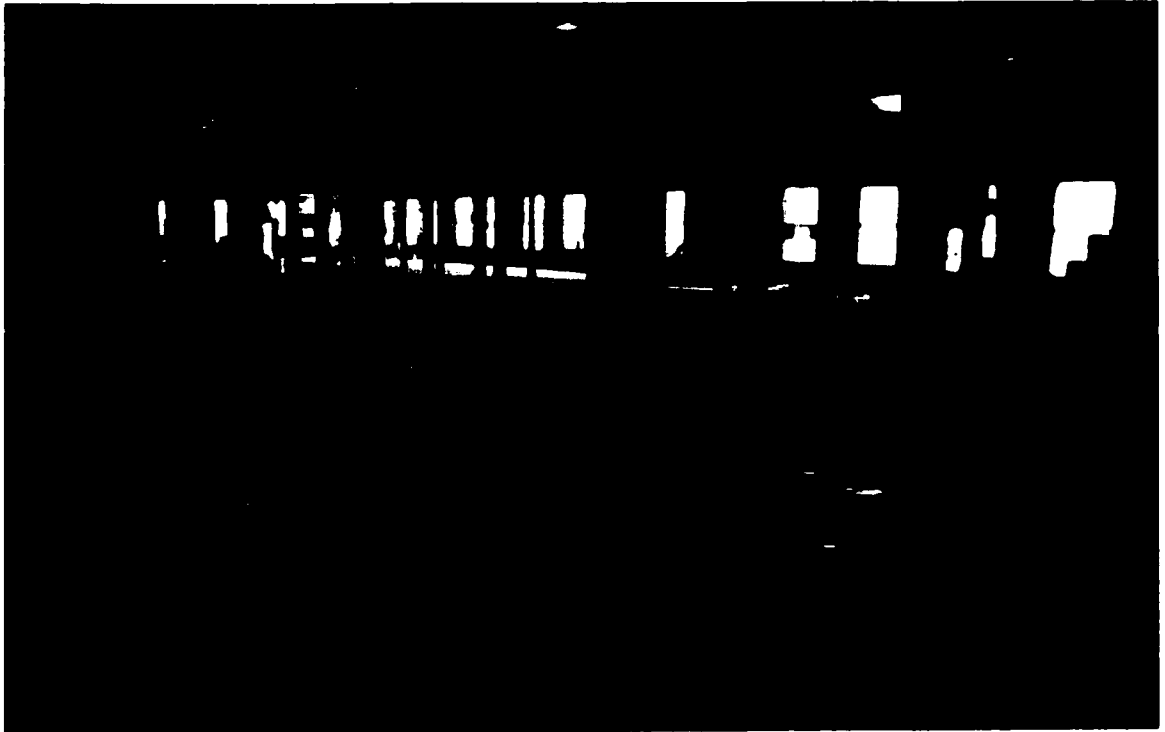
Once we feel at home; we are ready to move into other unknown territories, whether they be of the physical world, the mind, of the imagination. . . through art we can revisit the earlier sites and allow the remembered images to act upon our emotions and imaginations. . . reflection connects us to the world by opening, and keeping open, possibilities for ourselves as well as for others.
(Hoogland, 1996, p. 19)

Revealing

. . . although still entirely an inner imaging process, shifts the direction towards a preparation for the possibility of outer imaging. . .
(Horner, 1998, p. 22)

Packing up my camera and preparing myself to evacuate the space that I have just documented. I am left with a confused feeling. Satisfied of the experience that has just taken place, but unsure of what the camera truly has documented, I stand and walk around thinking that the job has been completed, not wanting to leave, knowing that the process is yet not over. Feeling insecure about where I am going to take the next step leaves me longing to curl up in this secure environment and re-enter my dream. forgetting about the world around me.

I turn and look around one last time, and as the sun starts to set, and dust falls upon me I am content for I have witnessed the pure beauty of the place, a photographers dream, as the perfect light of dusk creates a transfixed moment.



Shadowy Peace

Describing

If the first four phases were designed to assist a beholder in developing and sustaining an interior dialogue, than phase 5 represents a radical shift into the potential of a dialogue between the inner image, already in full flight, and the outer image as a subject in its own right.

(Horner, 1998, p. 24)

Leaving these previous memories behind I wait for a couple of weeks before I go into the darkroom to develop the negatives. I need this time to distance myself further from the inner journey that has taken place. I want the photographs to speak for themselves with no biased judgement from my earlier experiences. Once I am in the darkroom, where I am silent and confined, I find myself changing the atmosphere by listening to music and singing. I do not allow this space to consume me; I take charge. I become the

overwhelming presence. This creates a new feeling for my work, allowing me to take an objective view of what is transpiring.

Once the negatives are developed, I look at the work and compare all the images, the prairies, the warehouse, and back alleys. I look at the dust patterns across the floor in the warehouse and see the same elements in the snowdrifts that form on the prairies. Although, these patterns represent movement, there is also an extreme element of silence. The reflections in the water on the roads in the back alleys create a 'never ending' horizon.

By focusing on the details it becomes possible to build up a description that as an inventory of the parts as beheld stands in as a displacement of the work in its own right. (Horner, 1998, p. 24)

In all the pictures the representation of light and shadows create an understanding of space and time. The dialogues between the vertical and horizontal lines create a rigid feeling and it is this feeling that embraces me and allows me to enter and become part of the space.

Even though, these pictures of the space create the feeling of an unknown inhabitation, it is this taunting stillness that entices for further investigation.

Structuring

Structuring, on the other hand, is all about relation, it aims to reveal the underlying patterns of space and the systems of time; it aims to make explicit the context that lies hidden beneath and behind any proliferation of surface details. (Horner, 1998, p. 26)

Leaving the darkroom brings me to yet another process: to where the inner processing relates to the outer one. At this point, I line all the photographs up together and see how they relate to one another and if a dialogue is taking place between the images. I look at the photographs and wonder if 'images captured in time' relate to the essence of what I want the viewer to see.

Looking at the photographs I'm back to the same feeling and spiritual essence that I felt when I was discovering it for the first time. I am reminded of entering these spaces and transfixing them in my memory - the spot and the feeling that it gave me. So it is like a rediscovery, through my photographs, of what I had discovered.

Interpreting

... is a form of social discourse in the sense that we bring with us to the responding process a vast repertoire of past experiences, acquired from inter-changes (inner and outer imaging). . .

(Horner, 1998, p. 28)

Being reminded of my rediscovery I find myself being reminded of past memories. As I look at the photographs, I wonder if they were created because of my low vision and how being this way makes me feel, or did my memories of my childhood play a part of it.

Looking at these pictures reminded me of all these past thoughts, feelings and experiences I have gone through. It cannot be narrowed down to just one element. The empty buildings can be a recreation of the dark dirt cellar I once played in as a child.

My empty and dirty playhouse under the house was yet so serene and secure. But yet the building could represent a loss of something, my vision.

The back alleys could be representing me as a traveller, or a stillness of something forgotten. Could the Saskatchewan prairies, the never-ending sky and land, be how I see my self and my life? Or could these spaces represent a respectfulness of a natural threshold: me as the guest and the space/place as the host, a gift shared by both. With the space/place offering up its elegant beauty and I am accepting the offering by photographing it. One thing is certain all these representations and reflections of my photographs, there is a mood present, within all the images.

Retro-Activating

**To ask what has taken place retroactively is to ask how one can better understand what conclusions might be valuable in future encounters.
(Horner, 1998, p. 30)**

After hanging my photographs and leaving the exhibition space to allow myself some distancing time, I return just before the doors are opened to the public. I look at the work, and I do not see the same pictures I saw in the darkroom when I was developing them. What the images have become are like pictures in a book. The experience that occurred in the space or place during the photography session is at once, a fleeting memory.

What I do experience is a new journey starting. Being more critical about the image, I analyse it and find myself experiencing and creating a new work of art. I think about what the new work will be and where will it take me. Then the public arrives. Again I am back to a inner imaging, but this time more superficial by explaining and talking about the experience of 'Why?' and 'What?' Here I am questioned, judged and interrogated, but in a respectful manner. This step is needed for me to complete the journey and move on to another body of work. I have experienced the blissful feeling of sharing my work with others, the same way the space and/or place was shared with me.

Only after the artist has surrendered his work to the public viewing can the work begin to be judged on its own merits—become capable of responding to our queries, of contradicting our first impressions—and acquire the force to modify our way of thinking or feeling within a relationship that retains the essential features of a host-guest relationship.

(Jager, 1997, p. 224)

(MY)STORY

A (Re)Telling Of A Pedagogical Journey

Standing in a studio at the Saidye Bronfman Centre, I am here to teach a workshop on self-portraits to a group of teenagers. Watching them create their images by looking into a mirror, which is in front of them, and then back to the paper. I was thrown back to the memories of when I had to retrain myself how to see.

It was the end of summer and becoming my favourite time of year, fall, but this time I was watching the fall days pass me by, from the inside of my house, too afraid to venture outside, for fear of what I might experience. I had just returned from the hospital after an eye operation. My doctor called it a multi-ocular implant, I felt like it was an intrusion and a violation of my life. This latest surgery had stolen most of my eyesight, only leaving me with 20% of my vision. Days passed, it seemed like, and I was withering away.

Then a friendly neighbour dropped by to take me for a walk. I became extremely excited. This was a big ordeal. I felt like a puppy being taken to the park after being cooped up all day in an apartment. Off we went arm and arm, me with my sunglasses on. Even though it was night the streetlights were much too harsh for my eyes to take. As we walked down the street I stopped abruptly, and started to push him and me off the sidewalk. Trying to stop me I screamed and said, "there is a big hole and if we don't move then I am going to fall into it." He laughed. I did not find this humorous. "A

shadow," he explained to me. I felt devastated repeating continuously to myself, "only a shadow" and remembering the empty buildings that I once photographed, and how the shadows had beckoned me. Shivers ran down my spine and I started to shake, feeling insecure and afraid. I felt no peace come from these places anymore, too afraid to venture into them fearful what might be waiting for me, if I were to do so. To me the walk had ended even though we were only two blocks away from where I lived. I needed to be alone in my flat, for I felt I was alone in spirit. As I walked through the door a peace came over me. I was home. The only space I felt safe in. Sitting on my bed and wondering about the experience, I found myself being flooded with memories of a time I use to walk around the city alone and venture into spaces, allowing myself to be consumed by the experience. "No more," I thought. My life as a photographer had come to a final stop.

As an artist I felt my life was over, but as an educator I found myself being bound and determined to start retraining myself within my daily life. Not yet understanding that art is also a tool for education.

Infancy was the first stage, and teaching myself how to eat properly was a lot harder than I expected. My fingers were the first tools I used; although highly embarrassing in restaurants, it was the only way I could get food into my mouth. It is funny how much is taken for granted until it is actually taken away. Being able to put food into my mouth with utensils was more difficult than I imaged. Using a fork and knife was impossible. The food either ended up on the floor or I would poke my face with the fork, which of

course had no food on it. I finally moved from my fingers to a spoon, I now understood the developmental process of a child.

Getting dressed was no easy task either, not knowing whether my clothes matched or even if they were on properly. I remember sitting at a friend's place after coming from a dinner party, and discovering that my shirt was inside out. I did not know this until she finally told me, and no one had said anything to me while I was at the party. Having a bit of a fashion crisis, I longed for the days when all I wore was black. Then I wouldn't have to worry about colour co-ordination, dirt or if it was 'in side out'. So I reverted to having an extremely tiny wardrobe that consisted of a scarf which I wore as a skirt, and a T-shirt. I wore these two pieces of clothing for a month before I decided to venture into something different. Still having some vanity left I found myself asking friends to help me match my clothes. I became a toy for them. Their own personal dress-up doll. They would dress me in a colourful array of clothes, that they wouldn't be caught dead in. All different shades of yellows, reds, blues greens and even orange, I felt like I was a colour chart. But the funny thing was that I looked great in all these colours; compliments came from everyone. People would say to me, "God only you could pull those colours off and look good in them."

Maybe it was this situation that helped me bring colour into my drawings and paintings. I would only use black charcoal, paint or ink when I drew or painted, but after this experience I now used a mixture of colours. Even though I can not always identify what

colour I am using I don't let it bother me. I just pick a variety of colours and change them continuously as I am drawing or painting an image, and it seems to work.

Getting a secure footing in my apartment was not easy. Using my legs as a cane, I was covered in bruises from bumping into things I could not see. I started to hate the place I was living in; there were so many obstacles to figure out and my body was full of proof. Everyday my roommate, who had lived in this place for seventeen years, would say: "Boy! Marg you will know this place better than me, and you have only been here for three months." I would laugh, but she was right. Every nook and cranny became transfixed in my memory, and after a while I found these obstacles preparing me for the outside world. For the world is no easy place to discover. And having a photographic memory proved to be extremely beneficial as well.

After figuring out where things were positioned in my apartment it was time to take a journey into the environment that surrounded me, and besides I was feeling a bit claustrophobic.

Deciding on a two block radius and working up from this, I thought I could handle. Leaving my apartment for the second time went a lot better than expected, and getting to know my environment by using the buildings as my guide helped me to venture even further. My map was not on a piece of paper, it surrounded me. I walked the same route everyday until I had it memorised. I knew every piece of unlevelled sidewalk, for I had tripped over it many times, and every building was embedded in my mind. I felt like I had

travelled to an unfamiliar place and was exploring it for the first time; this place was Montreal and I was becoming re-acquainted with it.

The buildings situated me in space, and maybe this was why I always loved to photograph architecture, and just maybe getting to know the buildings when I could see them I was preparing myself for when I needed them as a guide. Remembering what the buildings used to look like played a big role in how I saw the space/place now. Since I couldn't see it clearly anymore, I found myself relying on the memory of what it used to look like or what it could look like. It became more like a fantasy, a reconstruction of what it really was. Keeping myself in the past and yet in the future at the same time, has allowed me to recreate my own existing world. Placing myself in it now and always bringing it back to the memory of being there before, and thinking of what it could actually look like, created a completely new image for me. It is through this imagery that I have constructed a world for myself.

This verbal imagery of the blind has all the fascination of an Alice-in-Wonderland world, where everything is strange yet recognisable and true, and sometimes no less beautiful.

(Trevor-Roper, 1988, p. 168)

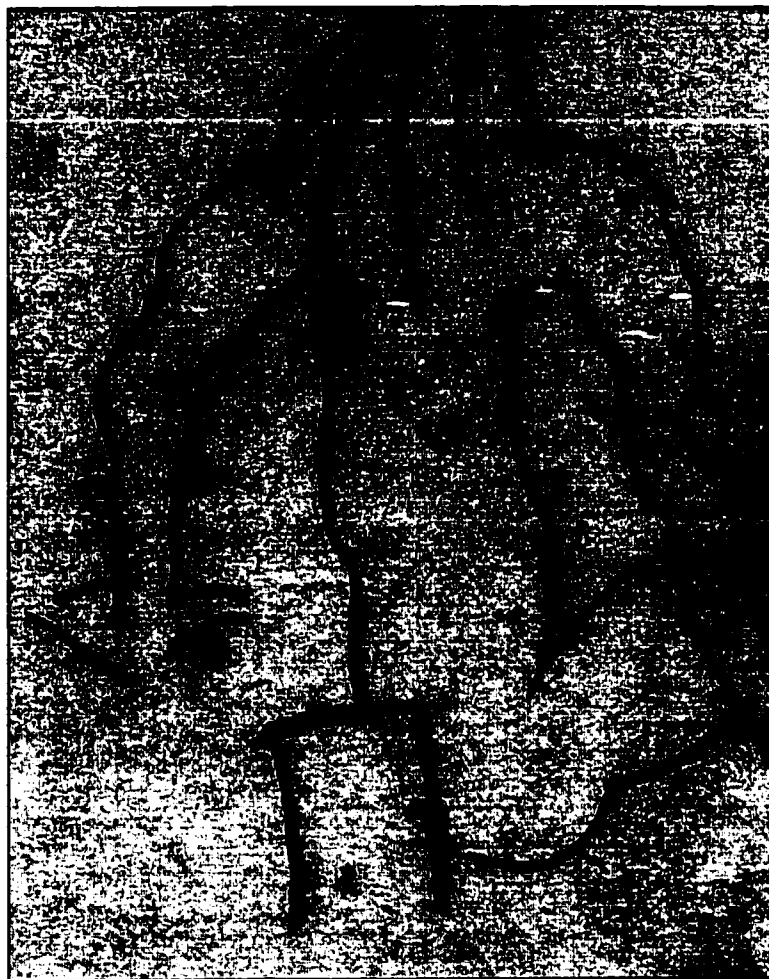
*Remembering and verbalising my appreciation of what I was seeing of the city, I recall a statement that was said to me by another photographer friend, "Would I have to lose my eye sight to appreciate what I see." I felt horrified at this remark and understood it as well. For it seems that in order to appreciate things one must encounter a loss of something, otherwise life is taken for granted. **"Being is something we take so***

completely for granted that it seems unnecessary to spend a minute, much less a lifetime, reviewing it." (Evernden, 1993, p. 60)

As I continued on my journey trying to understand my new existence, I found myself aching to pick up a pen and paper and start drawing, but I still did not have the confidence for this. Looking at art books and trying to figure out where I stood in my life as a sighted artist, I found myself thinking back to my painting class. My professor had told me about great artists who were also visually impaired. I was also told Monet's style of painting derived from his impaired vision. This gave me the encouragement I needed to try drawing. My roommate decided to take me to a drawing studio, the nude. I was intimidated by the entire experience. For one thing I couldn't see a thing from sitting at the tables and the lights were so bright I needed to keep my sunglasses on. I was taken by the hand and put on a chair about five inches from the model, and the lights were turned off so I could remove my glasses. Here I sat in a dimly lit room trying to draw the nude. I could smell her essence and hear her breath. Although not being able to see all of her I allowed myself to fall into her breathing patterns. Through this experience I found myself allowing my hand to draw what it felt and not what it imagined drawing.

For the first time, I did not let my memory of the nude body become the main focus for my drawing and for the first time my drawings were free and full of movement - loose and gestured. When it came time for everyone to view my work, another artist stated. "This is

the proper way to draw the model; you are to be in the model's space in order to draw them correctly." And he touched my arm and said, "This is some of the best work I have ever seen you create". I felt honoured and respected as an artist.



A Body of Buildings



Solid Structures



The Hand has its own Eyes

As I continued going to these drawing sessions and training my hand and eye coordination, I soon realised that I was able to develop my remaining sight. This was my stepping stone back into photography, for if I could draw what I did not see why couldn't I photograph what I could not see.

Soon after this I decided to take the train to Hamilton and visit a potter friend. While I was there she got me working in clay. Holding the clay in my hands I was reminded of a clay workshop taught by Leah Sherman, in art education. "Just close your eyes and explore and experience the clay," she said. So I decided to follow this process, and I

found myself moulding the clay in my hands and recreating the drawings I had created during the model sessions.

By reflecting on past memories and experiences I was discovering my creative process again. During my entire stay in Hamilton, my friend continued to remind me about taking photographs. She also read me an article from the New York Times about a sighted photographer, who was famous in the late 19th century. I just laughed and told her to be patient with me. She never mentioned it again.

On the train ride back to Montreal, I found myself reflecting on the experiences of the past two months. I was looking out the window watching the landscape pass me by. How serene it looked and felt to me. As I continued watching the passing of homes, towns and farms, I realised that this was how I saw things. People used to ask me all the time, "What do you see?" I could never answer this question with words, for they never understood the concept, but I could answer it with images.

I pulled out my camera. Although this was my first time taking photographs I always carried my camera with me; I guess it was a security blanket. I started photographing the passing landscape not thinking or worrying about whether the pictures would turn out.



A See of Blur

Up until now, because I was a photographer, the camera was my eye. I realised that I could not use the camera anymore in this way, for I could not see the subject/object clearly through the lens.

When I returned to Montreal I went to the darkroom to develop the rolls of film. I realized at this point that I had a hard time recognizing what was on the negatives. Not only am I once removed but I have been twice removed. And now I am three times removed for the only time I am sure of what I photographed is when I have blown-up the negative through the enlarger. The enlarger, instead of the camera, has become my eye.



A Passing in Life

My First Photography Experience

I was fourteen when I bought my first camera. I saved my money and at the end of August I went to the camera store to look at the latest model of Nikon's. FE-2 was what the man at the counter said to me. He asked me if I wanted to see a black model or a chrome model. As I stood and thought about what model I wanted he went to the back of the store to get them. I thought all black would be stunning, but shiny chrome and I found myself remembering all the pictures I saw of men buffing the chrome on their new cars. Yes, I thought the chrome model I will get. When he returned, he pulled out the only model he had, which was chrome, and handed it to me. Holding it in my hand I felt powerful. I held it up and examined it, what a beauty. I was beaming, and full of excitement. I put the camera to my eye and looked at the store through the viewfinder.

Everything looked so crisp and clear. I circled around, still looking through the camera, and smiled, this camera was mine. I pulled out all my money, three hundred dollars and handed it to the man at the store. With the purchase of the camera and lens he gave me one roll of film. I took the camera home and went to my room. I sat on the bed and read the camera book trying to figure out how to load the film. With a little help from my brother-in-law I had loaded the film and was on my way to taking pictures. I left the house and went to the river. I didn't know what I was going to photograph so I just put the camera to my eye and started shooting. Looking through the viewfinder made the world seem so different.. I continuously would put the camera to my eye and then remove it, making sure that I was seeing the same thing, even though sometimes it looked so different. I noticed all the details and everything looked sharper through the camera. I felt like I had two visions. It didn't take me long to finish the roll of film.

Relevance To Art Education

Through the use of storytelling, one is capable of understanding their past memories and experiences; telling (my)story, has enabled me to understand myself as an artist and an educator. Creating studio art through stories of life experiences gives meaning not only to the art piece, but to the creator as well. As an educator my responsibility is to "give students their possibilities in a world" (McGuire, 1995, p. 66). 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 (Jager, 1997).

Zurmuehlen (1990), suggests that 'studio art' is created from our outer-image experience which in-turn is presented through an inner-image and then produced back into an outer-image, as art. This inner and outer process is the exploring and recalling of our memories and early experiences: through this process we create art.

Remembering A Teaching Experience

I taught a bookmaking project to a group of students for them to create their own sketchbook. When the project was finished they all wanted to show their books, and talk about them. Each part of the sketchbook was filled with collages, drawings, and paintings that represented their life experiences, which were extremely powerful. When the students were ready to display their books, I was astonished to hear all the stories that came from the pictures. Some students created an origami book and recalled their experiences of when they were taught how to do it. Other students shared similar experiences, where they lived, about their families, and what they felt was important to them. All the students were able, in one way or another, to relate to the story and create a bond. I even found myself remembering the experiences I had when I was that age.

As an educator I have a responsibility to tell a story of my own and to be as Madeline Grumet suggests, 'The reader as well as the writer of it.' The story of my educating students and my being educated by them. In order for me to be able to handover to students their possibilities in the world.

(Thunder-McGuire, 1995, p. 66)

To synthesize these two elements 'creative process' and 'life experience's is, in itself, learning and educational. To separate them means that art and life become meaningless, therefore, leaving no room for growth. "When as teachers we continue to produce our

own art, we link ourselves to our students in ways that mere knowledge of theories of creativity cannot produce.” (Thompson, 1986, p. 47)

My creative process, through Horner’s paradigm, and (my)story, the telling of a narrative journey, were both needed for examination. Pursuing this quest gave me an understanding, for myself, as an artist. Being able to understand what position I take, while I create, enables me to comprehend the aspects of my teaching.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bachelard, Gaston. (1969). The Poetics of Space. (Mari Jolas, Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press.

Buttimer, Anne, & Seaman, David. (1980). The Human Experience of Space and Place. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Carter, Erica, & Donald, James. & Squires, Judith. (1993). Space & Place: Theories of Identity and Location. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Dewey, John. (1958). Art as Experience. New York: Capricorn Books.

Evernden, Neil. (1985). The Natural Alien. Toronto: Toronto Press.

Grant, Donald (1983, December 12). No quitter: Blind artist throws all his energy into teaching. Globe and Mail [Toronto], p. 14.

Herival, Antoinette. (1997). A voyage between tide and time: Creating research in the studio. Canadian Review of Art Education, 23 (2), 55-73.

Hoogland, Cornelia. (1996). The Geography of Consciousness: The Dutch immigrants' daughter as artist. Journal of the Canadian Society for Education Through Art, 27 (2), 14-21.

Horner, Stanley. (1989). 2C & Not 2B: That is Not a Question. Unpublished manuscript. Concordia University, Montreal.

Horner, Stanely. (1998). Basic Paradigm II: Practice: inner and outer imaging. Unpublished manuscript. Concordia University, Montreal.

Jager, Bernd. (1987). Imagination and Inhabitation: From Nietzsche via Heidegger to Fried. Imagination and Phenomenological Psychology. Duquesne: University Press.

Jager, Bernd. (1997). Concerning the Festive and the Mundane. Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 28 (2), 196-234.

Jager, Bernd. (1998). Human Subjectivity and the Law of the Threshold. Phenomenological Inquiry in Psychology: Existential and Transpersonal Dimensions. New York: Plenum Press.

Martinez, Annick. & Thiboutot, Christian. (1999). *Gaston Bachelard and Phenomenology: Outline of a theory of the imagination*. Universite du Quebec a Montreal. Departement de psychologie. Translated by David Jager.

McGuire, Steve. Thunder. (1999). *Completing Images That Are Demanding*. Concordia University. Montreal.

McGuire, Steve. (Thunder). (1995). *Narrative Interpretation: Personal and Collective storytelling*. M. Zurmuehlen (ed.), Working Paper in Art Education. University of Iowa. Iowa city, Iowa. p.65-68.

Rolph, Edward. (1976). Place and Placelessness. London: Pion Limited.

Rotenberg, Gary. (1993) The Cultural Meaning of Urban Space. Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing.

Thompson, Katherine. (1986). *Teachers As Artists*. Art Education. 39 (6). 47-48.

Trevor-Roper, Patrick. (1988). The World Through Blunted Sight. Allen Lane: London. Pinguin Press.

Truitt, Anne. (1982). Daybook: The Journal of an Artist. New York: Pantheon.

Zurmuehlen, Marilyn. (1981). *How Art Gives Meaning to Experiences*. Art Education. 34 (4). 24-26.

Zurmuehlen, Marilyn. (1986). *Reflecting On The Ordinary: Interpretation as Transformation of Experiences*. Art Education. 39 (6). 33-36.

Zurmuehlen, Marilyn. (1990). Studio Art: Praxis, Symbols, Presence. Reston, Virginia: National Art Education Association.

IN(TO) SILENCE

Artist's Statement

Returning to the Saskatchewan prairie after a long absence, I was stunned to see that it embodied many elements that have influenced my visual work. The beauty of the landscape relies on the dialogue of the sky and prairie, two flat and overwhelming planes that evoke a sense of vastness, transcendent isolation, and silence. Punctuated with the flat, utilitarian architecture of railroads and agriculture, a formal still life is achieved on a large scale

This project began with my recognition that the architecture of the prairie was similar to what I had attempted to capture in my pictures of Montreal back alleys and abandoned buildings. While shooting these images I noticed I was moving away from crowds and into isolated areas, focusing on those private moments of silent contemplation when I might pause to look at something briefly during a hectic day. These series of images are linked by their evocation of a space that is transcendent in its simplicity and silent focus. They also focus on ordinary visual landmarks that become interesting when witnessed apart from their ordinary daily function, when they are viewed as compositional challenges.

I found the parallels between the Prairie and Montreal architecture were interesting to the diverse population of Montreal. By bringing the stark compositional lines of the prairie to my work in Montreal I lend a fresh perspective to the city by focusing on its moments of silent emphasis

EXHIBITION
IN(TO)SILENCE

