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**Children's Perceptions of Their Personal Collections in Relation to
Their Art Museum Experiences.**

Jeanette Klein Ritchie

**A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art Education**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts at
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ABSTRACT

Children's Perceptions of Their Personal Collections in Relation to Their Art Museum Experiences.

Jeanette Klein Ritchie

This study uses a particular orientation of Qualitative Research, referred to as action research or teacher-as-researcher, to investigate the potential of children's experiences of collecting and arranging their own collections as a link to response to objects in an art museum. A series of activities and interviews were conducted, using a constructivist approach grounded in Gardner's (1995) theory of Multiple Intelligences. Horner's (1986a) paradigm of orientations to museum experiences was used to structure the activities. This study has also been guided by Wetzl-Fairchild's (1995) investigation into the aesthetic response of schoolchildren. Issues arose involving the children's lack of a coherent vocabulary with which to discuss and to describe their art experiences. The findings were examined in the light of children's perception of what is valued and legitimated in the adult/artworld in relation to their own world. One of the most significant findings was the need of the children to be able to play with and to handle the objects in their collections. Information useful to classroom teachers planning field trips to art museums was also discussed.

Dedication

With heartfelt thanks to my mother, Dorothea, who awakened in me a lifelong quest for knowledge, and to my guides and mentors, Professor Andrea Wetzl-Fairchild, Professor Cathy Mullen, Professor Emeritus Leah Sherman, and Jackie Wilson, and also to my two children, René and Kerri, who have consistently and joyfully supported me.

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CHAPTER 1

The Context of Research

Introduction

A. Background.

Making and doing, building and pretending; these are my fondest and clearest memories of childhood. I was born on a temperate plateau in Southern Africa. Encouraged by European parents, both from creative families, my younger brother and I would collect clay from a nearby stream and fashion it into animals, people, structures, and containers. We would use found materials gathered in the surrounding veldt to embellish our creations. These same activities continued in and out of school.

The headmaster, or principal, during my elementary school years was the noted anthropologist, Dr. Peter Becker, an expert on Bantu history, languages, customs, and beliefs. He was known as Vul'indlela – the Opener of the Road. He believed that children learned best by being involved in the process of discovering and acquiring knowledge and skills. Under his leadership we employed all our senses in the “play-full” work of learning. Under Dr. Peter Becker our products, such as a maquette of a Zulu village, were the culmination of our learning. We drew, we painted, we constructed, we sewed, we knitted, we wove, we wrote, we sang in English, Afrikaans, and Zulu, and we played indoor and outdoor games. This was also the only time in my education that I experienced authentic contact with the diversity of South Africa’s ethnic cultures.

Politics intervened in the form of Apartheid. Schools were separated according to language into Afrikaans and English medium sections. Further draconian measures by the

Nationalist government, instead of embracing multiculturalism, divided the population into a dozen or more distinct racial groupings such as White, Black, Coloured, Asiatic, Malay, etc. Members of different racial groups were forbidden to attend the same schools, live in the same areas, or consort together in any way. Thus this kind of inspirational, experiential learning replete with multicultural and multisensory adventures and creative art events was not to occur again in my school life until some half a dozen years later.

I was then most fortunate to become the recipient of an American Field Service (AFS) Scholarship at seventeen years of age. The AFS is an organization devoted to the promotion of world peace through individuals' experiences of other cultures - a sort of junior ambassadorship. I attended my senior year at a comprehensive American high school in Indianapolis. Here I was to experience the efficacy of "hands-on" learning or rather a type of apprenticeship in several life skills and career options. In an "apprenticeship" one acquires skills under the tutelage of an adult expert generally in the context of producing goods and services in a real life situation. The products we realized under the apprenticeship system, such as programmes and tickets for concerts, advertising spots on the school radio broadcasts, and the school yearbook, fulfilled a demand in the marketplace. Thus the most active part of a student's life was the after school activities and clubs sponsored by interested teachers. I participated in the production of the school newspaper and the yearbook. Through the Art Club I assisted in the designing of tickets and programmes for school events. I performed in a musical, written, choreographed, and produced by the students. I sang in the choir and the Glee

Club which performed at all sports events. I realized then that I wanted to be able to facilitate learning experiences of this kind for students of ALL ages.

On my return to South Africa at eighteen years of age, in order to accomplish this ambition, I returned to my early passion for the visual arts. I transferred my studies from the Science Department to the Fine Arts Department at the University of the Witwatersrand. My first teaching post after I had obtained a B.A. in Theory and Practice of Art, and an Honour's degree in History of Art and Architecture, was at the University of the Witwatersrand teaching courses on the history of art and architecture. As well as the task of teaching the chronological history of Western Art to three hundred first year students, I was asked to teach a course for the art education students on critiquing contemporary South African Art. This was especially significant, for South African art was just beginning to receive recognition as a form of expression different from the European art styles and movements. There was a paucity of documentation available to students because the interest in a "national" style of art was relatively recent.

I began organizing visits to local museums and galleries to compensate for the lack of relevant texts. I soon discovered that visiting local museums and galleries where the students could view original works of art was a more powerful context for learning about art than was the routine slide show in a darkened auditorium. Although at the time, I had neither the theoretical framework nor the grounding in pedagogical theory in my teaching, I was promoting the values inherent in a teaching practice made transparent to the students. I was sharing the task of acquiring knowledge, allowing for diversity in response, and facilitating dialogue in all areas and stages of the learning process.

Together we were experiencing as closely as possible the creative process of curriculum building.

Immigration to Canada and personal circumstances led to a slight change in the orientation of my teaching and studying. I returned to school at the end of the 1980s to fulfil a desire to be actively involved once again in the field of art education. I became involved in Early Childhood Education and alternative sites for learning. Praxis began to find support and enrichment in current theoretical contexts and issues, such as the need to teach for diversity in a pluralistic society and the current trend toward interdisciplinary and integrated teaching. I worked part-time as an art specialist, a resource teacher, and an in-school daycare coordinator in several local schools. I also became a part-time lecturer in the Art Education Department of a university.

While preparing a course on the teaching of visual art history in elementary and high schools, I read an article by George Szekely, an established artist and widely published art educator, who emphasizes the importance of play and popular culture in artistic development. In *Discovery experiences in art history for young children*, Szekely (1991) advocated that children's love for art history could be encouraged through discovering and collecting beautiful old objects, old toys, popular collectibles, and found objects. This evoked memories of how some of my current, young students would shyly or excitedly offer to share with me the special object/s carried in a pocket or housed in a lunch box. These were generally objects which the more conservative teacher bans from the classroom as a result of their potential for distraction. But what about the potential for a meaningful learning experience? This question began to show promise for fruitful research, especially as I was involved in a course on museum education.

I decided to investigate whether a child's experience with a personal collection of objects could be used to create a meaningful learning experience at an art museum. "Meaningful" in that the child would be aided in making natural connections between her world and the art world. In other words, the child might recognize similarities in the enterprise of collecting, arranging, displaying, and storing objects. I would start from where the child is situated in relation to the knowledge to be acquired. What does the child already know about the theme or subject matter? How can the educator add to this knowledge in a manner relevant to the child's reality? In other words, how could the educator facilitate a transfer of knowledge from the child's world to knowledge regarding the art world?

B. Practical Justification

In the Quebec Curriculum Guide for the Visual Arts (Ministère de L'Éducation, 1987), "response" to their own works of art, to those of their peers, and also to the works of art of past and contemporary artists, is one of a triad of global objectives which defines the art education requirements for elementary and high school students. A popular means of facilitating the latter part of these requirements is for the teacher to organize a visit to an art museum, gallery, or cultural centre where students can view original art objects.

One such event, which I recall, was a visit to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), with a group of special needs students aged 8 to 13 years, which I had organized during my internship as an art educator. It became apparent that the art objects which were three-dimensional, rather than two-dimensional works, were more accessible to my students for several reasons. The students had great difficulty in isolating

individual paintings from the melee “collaged” onto the walls, whereas sculptural forms could be walked around. Their shapes, textures, and colours were more obvious, less subtle and illusionary, easier to read and to describe. In other words, for the students, their experience with three-dimensional forms was more concrete and more closely associated with the real world of objects. For example, a maquette of the recent extension to the museum held their attention and interest for the longest time. They were able to comment on the layout of the streets, position of cars. They even recognized the parking place of the bus in which they had made the journey. They also attempted to locate their position from amongst the various levels and halls of the structure. They had recently made a tour of their school building in order to map the various rooms and were pleased to be able to utilize this knowledge in the current context. I learned from this experience that a teacher needs to plan carefully for different learning styles, to start from where the students are situated, and to make use of “rehearsal” activities to increase the students’ readiness skills to participate in special activities.

Studies about class field trips point to a need for research into the area of museum readiness and how best to facilitate meaningful learning in a museum setting. Kate Pontin, during her service as museum education officer for the Leicestershire Museums Service, conducted research into museum visits by school groups. The main thrust of her research was to discover whether the teachers’ aims were achieved and how much the students gained educationally and socially. One of her conclusions was that poorly prepared visits had low impact on students. Preparation was needed on the part of the museum staff in collaboration with the teachers. (Pontin, 1995).

On another occasion, during a visit to the McCord Museum of Canadian history, I once again experienced the effects of a poorly planned visit. I was able to act as an interested observer on a field trip organized by the grade four classroom teacher. Alongside the imported porcelain pieces belonging to the McCord family were displayed woven baskets used by the local Aboriginal cultures of that time. However, the young students paid scant attention to this significant piece of information offered by the docent. The inclusion of previously marginalized cultures and groups in the history of their city had little or no impact on them, perhaps because of their own lack of experience in responding to art objects. They wandered aimlessly until one young boy discovered what appeared to be a game of dominoes in the collection of Inuit artifacts. This aroused great excitement amongst his friends who gathered round to “check it out”. They had found an artifact which they could relate to their own popular culture. Again it occurred to me that children’s own found objects and/or collections of readymades - in this instance, game boards and gaming pieces - could be used as a link to inform visits to museums and to rehearse response to artifacts from diverse cultures.

This latter experience also served to underline for me the necessity for designing a curriculum with cross cultural and interdisciplinary connections. A further consideration was the fact that Montreal is a culturally pluralistic society and classrooms in most schools now reflect this culturally diverse population. David Guip (1993), Professor of Art and Director of Art Education in the Department of Art, University of Toledo at the Toledo Museum of Art, pointed out that:

understanding cross cultural issues has become one of the most important concepts to be explored within the framework of contemporary culture. One has

only to look at recent topics and presentations at national and regional educational conferences to become aware that cross cultural themes are the mainstream of current educational thought...Educators are faced with more diverse populations in schools, and there is a greater need for children and adults to understand important cultural components of western and nonwestern traditions. (p. 28)

Since it has become apparent to educators that one cannot create a curriculum or plan a learning/teaching event without including cross cultural components and a pluralistic approach, alliances between schools and museums have been burgeoning. Museums are able to provide rich resources at every level. Visual images and art objects are powerful tools for the creation of dialogue between cultures of origin and adopted cultures. Art educators are in a significant position to promote and to facilitate this dialogue. One of the most useful areas of study allowing for sensitivity to diverse cultures and the contextualizing of their "artworks" is through aesthetic response. Compared with the classroom, museums - and especially art museums - contain rich resources of images and artifacts. So once again I returned to the notion of the benefits of investigating children's propensity for collecting objects as a way of providing a bridge or link to the study of objects from different times and different cultures displayed in art museums.

C. Research Question

As I reflected on the significance of the two museum experiences mentioned above and correlated them with some of my own childhood learning experiences in a culturally rich and diverse environment, questions began to arise which were relevant to my current teaching practice. What experiences do children have of their own personal

collections of objects and readymades which might be useful in preparing them for a visit to an art museum which functions as a repository for artifacts and art objects? Would the children be able to make connections between their individual world and the collective world of art? How could the children be empowered by the art educator to facilitate this endeavour? Could the children become collaborators in designing a meaningful visit to an art museum? The primary research question thus became: **how could children's experiences of collecting and of arranging their own personal collections be used to provide a link or bridge to facilitate responses to objects in art museums?**

In order to undertake this research, I consulted literature in several related fields. I first investigated general theories on current educational practices, which were further elaborated by theories relevant to art education and to museum education. Furthermore, I found it was necessary to include approaches which would facilitate response activities in an art museum and which would accommodate a diverse population of children. Finally, I consulted information on collections and object relations.

Thus in chapter 2, I have reviewed some of the current education theories pertaining to learning and their application to learning in specific sites such as art museums. Thereafter, I have made mention of information found on collecting of objects and object relations pertaining to young children. I have also included a brief look at inquiry methods to assist children in responding to art objects. In chapter 3, I have described the design of the research. Chapter 4 contains the pilot project and a description of the subsequent modifications to the original design. In chapter 5, I have recorded the narratives of the students who participated in the research activities. Finally, chapter 6

incorporates an analysis of the completed research and the conclusions derived from the research project with recommendations for facilitating art museum visits for children.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

In section A, I will first examine some current education theories on the acquisition of knowledge in school settings. Then in section B, I will look at these theories in relation to museum settings and more specifically, art museums. This will lead to a review of theories on aesthetic response in section C. In section D, I will examine some of the research on collecting and object relations. Finally, in section E, I will summarize the readings in relation to my research question and research design.

A. Theories of learning

Howard Gardner, a cognitive psychologist, Professor at Harvard Graduate School of Education, co-director of Harvard's Project Zero, and researcher at the Boston Veteran's Administration Medical Centre, has developed a theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI theory) which has gained widespread recognition in educational circles. In *Frames of Mind*, Gardner (1983) explains the evolution and the results of his research. He theorizes that there are several discrete and different intelligences. This theory, which is grounded in the developmental theories pioneered by Piaget and Erikson, has formed the basic framework for all Gardner's investigations, and has contributed greatly to the knowledge of different teaching and learning styles and to the practice of teaching for diversity.

The core components of these intelligences (now eight in number), as described by Gardner (1995), are listed hereunder:

1. **Musical** – the ability to produce and recognize simple songs; play with these melodies, varying speed and rhythm.
2. **Logical mathematical** - the ability to understand the basic properties of numbers, adding or taking away; appreciate principles of cause and effect, one to one correspondence; ability to predict, as in which objects will float, sink, etc.
3. **Interpersonal** – the ability to understand other people and work effectively with them and to notice who plays with whom at school, and why.
4. **Intrapersonal** – the ability to understand things about oneself, how one is similar to, different from others; remind oneself to remember to do something; know how to soothe oneself when sad.
5. **Bodily/kinesthetic** – the ability to use the body or parts of the body (hands, feet, etc.) to solve problems, as in playing a ballgame, dancing, or making things with the hands.
6. **Linguistic** – the ability to use language to express meaning, understand others, tell a simple story; react appropriately to stories with different moods; learn new vocabulary or a second language that is used naturally.
7. **Spatial** – the ability to be able to form a mental image of large (a home) and local (a block building) spatial layouts; find one's way around a new building.
8. **Naturalist** – the ability to recognize species of plants or animals in one's environment; for example to learn the characteristics of different birds. (p. 31)

According to Gardner (1995), school learning is focused mainly on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences. This narrow, traditional stance fails to respond to the

pluralistic learning profile of the student population. Gardner advocates using the concept of multiple intelligences to establish a profile of each student's strengths and weaknesses. From this profile the teacher can extrapolate the most efficacious teaching/learning styles to accommodate the needs of the students. In order to facilitate this process, Gardner developed different approaches or orientations that could be mapped roughly onto the different intelligences. The result was the creation of openings for different styles of learning or flexible entry points into the understanding of knowledge. There are five of these openings or entry points into the understanding of knowledge, which represent a point of departure for a more pluralistic view of the intellect. The following list is a compilation from several texts (Davis & Gardner, 1993; Gardner, 1991; Kornhaber & Gardner, 1991):

1. A **narrational** entry point, where the concept is presented in the form of a story (e.g. one might ask what story seems to be depicted in an artwork).
2. A **logical-quantitative** entry point, where information is presented in the form of numerical quantities and deductive reasoning (e.g. this information is most often found on museum labels or didactic panels).
3. A **foundational** entry point which looks at the philosophical and the root meanings of concepts (e.g. one might ask why this object is considered to be a work of art).
4. An **aesthetic** entry point emphasizes the sensory or surface features of experiences (e.g. one of the most appropriate responses in art museums).
5. An **experiential** entry point which favours a hands-on approach dealing directly with the materials which constitute the concept (e.g. creative expression in the form of dramatic reenactments, artmaking, or music and movement).

Gardner cites the art museum as a contextually rich environment and an excellent site for individually centred learning where any or all of the five openings may be constituted (Davis & Gardner, 1993). Learners construct their own meaning by searching out relevant information as needed for a particular perspective or interpretation. The museum provides spaces and opportunities where authentic and different voices can flourish. Thus in the following section on museum education, it will become apparent that several museum educators have adopted Gardner's theories as guidelines.

Jerome Bruner, a cognitive psychologist, who had greatly affected the academic career of Gardner, had headed a team responsible for the creation of the curriculum of the fifth grade social science programme on the study of man. Gardner, a youthful member of this team, described the experience in glowing, evocative terms. There was a great respect for the intellectual capabilities of the child. Materials were drawn from anthropology, primatology, psychology, linguistics, and social and biological sciences. Of special significance was the ethos, the ambience engendered; children learning joyfully, teachers passionately engaged in the sharing of knowledge with children and with each other, a rich and diverse range of motivational materials, and a sophisticated, meaningful curriculum made comprehensible to young minds. (Gardner, 1989)

Thus when I encountered a new publication by Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (1996), I immediately perused it hoping to find information relevant to current theories on education. I was not disappointed. One of the tenets of Bruner's theory of education is based on the constructivist philosophy. He reiterates Nelson Goodman's phrase that

“reality is made, not found” and adds that “reality construction is the product of meaning making shaped by traditions and by a culture’s toolkit of ways of thought” (p. 19).

Constructivism is an overarching epistemological approach, favoured by, amongst others, sociologist-ethnographers, who deal with the acquisition of knowledge as dependent on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors. These factors result in multiple and competing “knowledges” which are subject to continuous revision (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Such researchers endeavour to understand the richness and complexity of the individual’s lived experiences from that individual’s perspective. The research is of necessity, mediated and coloured, by the researcher’s own background.

According to Schwandt (1994):

the world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigations is thought to be constructed by social actors. That is particular actors, in particular places, at particular times, fashion meaning out of events and phenomena through prolonged, complex processes of social interaction involving history, language, and action . (p.118)

I am using the term constructivism as Bruner (1996) does in the form of a theory of learning, or an approach to learning, wherein different symbol systems allow us to construct meaningful and multiple versions of the world. I am using a constructivist approach to build a curriculum together with my students. Judith Simpson, an assistant professor of visual arts in the School for the Arts at Boston University describes constructivism as an approach based on the notion that the individual actively builds and

adapts experiences into a world view. She also points out that current mainstream thinking in education is based on constructivist ideas which correlate with and support Gardner's research on multiple intelligences. (Simpson, 1996)

After consulting several texts (Bruner, 1996; Cason, 1998; Simpson, 1996; 1998) where constructivism is used as a teaching model, I have attempted to summarize the basic concepts of the constructivist approach as follows:

- learning is a process of knowledge construction
- the value of knowledge to the learner is found in its usefulness to real-life situations
- new knowledge needs to be built on existing knowledge (using Vygotsky's principle of "zone of proximal development")
- learning is context dependent and is different for different cultures and for different life experiences
- if knowledge is acquired in an authentic manner and in meaningful contexts, the chance of transference is improved
- the teacher is not the sole transmitter of knowledge but draws on the different aptitudes and intelligences/frames of mind of the group (see Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences)
- learners support each other and cooperate in collaborative ventures where the teacher is one of the collaborators
- reflection and insightful responses are important components of the learning process
- "works" have to be produced in order to assess the learning accomplished
- self-evaluation assists students in planning future learning strategies.

In a nutshell, constructivism is pluralistic and inclusive in nature and is uniquely able to deal with teaching for diversity. Simpson finds connections in intent with Dewey's progressive theory and the child-centred thinking of Rousseau and Froebel which, as Simpson advocates, makes the constructivist approach a sound pedagogical choice for planning learning/teaching events in art education. (Simpson, 1996)

A notion, which I had encountered often in the literature on early childhood education but had not found in the writings on multiple intelligences or constructivism, is that of the importance of play in learning. The Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC) published a position statement in 1996 with the following headline: *Young children have the right to learn through play*. I found it difficult to extract a succinct definition of the term play in the literature, but from my readings I have compiled the following list of important characteristics and concepts of learning through play (CAYC, 1996; Hardacre, 1995):

- learning through play enhances the physical, social, intellectual, and emotional development of children
- play is intrinsically motivated and pleasurable
- play enables children to problem solve in non-threatening, non-judgmental situations allowing for creative and complex responses
- multiple combinations and variations are possible
- process is more important than product
- participants are physically and actively involved in the process.

Expanding on the notion of the importance of play in education, Selma Wasserman (1992), Professor of Education at Simon Fraser University writes, “the creation of new ideas does not come from minds trained to follow doggedly what is already known. Creation comes from tinkering and playing around, from which new forms emerge” (p. 133). In fact the intriguing title of the article, *Serious play in the classroom: How messing around can win you the Nobel Prize*, implies that learning through play is important at all stages of a student’s education because it encompasses:

the development of knowledge, of a spirit of enquiry, of creativity, of conceptual understanding – all contributing to the true empowerment of children. Is it possible that serious play is, in fact, the primary vehicle through which serious learning occurs? (p. 133)

Ellen Dissanayake (1992), an art historian with an anthropological focus, relates how she had originally considered art to be a derivative of play. However, after further research she concluded that play, ritual, and art are of the same order, a special order or realm not of the ordinary. Szekely (1991) has videotaped children involved in the ritual of play. His findings are detailed in his book entitled *From Play to Art*. He describes how, as children move through the process of play, they are creating, they are continually constructing and deconstructing ephemeral artworks and avant-garde inventions; play and art are inextricably intertwined.

As I reviewed the literature on museum education, I found that the originators of children’s museums and the curators of interactive shows have realized the efficacy of combining play and art in museum-based learning. Thus in the following section on

museum education, I will endeavour to trace the way in which the concept of learning through play has been adopted and adapted by museum educators.

B. Museum Education

Historically museums have functioned as repositories for collections and they have been devoted to the conservation of these collections. With pedagogical theory currently laying great emphasis on museums as ideally suited for individualized and play-full learning experiences (Davis & Gardner, 1993; Sternberg, 1989), many museums have shifted their focus to education. New museums have been conceived with this express goal in mind (Falk & Dierking, 1992). In an interview conducted by the senior editor of *Museum News*, Michael Spock - popularly known as the father of the children's museum movement - describes the burgeoning of interactive children's museums since the establishment of the Brooklyn Children's Museum in 1899. He points out how this type of institution has wedded current educational theory, especially Gardner's MI theory, to the object-based experiences associated with museums:

All the way we saw ourselves not just as an activities center but as a real museum, and the base of that museum was collections and some kind of contact with the real three-dimensional material. (Garfield, 1993, p. 59)

In a similar vein, Stewart Cohen, Director of the Child Development Center at the University of Rhode Island, has recommended that the physical space of the museum should feature hands-on activities (for adults and children) and exploration allowing movement and experimentation. He advocates "museum settings that emphasize child-

adult inquiries, favor concrete over abstract learnings, physical over verbal interactions, experiential over conceptual understandings, and sensory over theoretical encounters". He praises the Brooklyn Children's Museum as the creation of "an alternative learning environment which provided unique opportunities for engaging families in intergenerational explorations and discovery learning expanding their sense of cultural pluralism" (Cohen, 1989, p. 24).

Szekely (1991), would probably concur with Spock and Cohen. He writes that "children's love for art history ...often comes from an interest in discovering and collecting old objects...We learn by becoming historians, curators, collectors and designers or by simply sorting through old things" (p. 44).

I realized, on reflection, that this observation would fit in well with my intention to work with children and their collections as a link to responding to objects in an art museum. However, I needed a framework on which to base my research activities with the children, both in and out of the museum. How could working with their own collections of objects prepare them to function successfully in the museum space?

In an article, *The Museum as staging ground for symbolic action*, Sheldon Annis (1980), a social geographer, describes the museum as a space where objects are re-contextualized and take on new meanings. Viewers are enabled to create their own meanings through interaction with the space housing the objects. These objects acquire the significance of symbols as the visitor or viewer assigns personal meanings to them. The object-symbols are able to support or convey a multiplicity of interpretations and illuminations.

Annis uses the analogy of a theatrical production, where the museum space is the “staging ground”, the curator is the “stage designer”, and the visitor is the “player”. Even though the curator/designer might have planned the script to play out chronologically or thematically the visitor is free to choreograph her own movement through the space. As a way of mapping the action of the visitor’s journey and the synchronous engagement with the object-symbols in the museum space, Annis proposes three levels of perception. These three levels he names “spaces” – **dream space**, **pragmatic space**, and **cognitive space**. They can be accessed simultaneously.

In relation to previous research cited on the importance of play, I found the sequence in which these levels of perception, or three spaces, are presented to be quite significant. The **dream space** is where the viewer’s sub-rational consciousness enters into a dialogue with the object-symbols. A fanciful playing with memories, visual puns, dreams, wishes, emotions occur in random sequence and speed as the viewer pauses, lingers, or moves on. It is a highly personal, idiosyncratic encounter. The **pragmatic space** is the level at which the physical action occurs. The activity in the physical space can satisfy different needs and different roles. The visitors/players “can seek out quiet/noisy, filled/empty, child/adult, or serious/frivolous spaces” (p.8). The journey is self-directed. Annis chooses to describe the **cognitive space** last in the trilogy. However, this is where most curators have tended to focus the educational effort. Factual information is displayed on labels and on didactic panels. Objects are often arranged according to some taxonomy or hierarchical principles. According to Annis, visitors are nonetheless able to subvert the cognitive order to suit their own background and interests.

Even though Annis does not use the term “play” in the sense in which I have characterized it above as regards learning through play, he implies a playful attitude. Some of the descriptors used match those of learning through play. He describes a visit to a museum as informal and generally enjoyable. The object-symbols allow for multiple interpretations. “Museums, like the objects in them, do not have meaning. Rather, they accept, reflect, and give back the meaning brought to them” (p. 8). This implies a sort of cognitive and affective play of the intellect. There is no actual physical interaction with the object-symbols which remain untouchable; the interaction is with the physical space of the museum where the viewers choose their own pathways.

Patterson Williams (1984), a museum educator, designed an instructional theory to help museum visitors have “personally significant experiences with museum objects” (p. 24). She developed the theory over a period of ten years using museum teachers, curatorial staff, art historians, critics, and artists as subjects in her research. The study revealed that viewers “contemplate” objects in a museum. In order to teach the skill of contemplation, Patterson’s instructional theory proposed that the act of contemplation could be broken up into four separate sequential clusters of mental activities and experiences. These contributed to the skill of contemplating an art object and to the ability of having a meaningful experience with museum objects. The four clusters are named looking, reacting, considering cultural context, and judging.

In the first cluster (looking) viewers are taught visual perception by means of perception games. The second cluster (reacting) relates to the dream space as proposed by Annis (1986). Viewers respond with idiosyncratic memories and personal anecdotes which the teacher augments and enriches with some knowledge about the object being

contemplated. The third cluster (considering cultural context) requires a willing audience open to absorbing information, either by means of a lecture or written labels. It is interesting to note that, so far, the main purveyor of knowledge, is the teacher who is considered an expert in the field whilst the viewers are cast in the role of students.

The final cluster of activities involves judging the museum object. Here the viewers are encouraged – after inquiry and deliberation – to make their own judgements about the merits of the museum objects. Once again there is heavy reliance on the input and the guidance of the experts. I see this model of instructional theory as predominantly teacher-directed where the viewers are well-rehearsed players in the drama.

Stan Horner, Professor Emeritus of Art Education at Concordia University, used Annis as a theoretical basis to further elaborate on the levels of experience in a museum setting by naming four orientations of space (Horner, 1986a). These are presented in a developmental sequence that can be “recycled”, or experienced several times over, during a museum visit. The four orientations are named as follows: **dream-space, play-space, metaphoric-space, and conceptual-space.**

In the **dream-space** the viewer is encouraged to access memories, even to fantasize and to realize associations regarding different cultures, eras, and ambiances. Horner (1986a) renamed this the **dream space-time** “because the time also stretches longer or shorter than clock time when the viewer engages in an encounter with the readymade objects/images/events that were pre-set and autonomous before entry” (p. 1). The notion of time being flexible is in part due to the potential for the occurrence of an overwhelming or intense fusing with the space-time of the object/readymade viewed. Horner (1986b) makes an analogy, in developmental terms, to the early stages of infancy

when the child is one with the mother. The significance of the **dream space-time** to learning is that it preempts premature judgement and closure. It also empowers the viewer to respond idiosyncratically regardless of expertise in the field.

The second orientation Horner (1986a) proposes is the **play-space** or **deconstructive space-time**. This is the orientation where the viewer may subvert the original intent of the object/readymade through exploration of its inherent limitations and possibilities. Developmentally, Horner likens this orientation to the child's exploration of its sensory world. Implicit is the sense that some of these explorations might involve physical interaction but I did not find an explicit recommendation for physical interaction with the readymades. Rather Horner describes a more sophisticated, intellectual deconstruction of the readymades to discover the underlying process or the unique features therein. This orientation would most advantageously accommodate interactive exhibits and hands-on activities.

The third proposed orientation is the **metaphoric-space**. Developmentally, the subject/viewer and the object are sufficiently differentiated to allow for a dialogue. Time proceeds sequentially as the viewer discovers the narrative or intrinsic meaning of the object. Analogies can be made and metaphoric allusions uncovered. Meaning, according to Horner, is mediated as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

Horner (1986a) describes these first three orientations as the foundation for the fourth orientation which he names the **conceptual-space**. Here the viewer's approach is objective but with some preconceived cultural or historical frames of reference. If the first three orientations have not preceded this last one, then it is likely that premature judgement will occur and little or no new learning will take place. In developmental

terms the viewer is at the stage of being educated enough to apply a methodology in the interests of explicating and contextualising the object.

During an earlier research project undertaken for a course on museum education, I was able to see the practical benefits of an exhibition designed by a curator using Horner's paradigm of museum experience. The exhibition was an adjunct to the *Living in Style: Fine Furniture in Victorian Quebec* (1993) show at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts called, *Touch Wood*. It was installed in the Educational Carrefour and, as the name implies, was designed to be interactive.

As I entered the space with the curator she explained that the first installation was the **dream space-time**. I discovered a large, ornately carved, richly upholstered chair with a series of hats and wigs hanging beside it and a large photo mural behind it depicting a typical cluttered Victorian parlour. On an adjacent plaque the narrative began: "Guess what! You have just inherited a wonderful Victorian chair from a long-lost relative." I immediately imagined an adventurous aunt who had travelled the world acquiring exotica which she would mail in mysterious packages to me and to her numerous, less fortunate nieces and nephews. The curator and I had a delightful time trying on the headgear and playing different roles in the imaginative narrative as we sat in or perched on the chair. I also recalled, from my childhood, tales of a magical flying chair which would fly its occupants to strange and wonderful lands.

We then moved into the **play-space** which contained nine or ten interactive sites designed to make one better acquainted with the construction of a Victorian chair – different kinds of wood to feel, fabrics and fibres to touch, richly carved molds to stroke. The curator demonstrated how to play with her favourite installation. It was a room full

of doll's house furniture in a glass case. The visitor could arrange the furniture by moving magnets attached to the bottom of the case. Activities catering to different desires and tastes allowed for absorbing physical and mental activity which provided entry into the liminal or **dream space-time** and the **deconstructive play-space**.

The stage had been set for me to discover the **intrinsic** meaning of the chair, its socio-cultural significance then and now. This orientation, the **metaphoric-space**, was occurring simultaneously with the **play-space**. The interactive experiences combined with an imaginative text led me to discover the meaning of the Victorian chair for that era and then, by extrapolation, to contemplate the meaning of furniture and furnishings in the contemporary socio-cultural setting. My mother, born in the Victorian era, had described just such a chair in her father's study within which she could hide with a book to escape discovery. In this era, children were meant to be seen and not heard. The household was organized mainly around the needs of the adults. Today, in a more child-centered egalitarian era, furniture is often chosen with the needs of the child in mind. Factors such as safety, comfort, and durability are taken into consideration.

Finally, we discussed the fourth orientation, the **conceptual-space** designed for the objective and disinterested seeking of information. There was a preponderance of didactic panels and several games based on association which required advanced reading skills to match the text with a sample of wood or fabric. I enjoyed the site where I could try the different kinds of joint systems, run my hand along the curve of the back piece of a chair, and examine a cross-section of the way in which the chairs became "overstuffed". The curator acknowledged that this was her least favourite part of the design but admitted that a significant portion of museum visitors (probably adults with a predilection for a

logical-quantitative approach) would patiently stand and read the whole text on the didactic panels.

From this practical application of Horner's (1986a) paradigm, I realized I could plan my research design most efficaciously using his paradigm of museum orientations. This model is pluralistic in that it is developmentally sequenced and empowers the viewer or visitor to construct personally meaningful engagements with the objects or exhibit. I also found that the **dream space-time** and **play-space** orientations would allow me to accommodate a variety of learning styles, to plan for multiple entry points into the acquisition of knowledge, and to design playful, experiential interactions with the material. In order to work with children and their responses to objects in their collections and in museum collections, especially collections in art museums, I also researched literature on aesthetic response and collecting.

C. Aesthetic Response

In order to be able to talk in an open and explorative manner with children about objects, without any preconceived outcomes, a couple of models of aesthetic response were consulted (Hagaman, 1990; Weltzl-Fairchild, 1991a; 1991b; 1995). Sally Hagaman (1990), a member of the art education faculty at Purdue University, proposes a model based on philosophical aesthetics (a branch of philosophy dealing with questions such as, What is art? How can we evaluate a work of art?) The benefits of philosophical aesthetics are described as follows:

1. Philosophical aesthetics serves to tie the disparate parts of the art curriculum together.

2. Philosophical aesthetics, like all philosophy, is based on wonder, the desire to find meaning in a problematic situation that may have no definitive solution, all of which characterize the young child. (pp. 22-23)

Hagaman's contention is that philosophical aesthetics should be introduced at an early age whilst children still possess a sense of wonder and are willing to express themselves freely. In order to introduce this discipline to young children, Hagaman reconstructed the discipline to be developmentally appropriate. As motivation she uses short texts which involve the children in a magical journey to other cultures. Here one can find analogies with Horner's (1986a) use of the art object/painting to generate a dream/play space into which one journeys. Thereafter the children are assisted in developing critical thinking skills by encouraging philosophical inquiry through class dialogue based upon the text. One such example is a journey where the children visit a Dogon mask carver in a sacred cave in Mali.

After a reading of the text, the children are encouraged to discuss the experience in broad terms. Hagaman (1990) then writes on the board questions formulated from the discussion which contain issues appropriate for further investigation. For example, if an object is used for something (functional), can it be art? Thereafter, Hagaman acts as a facilitator to keep the dialogue on track and to encourage the involvement of all the students. As a practical extension, students brought in functional and nonfunctional objects as a concrete way to establish criteria for form, function, and intention. Finally the students created functional or decorative masks, such as a wind-catching mask or a mask with which to scare away competing soccer players. The issues raised during these

sessions are written up by the teacher on the *Big Art Questions* list to be available for future discussion or reference. In this model the teacher is required to moderate the discussion in order to direct the endeavour toward fertile ground.

Andrea Weltzl- Fairchild (1991a; 1992), an art educator interested in museum education, investigated a number of models for aesthetic response with children including Parsons, Housen, Dufresne-Tassé, and Horner. Of particular interest is Weltzl-Fairchild's use of Horner's paradigm of phenomenological description as an instrument to elicit aesthetic response. This model structures the response sequence to avoid premature judgement and to empower the viewer. Meaning does not reside only in the art object but is created when the lived experience of the viewer is used to inform contemplation of the art object. In her study, *The Museum as medium in the aesthetic response of schoolchildren*, Weltzl-Fairchild (1995) also found that children had different aesthetic responding styles independent of age. These were named the **concrete**, the **empathetic**, and the **conceptual**. The **concrete** response style showed an ability to name objects and visual graphic elements without becoming involved in the affective stance. **Empathetic** subjects displayed quite the opposite response. They were able to access the narrative potential of the artwork and its metaphoric possibilities. The participants displaying the **conceptual** response style showed little interest in the sensual or affective qualities of the artwork but tried to find the message in the work. These different styles of response can be related to different learning styles and different forms of intelligence. Another significant conclusion of the study was that the museum/art educator played a very important role in facilitating the interchange between art object and viewer. The choice of

art objects to be viewed by the children and the type of questions asked of the children can become powerful educational tools in the hands of the museum/art educator.

Bonnie Pitman-Gelles (1981), author/compiler of *Museums, Magic, & Children*, points out that what makes museums distinctive sites of learning is that “although as educational institutions museums and schools both educate children, they are fundamentally different in what and how they teach” (p. 79). For example, the learning encountered in a museum is informal rather than formal. Visits to a museum are generally by choice not coercion. Possibly, most important for early childhood, the greatest impact comes from the objects not the written word. With this in mind, I returned again to the potential for children’s collections of found objects or readymades to facilitate the apprehension of the function of a museum as a repository for collections of objects. Thus, I looked for information on collecting, and on children’s predilection for collecting, in particular.

D. Collections and Object Relations

Although thus far there is a scarcity of research literature on children as collectors, some information was found in an article from a 1980 presentation at the Information Forum on Collecting and Learning of the National Art Education Association. Professor Ulbricht (1980), an art educator at the University of Texas at Austin, had conducted research into the art learning behaviours of people in a small midwestern town. One of the behaviours active amongst many of the subjects was that of collecting. He defined **collecting** as a whole, composed of many parts, whose quality can be determined by the number of items, the rarity of items, or the length of time over

which the collection has been maintained. For adults the “process of collecting was a purposeful act which often required research, acquisition, classification, restoration, preservation, and display just as fine art collections are processed in museums” (p. 34).

Collecting was not unique to the adult population. Children were found to have started collections at a very young age. Ulbricht (1980) described the findings of a study conducted by Burk in 1900 using 1,214 boys and girls as subjects. His findings showed that, in general, collecting activities began in early childhood, increased in strength between the sixth and the eleventh year, where it peaked, and declined thereafter. Children often acquired up to three or four different collections showing a wide variety in nature. They also displayed a developmental trend. Collections started with largely undifferentiated found materials and moved on to more specialized items. Furthermore, even though imitation was a strong factor in stimulating collecting, unlike the adult collectors, the children showed little sense of order or classification (p. 37). I found this to be an important fact to note for further study as I would be planning activities related to museum collections.

In Csikszentmihalyi’s & Rochberg-Halton’s ethnographic study, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (1981), people’s relationship to things was investigated. There was found to be a developmental sequence and a socio-cultural pattern. Children seemed to prefer objects related to action, whereas adults tended to choose objects which invited contemplation. In terms of gender, males tended to prefer objects related to action, whilst females tended to collect objects associated with nurturing and interpersonal roles. Mothers and daughters showed close relationships in their preferences but it appeared that fathers did not influence the choices of sons.

However, fathers were found to influence the kinds of memories and associations held dear by families. The finding with the most significance for the use of children's collections as a potential learning tool was that

the importance of objects of action in the early years is a reminder of the powerful need children have to internalize actions and to define limits of their selves through direct kinetic control.....objects that seem to be made for contemplation are often used in action by youth. (pp. 97,101)

Also pertinent to this investigation was a statement made by Susan Pearce (1995), president of the Museum Association of Great Britain, who contrasted the nature of art museum collections with that of personal collections. The former were seen as generally authentic, involved with connoisseurship, fine art and fine specimens, whereas the latter were generally non-authentic, comprising mass produced articles, and sometimes fakes. Moreover, personal collections often involved an element of play, "we treat our collections as play, making out our own special ground, and playing within the rules of our own devising" (p. 21).

Szekely (1998) makes deliberate use of play, in the tradition of Froebel, Montessori, and Piaget, not only with conventional art materials but more especially with an extensive array of his collections of everyday functional objects, such as clothing, antique toys, and found materials. His message to teachers is to pay attention to children's interests, inventions, ideas, and collections.

In writing about children's perceptions of their museum experiences, Nina Jensen (1994) points out a change in focus from the museum administrators' agenda to an

interest in the experience of the visitors. “As museum visitors interact with museum collections they construct personal and social meanings which are unique to their individual characteristics and cultural backgrounds” (p. 301). This change in direction has been facilitated by the acceptance of constructivist theory as a working model in the museum world. This finding is reiterated by George Hein (1995), a museum educator, who agrees that over the past several decades, museum education has concentrated on how the learner constructs meaning out of experience. The quest is to maximize the potential for learning. He maintains that by using the constructivist theory as a model, teaching and learning do not necessarily correlate. That is, what the teacher communicates in his or her teaching is not necessarily what the student subsequently attends to or encodes. However, the student or the viewer is provided with a rich and varied environment and a number of different ways to interact with the resources offered. Multiple forms of interactions and multiple interpretations are possible.

I am thus brought full circle to a recurring emphasis on constructivism as the overarching paradigm in current educational theories, art educational theories, and theories in museum education. The summary of the literature review takes note of this finding and of my intention to investigate how children’s experiences of collecting and of their own collections could be used to provide a link or bridge to facilitate responses to objects in art museums.

E. Summary

Proponents of the efficacy of the constructivist approach have been found amongst cognitive psychologists, art educators, and museum educators (Bruner, 1996;

Hein, 1995; Jensen, 1994; Simpson, 1996). This approach empowers the learner to construct her own socially and culturally relevant meaning from lived experiences. Thus this approach is pluralistic allowing for multiple voices and multiple interpretations. The teacher becomes a collaborator in the learning process and builds the curriculum together with the students.

Gardner's MI theory likewise falls under this umbrella of constructivism in that it explicates different, discrete intelligences which can be accommodated by creating openings for different learning styles. His theory has been adopted as a basis for the design of many interactive museum sites (Spock in an interview with Garfield, 1993).

As well as attending to different populations with different needs, there was an emphasis on developmentally appropriate structuring of knowledge acquisition. Several models favoured a sequential approach which encouraged active student participation. (Horner, 1986a; Weltzl-Fairchild, 1991; 1995; Williams, 1984). For viewers and students of all ages, but especially for young children, emphasis was placed on play and interaction. (Cohen, 1989; Horner, 1986a; Szekely, 1991; Wasserman, 1992). Museum spaces were offered as one of the ideal places where playful interaction and hands-on experiences could occur in an informal manner, in contrast to school education where these opportunities are less likely to be included (Davis & Gardner, 1993; Garfield, 1993; Pitman-Gelles, 1981).

I believe of particular interest for my research project were the findings by Weltzl-Fairchild (1995) that children's response to art objects was more related to idiosyncratic styles than to age. Furthermore, the role of the museum/art educator in facilitating a meaningful response to art objects is a potentially powerful educational tool.

I found that the proposal of different styles of responding correlated with the flexible entry points into knowledge as proposed by Gardner. The emphasis here is on different learning styles, different interpretations, and teaching for diversity. Finally, I found that Horner's (1986a) four orientations of experience in a museum setting would provide the closest accommodation to a constructivist approach for my research design described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3`

Research Design

My current practice as an art educator is involved with teaching young children (Kindergarten to grade 6) and also with the training of pre-service student teachers. I thus felt that it would be most useful to conduct research into the question of the potential for using children's collections as a learning tool for a richer, more replete, response to art objects in a museum. In the role of teacher-as-researcher, I endeavoured to explore whether the students would be enabled to discern relationships between their own collections and the collections that were displayed in the museum. I also wanted to provide teachers with insights and information that would facilitate visits to an art museum.

I thus had to take into consideration a research design that would allow for diversity in responses as the children constructed their realities – literally and metaphorically. I have described constructivism as an epistemological approach to learning and to research in the literature review section above. For this study, I have chosen to use a particular orientation of the constructivist model called action research for my research methods. I will use qualitative methods to collect and to interpret the data.

A. Method

The notion of “teacher-as-researcher” can be traced back to the tradition of John Dewey, a philosopher and educator, whose theory was that actual life experiences were to be used to inform educational praxis. This orientation in research is labelled variously:

action research, reflective teaching, teacher-as-researcher, teaching as inquiry, and critical praxis (May, 1993).

Action research (which is the term used in this study) is defined as “a systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change”. Its roots can be traced to the muckraking journalism of the industrial era and the Great Depression of the 1930s (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). According to Bressler (1993), it was not until the mid 1980s that “teacher knowledge” began to be valued as research. Until then, the academic research community had been the main contributors of studies and information in the field of education. Thus it is only in the last decade that teachers, as classroom experts, gained

“voice” and alternative approaches to research began to be explored: [teachers-as-researchers] describe the social realities of teaching, living in a school building within a particular community, teaching different student populations. The integration of affect and cognition is manifested in the reflection act in which teachers are engaged in describing and interpreting their realities. The deep understanding of one setting can facilitate understanding of others, not by the principle of generalization, but by transferability. (p. 33)

Action Research as a subsection of Qualitative Research is defined as “the study and enhancement of one’s own practice” (May, 1993, p115)”. May describes the characteristics of Action Research as follows:

1. It is always field based.

2. Data is obtained by keeping fieldnotes or journals, participant observation, interviewing, collecting and analysing documents and students' work and data thus obtained is more detailed and richer than that which is obtained from simple tests and surveys.
3. The primary goal is to gain a better understanding of teacher beliefs/practice and how these came to be.
4. A secondary goal is to enhance or to change practice in accordance with the outcomes of the research project (p.118).

Action research falls under the broader framework of Qualitative Research, of which the philosophical underpinning or theoretical foundation is that of hermeneutic phenomenology. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) maintain that "all qualitative researchers in some way reflect a phenomenological perspective," and that theory is more closely akin to paradigm, which they describe as "a loose collection of logically held-together assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research". Furthermore, the primary concern is *verstehen*, that is, phenomenologists "attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations" (pp. 30, 31). In allowing meaning to emerge from the participants' perspectives, different world views can be accommodated, different voices can be heard. Thus knowledge is constructed through interaction with others – the constructivist approach.

A drawback associated with this mode of inquiry is that the teacher-researcher is "inside" or, in other words, the researcher is not separate from the research. In order to mediate this apparent weakness, periodic self-monitoring in the form of self reflection on

personal biases and prejudices is necessary. This can take the form of a personal journal, field notes, or consultation with an outside observer who has been recording the events or monitoring the research.

In the field of Art Education, both Bressler (1994) and May (1993) express concern at the essentially marginalized position of art educators whose knowledge is most often private and implicit. Action Research or teacher-as-researcher is seen as an opportunity for art educators to question and to articulate “teacher knowledge” in their field. May sees Action Research as “[grounding] us viscerally in real place and time with real persons, begs our questions and possibilities, makes us responsible for what we believe and do” (p. 124).

As I had proposed to study how children’s experiences of collecting and their own personal collections could be used to provide a link or bridge to facilitate responses to objects in art museums, action research presented itself as a suitable methodology whereby I, the teacher-as-researcher could plan an intervention, monitor it in situ, collect the data, analyse and reflect upon the outcomes, and modify or adjust the teaching-learning events accordingly.

B. Emergent Curriculum

In *Creating Meaning Through Art: Teacher As Choice Maker* (1998) Simpson contends that when new knowledge is structured to provide a bridge to children’s current experience and knowledge (providing for what Vygotsky has called “the zone of proximal development”), this is an example of a constructivist approach. She also maintains that it is up to the teacher to create a constructivist atmosphere in which all

students can construct meaning. Thus the teacher may start with some ideas or topics as curriculum goals. Thereafter the teacher and students collaborate on an **emergent curriculum** which reflects the current level of the students' knowledge plus further interests and needs of the students. Therefore the curriculum is continuously in the process of change and modification. The teacher takes on the role of facilitator and orchestrates the sharing of mutual learning. "Works and works-in-progress create shared and negotiable ways of thinking in a group" and "externalization produces a record of our mental efforts" (Bruner, 1996, p.23). One of the most appropriate symbolic languages which students, especially elementary-school-age children, use to create records of mental efforts is through visual graphic language/artmaking.

At present, one of the sites where constructivism and an emergent curriculum is practiced most successfully is in the thirty-three schools of the Reggio Emilia region of Italy (Gandini, 1997, p.21). I was especially interested in their practice of documenting the educational process by means of photographs. These served to follow the path taken by the children, to help the children remember prior learning, to re-visit the ongoing project, to make connections with future activities, and to show the importance of the work accomplished. Thus I decided that photo documentation would be an asset to the research design.

C. Participants

A constructivist framework was also considered as the best fit for the participants who were solicited from a local alternative elementary school where I worked ("alternative" in that the school has a policy of inclusion, where children with special

needs are integrated into the mainstream culture. The term “special needs” covers a diverse population including children with learning difficulties, behavioural problems, special gifts, etc).

Students were chosen from grades three to six, approximately aged eight to eleven years, because studies have shown that:

4th - to 6th- graders seem to be the most successful audience for museums. Developmentally children have emerged from egocentrism to an interest in others. Pedagogically the curriculum mirrors this through inclusion of myths, geography, the history of other civilizations, and connections to their own, the point when objects and pictures in an art museum begin to have some meanings. (Newsome & Silver as cited in McNamee, 1987, p. 182)

Another important requirement was that the student should own a collection of found objects, readymades, or collectibles. After consultation with the resource teacher to find students who had shown an interest in art activities and who also had collections, four participants were found - two eleven-year-old girls, a nine-year-old boy, and an eight year old boy. These students were agreeable to working with their collections, visiting museums or galleries, and, if relevant or appropriate, producing artworks in response to their experiences. Permission was obtained from their parents and, thereafter, meetings took place sporadically whenever I (the researcher/teacher) and the participants were able to find compatible time slots.

As mentioned before, these students attended an alternative school with a mission statement of inclusion. This means that children with learning and/or behavioural

difficulties, and children who were physically challenged were “mainstreamed” into the regular classes. Thus the four participants with whom I worked can be considered a fair cross-section of this diverse population. They were not a homogenous group but a good representation of what a teacher might encounter in an average elementary school population, an extra-curricular programme, an in-school daycare, or even a group from a summer school/camp or in a museum.

D. Procedure

The response activities and interviews planned for this study were devised with the constructivist paradigm in mind - as described above. These activities and interviews would provide the data for later analysis. The point of departure was to use the children’s own collections of objects as an introduction to an understanding of museum collections. The question was whether a child’s experience with a personal collection of objects could be used to create a meaningful learning experience at an art museum. In order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experience from the world of the child to the world of art, the following activities were structured using Horner’s (1986a) developmental sequence of orientations to museums: **dream-space**, **play-space**, **metaphoric-space**, and **conceptual-space**. Sample questions were guided by Wetzl- Fairchild’s (1995) findings regarding different styles of responding.

I had planned to have each student participate in the same sequence of activities and to pose the same series of questions to each participant. In order to honour the notion of an emergent curriculum, it was expected that changes would occur to suit individual

needs. In accordance with the constructivist practice of documenting the process, cameras were available at all sessions for use by the researcher and/or the children.

E Structure and Sequence of Activities

Activity I: Horner's dream-space (rehearsal)

Objectives:

- to enable the student to feel comfortable with the teacher/interviewer
- to encourage the student to talk about his/her collection of objects
- to engage the student in active imagination.

Method:

The student was asked to imagine that s/he had been invited to show her/his collection (or part thereof) of objects in a very important museum in the city. A news reporter had asked to interview the student for a local television station. What would you like to tell the television audience about your collection? If it became necessary to encourage or to prompt the student, the following were offered as sample questions:

- How did you start your collection?
- Where do new pieces come from?
- Is there any one piece which is your favourite? What makes it your favourite?
- What can you tell me about your collection?

Photographs were taken of the collection.

Activity II: *The Magical Travelling Museum-in-a-box: the teacher's collection* (see Appendix C) – Horner's play-space (rehearsal)

Objectives:

- to orient the student to the **play-space**
- to enable the student to explore the objects in a playful manner
- to begin to introduce the student to appropriate vocabulary

Method:

The student was encouraged to play with the objects for about five to ten minutes and was then asked to arrange the objects into groupings as if in a museum setting. The student was invited to describe and to explain his/her family groupings. If it became necessary to encourage or to prompt the student, the following sample questions were used:

- Can you tell me what you were thinking about when you arranged the groups?
- I wonder how these objects are related?
- What makes them similar?
- How are they different?

Photographs were taken of the student's arrangement and then the student was asked to choose an object from the teacher's collection which interested her/him the most and the object was photographed. The student was asked the following questions in relation to the chosen object:

- I wonder what it's made of and how it was made?

- How does it feel? What words would you use to describe what you feel?
- Can you describe its shape?
- Can you describe the colour/s?
- Can you guess its age?

Activity III: Participant's choice of a museum – Horner's dream-space, play-space, and metaphoric-space

Objectives:

- to observe the participant's behaviour in an actual museum setting
- to enable the student to transfer knowledge acquired from an interior context to an exterior context

Method:

The participants were taken to a museum of their own choice and they were given free choice of how many and which exhibits to visit. Photographs were taken, if allowed by the museum.. A post-visit interview was conducted.

Activity IV: Horner's conceptual space

Objectives:

- to complete the cycle of linking the student's personal world with the art world
- to reinforce and to review the knowledge acquired

Method:

After the visits to the museum the students were asked if they would like to work with their own collections in regard to their museum experiences. Some suggestions were made as follows:

- produce a written and visual journal of the process
- research information about one or more specimens in your collection
- catalogue and build containers or display units for your collection
- create a new piece of artwork in response to your collection
- a response of the participant's own creation.

CHAPTER 4

Pilot Study

At the start of the study a few sessions were organized in the form of discussions about, and rehearsals for, the planned activities. This was to allow the participants and the teacher/researcher to become equally involved in the procedure and the progress of the study and to collaborate in honouring the notion of an emergent curriculum. From these initial meetings several problems were identified which required modifications and changes to the original plans.

One of the first problems I encountered was finding a suitable place to meet. We had chosen the school where I taught and which the students attended as the most accessible meeting place. The parents were comfortable with the location as regards safety and adequate supervision. However, we soon discovered that it was difficult to find a quiet, well-lit location, free from interruptions. So on some occasions, I met with a participant in my home and took on the responsibility of transportation. Another problem was the scheduling of meetings. All four students led busy lives, participating in a number of extra-curricula activities. There were also periods of illness which resulted in absences from school and delays in our plans. Finally, two of the students moved away from the school district, one to a more distant suburb, the other, out of province. Thus my research in some instances was hurried and the data was not as abundant or as rich as I had hoped.

At one of our first meetings, I discovered that the two girls had chosen to bring their rock/gem collections even though they had several other kinds of collections. I had brought fairly standard photographic equipment: a manual camera with an extender lens,

tripod, flash, and several polaroid cameras. The students were eager to try out all this equipment, however, the results proved disappointing. We discovered that we lacked the necessary skills to successfully photograph objects the size of a quarter or smaller. For our next session I hired a young student from the photographic department at Concordia University. She collaborated with us in producing a series of presentable photographs of the rock collections and also of one of the boys' comic book collections. When a fourth participant was found, we experimented with a throw-away camera. He was delighted at being able to handle the camera completely on his own and the photographs produced were adequate for our needs. Finally, we decided that we would pool all the photographs we had taken and each participant would choose the photographs with which to document his or her case study.

Another technical difficulty encountered was with the use of a tape recorder to record the sessions. We were already handling cameras, tripods, and boxes of small objects in a confined space in a busy school. Frequent interruptions occurred in the form of phones ringing, bells ringing, teachers' and/or students' voices in the hallways or coming from the schoolyard. Sometimes the tape had been paused and we forgot to re-activate it, or the plug was inadvertently pulled out. However, the greatest deterrent proved to be the behaviour of the children when they realized that their responses were being recorded. Already at a disadvantage as regards a practiced vocabulary with which to discuss the visual arts, they became even more hesitant and tongue-tied in the presence of the tape recorder. Thus in order not to inhibit the participants nor to disrupt the flow of an interview or activity, I abandoned the tape recorder and tried to take notes in as

unobtrusive a manner as possible, often adding some memories and reflections after the departure of the participant.

Originally I had planned to visit an art museum or exhibit chosen by each participant. However, when the children discovered, during our research into possible sites, the existence of a museum with an extensive rock and mineral collection (the Redpath Museum), this became their first choice. An added attraction was the possibility of attending a Discovery Workshop which combined learning with creative expression in the form of artmaking. Because my interest as an art educator was to investigate their behaviours and responses in an art museum, we decided to include two museum visits in the study. My ready acquiescence was due in part to my realization that a visit to the Redpath would be working with the current level of knowledge and interest of the children. Furthermore the rather eclectic collection, mainly natural history in direction, included rocks and minerals, a dinosaur skeleton, an Egyptian mummy, a Samurai warrior suit, and some African masks. Most young children are already familiar with these artifacts so that this experience could then be used as a link or bridge to an art museum visit.

Thus, through trial and error and consultation with the participants, the original research design underwent several modifications and changes. Thereafter changes were made on an individual basis with respect to individual needs and desires. Since each student was encouraged to work in a cooperative and collaborative manner with the teacher, the process for each moved in different directions and the creative production, likewise, was different for each student. The process for each student resulted in a different emergent curriculum which deviated in several ways from the original proposal.

Thus, in the following chapter, qualitative data is presented as individual stories or profiles. The stories are pieced together from some few tape recordings, my field notes taken during the activities, and notes added afterwards during the reflection process, aided by the photographs taken at each session. Each story is followed by an analysis of the participants' behaviours in terms of Horner's (1986a) four orientations for museum visits, which were used to structure the activities.

Thereafter, in chapter 6 all four participants' stories are examined in relation to the question: **how children's experiences of collecting and arranging their own personal collections could be used to provide a link to facilitate responses to objects in art museums.** In the conclusion, issues related to teaching practice are examined.

CHAPTER 5

Participants' Stories

Please note that participants' names have been changed to protect their privacy.

A Jess's Story

Jess was an eleven year old student in grade 6 in the French Immersion stream of a local alternative school. Our first meeting, after the initial introductory and brainstorming sessions, took place at the school in the staff room.

Activity I: Horner's dream-space orientation (rehearsal)

At this meeting we were to take on the roles of interviewer and interviewee at a TV station. I was to question Jess about her collection. Unfortunately, because we had already spent a session photographing her rock collection, Jess had not brought it with her this time. So we conducted the interview using the photographs as visual clues. We pretended that she was being interviewed for a photo story in a children's magazine.

When asked how she had started her rock collection, Jess reminisced that she must have been five or six years old, "every little kid sees a rock, picks it up. When his mom says what are you doing with that? He puts it in his pocket". So Jess's first rock was found on the ground. "I felt drawn towards it." When questioned further, Jess tried to explain how certain markings and colourations attracted her to rocks lying on the ground. "I notice certain rocks when I'm outside and I add them to my collection." (Figure 1, 2).

Then Jess described how “one day, in our mailbox, there was a catalogue”. Jess’s mother ordered a set of gemstones from the catalogue. Her mother had also brought back some specimens from the Ottawa Museum and from a vacation spot. I asked if Jess knew the names for any of her rock samples. She was rather nonplussed but offered that one of the rocks might be Fool’s Gold. The set ordered from the catalogue had come in a box with names but this was stored separately from the ones she had personally found. Originally her collection had been put in little boxes and then into a larger wooden box, which she herself had made, and then stored in her closet. “It fell down and rocks broke and now it’s out where I can see it.” I asked where that might be. Jess described how the rocks were now kept in a basket where she could admire and touch them on a daily basis.

When asked if she had a favourite piece, Jess picked out the very first rock which had started her collection: “I like the first one, I can’t explain why. It pulls me toward it. I’ve sand papered it to make it smooth and round”. It transpired that this process was ongoing, carried out lovingly and carefully (Figure 3). It also became apparent that Jess lacked the necessary vocabulary to discuss the formal qualities of objects or to describe elements of personal taste.

As a closing question, I asked Jess if she collected any other kinds of objects. “I collect drawings I have made.” There was also a collection of seashells started when she was about seven years old. It was kept near her rock collection but was smaller in number. Her rock collection was her biggest collection and also her favourite.



Figure 3. Jess's most favourite rock which has been carefully smoothed and polished.

Jess's response to her collections was sensuous and playful, playful as described by Pearce, where the collector handles, admires, and is inspired by her collection of objects. (Pearce,1995)

Activity II: Homer's play-space orientation (rehearsal)

Jess was introduced to the *Magical Travelling Museum-in-a-box* and invited to open the box, open the smaller containers, remove the objects from their containers, and to organize her own museum space using all or some of the contents of the museum-in-a-box. Jess eagerly entered into the play-space orientation: "this reminds me of building a doll's house for my little sister during the holidays". She quickly set up a series of groupings within the large box taking the literal interpretation of museum-in-a-box. I reminded her that she did not have to use everything in her construction, however, Jess continued happily with her original intentions of placing all the objects inside the box, using the walls of the box as the walls of her museum. As soon as Jess had completed her museum, we both took photographs of the structure. Jess even climbed onto a chair to get a better view (Figure 4). I noticed that Jess had built a grand entranceway to the museum and so we made sure to photograph that section (Figure 5).

After the photo shoot I asked Jess to describe how she had organized her groupings of objects. She explained her set-up in terms of a natural cycle: "the animals came before the humans and materials from the earth came before both the animals and the humans". Next I invited Jess to point out the object she found the most interesting. At first she chose two objects, a soapstone carving of a chameleon from Southern Africa and



Figure 4. Jess's museum construction.

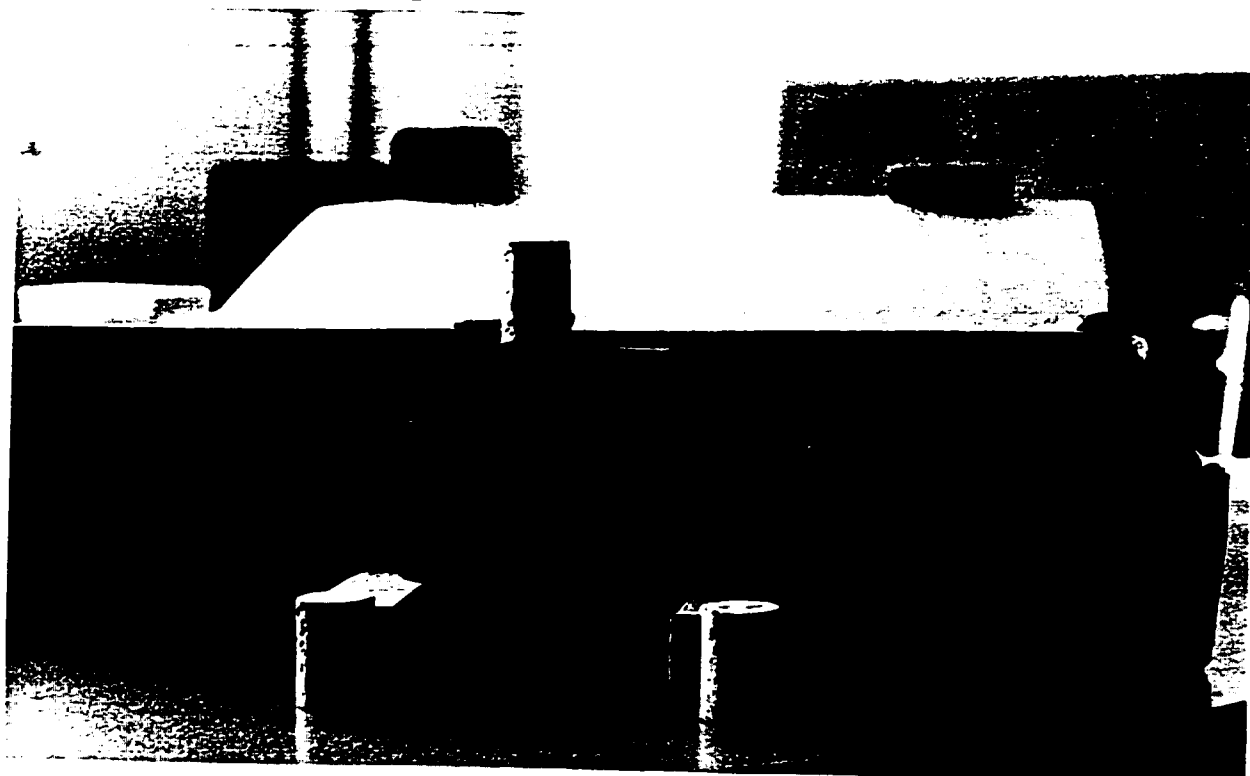


Figure 5. The elaborate entrance façade.

a geode. When asked to choose her favourite, Jess settled for the chameleon (Figure 6). I suggested that Jess explore the piece not only with her eyes but also through her sense of touch. I then asked what she had discovered about the physical qualities of the sculpture. Her reply was that it felt hard and cold and was a greenish-grey in colour. She was not sure what kind of stone it was. As regards identifying any of the materials used, Jess was able to name broad categories such as wood, stone, paper, and beads but was not able to specify materials such as ivory, verdite, or soapstone. On discovering that several of the pieces had been carved out of soapstone, Jess expressed a desire to try soapstone carving herself. I agreed to look into the possibilities of facilitating this wish.

When asked if she could tell the age of the sculpted chameleon, Jess turned the sculpture in her hands as she pondered the question. Eventually she said, "It looks old. It's all scratched". She had assumed that the tool marks were signs of wear. I then enquired about the bookwork which Jess had included in her museum. I wondered if books were generally found in museum settings. "If it's old", said Jess. "Not if it's a child's book written like about a year ago." It was obvious that Jess believed that museums were repositories for old objects and that the objects belonged to the adult world.

An interesting event occurred when Jess was present at Terri's (one of the other participants) session to build her own version of a museum. Jess was intrigued by Terri's set up on a circular table (Figure 7) and asked if she could try again. This time she grouped the objects alongside or on top of the walls in frieze-like settings. Some of the containers were used as niches to house the sculptures. The imposing entrance had



Figure 6. Soapstone chameleon, Southern Africa.

disappeared but there seemed to be a greater awareness of the object's placement in space and a loosening up - a more playful approach to the construction (Figure 8).

Activity III: Horner's dream-play, and metaphoric-space orientations, visit to a museum.

During our research into possible museum sites to visit, we discovered that the Redpath Museum (a natural history museum, "with something for everyone" on the McGill University campus) was advertising an exhibition entitled *Treasures from the Earth*. Jess and Terri both expressed an interest in seeing this show because they felt it related to the nature of their collections. Furthermore, one of the workshops offered was to carve a soapstone amulet in the form of a shark's tooth. Jess had already expressed a desire to work in soapstone and Terri was excited at the prospect of learning a new technique. So it was decided that I would organize for the three of us to visit the museum and attend the workshop. Unfortunately we were later advised that this particular workshop had been replaced by a workshop on masks. The two girls were still keen to visit the museum and participate in the mask workshop. (Each girl's response to the visit has been discussed separately under her own story.)

On arrival at the museum Jess was not disappointed. Here was an imposing stone edifice with an elaborate columnar entrance just as she had constructed her version on an earlier occasion. We made a note to take photographs before we left but hurried inside so as not to be late. We were immediately struck by the dinosaur-like creature which seemed to fill the central space (Figure 9). Jess then moved to the glass cases filled with various

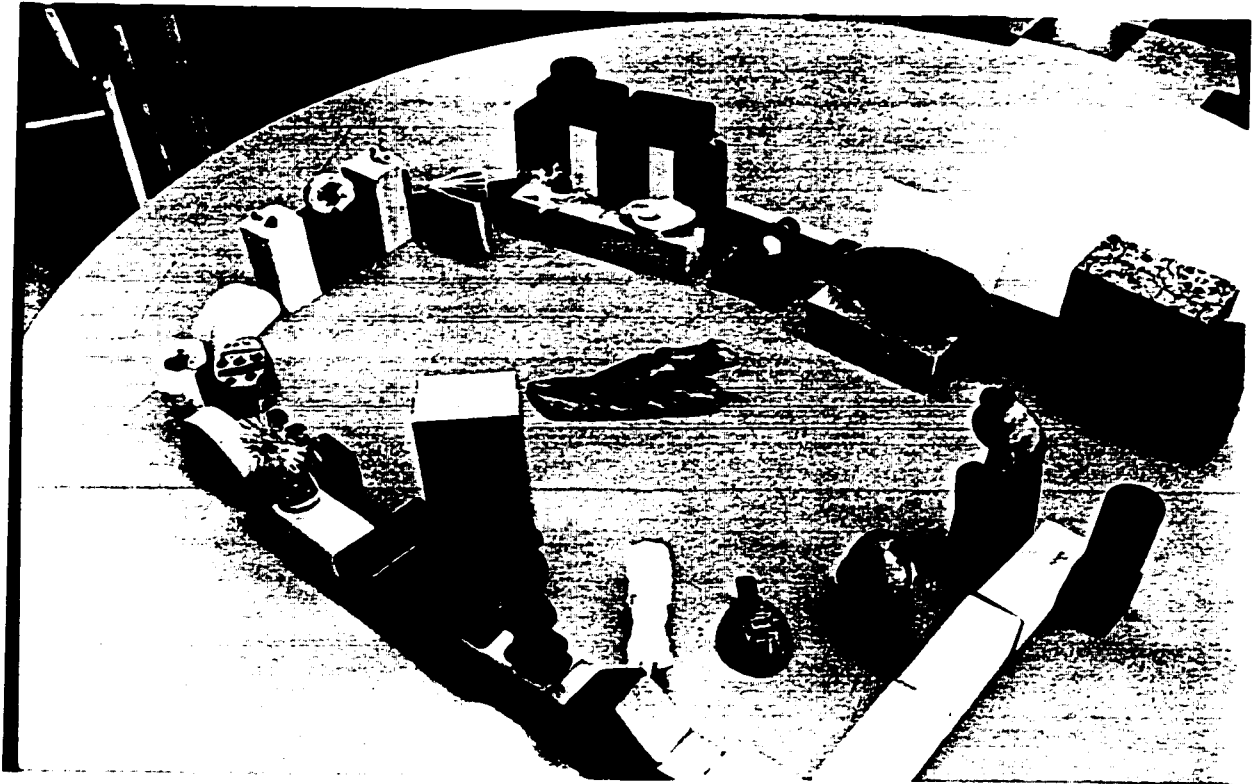


Figure 7. Terri's museum construction.

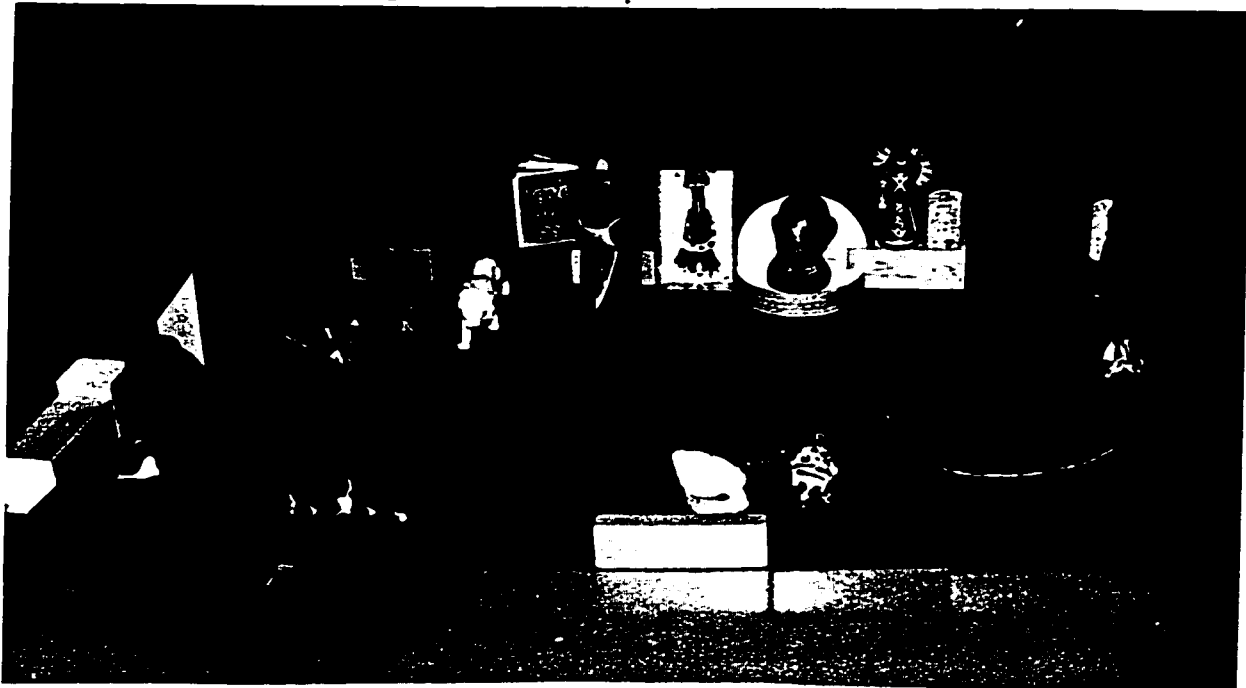


Figure 8. Jess's second version of a museum exhibition, influenced by Terri's construction.

rocks and minerals. She slowly moved from case to case looking attentively at each specimen in silence (Figure 10). Soon it was time for the workshop to begin.

During the introduction by the animator, Jess listened quietly. I took notes but for the other participants this was a recreational activity and they were eager to start working with the materials that had been laid out so invitingly. These included: coloured construction paper, tissue paper, shredded paper, cardboard, sawdust, dyed eggshell fragments, sand, feathers, corks, raffia, glue, tempera paint, paint brushes, scissors, and hole punches. Visual aids included books on African Art, slides of student's mask making but, unfortunately, the museum's own collection of African art was temporarily unavailable. The instructor encouraged the students to choose their own shape for a mask and to choose freely from the materials. Jess worked quietly and seemed quite focussed on the process (Figure 11). She worked with little hesitation and when she was finished, she asked if I would photograph the mask (Figure 12). Jess was pleased with the result and said that she had made masks on several occasions at school and so she felt competent and comfortable at this workshop.

At the end of the workshop, the instructor, who was a colleague and was aware of the fact that my students had originally signed up for the workshop on soapstone carving, offered to supply a kit and quick instructions on how to complete the carving of an amulet. What good fortune! We had time for a quick snapshot of the two girls at the entrance before we had to depart.



Figure 9. Dinosaur skeleton, Redpath Museum, Montreal.

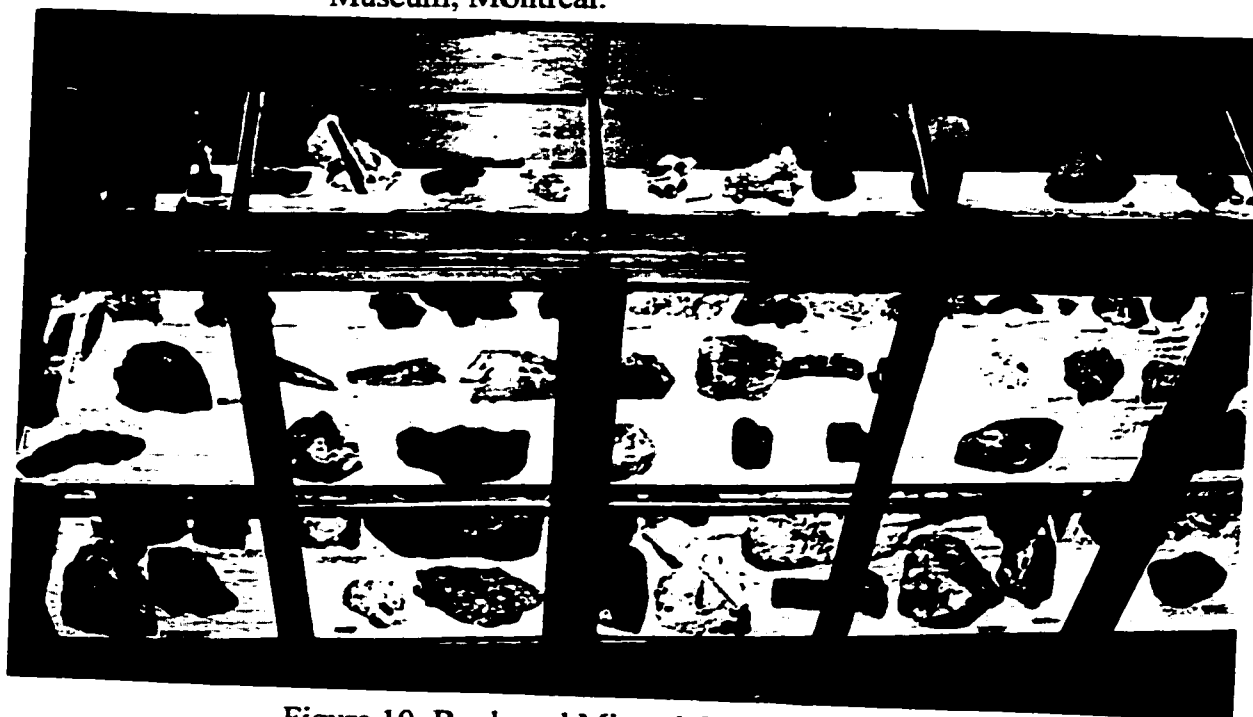


Figure 10. Rock and Mineral Collection, Redpath Museum, Montreal.



Figure 11. Jess working on her mask.



Figure 12. Co

In order to fulfil the demands of this study, our next visit was to an art museum. Jess had chosen to visit the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA). On our arrival Jess immediately asked if there was an exhibit with the possibility for interaction. The Educational and Cultural Carrefour had an interactive exhibit titled *Picture This: the Object as Subject*. So we decided to start there. On a long, low table were scattered a variety of objects suitable for composing a still life. There were different sized, different shaped, and different coloured glasses and bowls. Artificial foodstuffs, such as fruit, vegetables, fish, shellfish, cheeses, and eggs were piled on the table. There were also seashells and pieces of fake greenery scattered about. On the walls around the room were still life paintings by renowned artists including Borman, de Heem, Suzor-Coté, Fantin Latour, Picasso, Borduas, Pellan, Tondini, Caiserman-Roth, Lyman, Plamandon, and Lismer.

Jess began to organise a still life using some of the material on the table. She tried several different tableaux and then finally sketched the one she liked best (Figure 13). Jess then slowly circled the room looking at the paintings on the walls but she did not appear to read any of the labels or didactic panels. When I asked her if she liked any of the works better than the others, she pointed to the Lismer Still Life (Figure 14).

Thereafter Jess, doggedly and with serious intent, visited almost every section of the museum. She very rarely commented but regarded all that she saw with the same interest and intensity. During our lunch break conversation it transpired that Jess had had very few art experiences and had not previously visited an art museum. Thus she had almost no vocabulary with which to express her reactions, or to describe her taste regarding the artworks. Furthermore she had no way to discriminate or to choose which

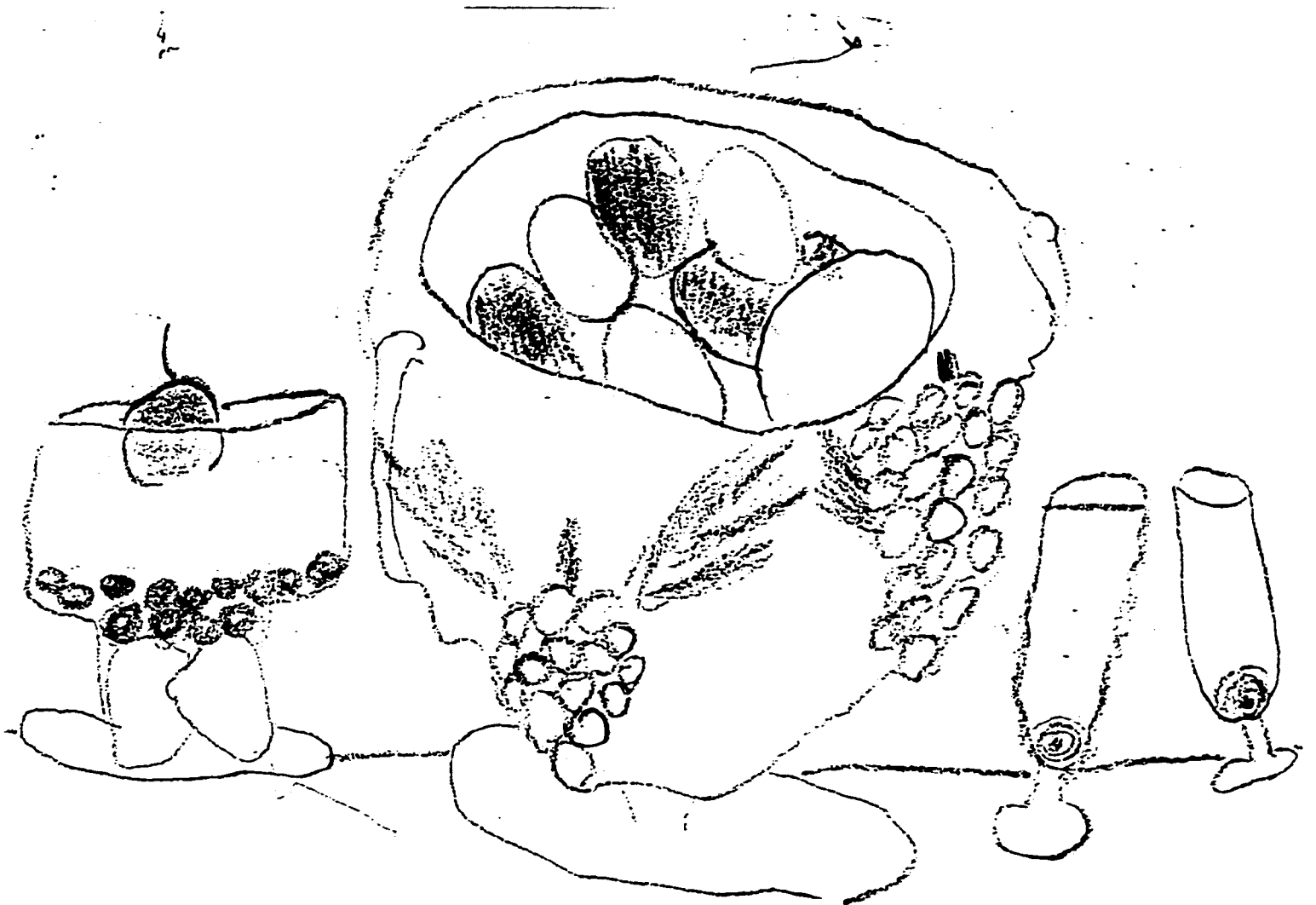


Figure 13. Still Life sketch by Jess.



Figure 14. Still life, A. Lismer, Educational Carrefour, MMFA.

sections to view. So her goal was to see as much as possible in the time available. Thus our journey through the museum halls and galleries resembled a meandering stream flowing wherever the ground provided a suitable pathway. We went through galleries showing jewelry, students' interpretations of the work of Magritte, a Soulages show, the work of Kiki Smith, and a very heavy, serious exhibit called *Exiles+Emigres*. Jess moved through all the halls with silent and dogged attention. We crossed into the old section of the museum and viewed the galleries of ancient cultures from places such as Africa, Australasia, Egypt, Greece, Rome. In the Benaiah Gibb Pavilion Jess paused to make some sketches of pre-Colombian Art, Inuit sculptures, and modern sculptures.

It was time to leave and because we were not allowed to take photographs in this museum, I photographed Jess outside the new museum addition designed by Moshe Safdie. Jess preferred to take a snapshot of the original, more classical style, museum building across the street (Figure 15). Then she chose to photograph the elaborate stone facade of the church building next door to the art museum. To her eyes, these neo-classical and neo-gothic styles more closely matched her vision of a museum as a repository for special objects.

As regards Horner's orientations to a museum space, Jess entered most easily into the **play-space**. It was more difficult to assess her initial involvement in the **metaphoric-space** and **conceptual-space** orientations of the museum. Her viewing of the artworks and artifacts was done in silence. She did not read the labels or didactic panels. She did not ask questions. I was to discover the answer later when I viewed her journal entries responding to her experiences at the art museum.



Figure 15. Entrance façade of the MMFA.

Activity IV: Homer's conceptual-space orientation

This was my final meeting with Jess. I had offered several choices whereby the participants could respond to the series of activities. This last session was designed to allow for a conceptualization of the experiences through some form of creative endeavour. Jess had chosen to keep a personal journal. In response to the first activity, Jess had written a haiku about her rock collection (Figure 16). Here one can trace the primeval origins of the earth, the use of rocks and earth in the structure of habitats, and together these form a beautiful picture of nature. A second poem, in rhyming couplets, describes her visit to the Redpath Museum (Figure 17). The whole sense of the poem is one of excitement at all the new experiences, the novel imagery, the exotic/special quality of the objects. The most interesting lines are "I had a lot of fun. Just like when a kid learns how to run." I could sense that Jess felt like a beginner trying to assimilate new information at a rapid pace. It was interesting to note how Jess used the knowledge she was acquiring at school - different forms of written communication- to express her reaction to new experiences.

She had also included several photographs with captions found in Chinese fortune cookies. The dinosaur skeleton and the rock specimens were seen in a new context but were well known subject matter to Jess. She had also done a sketch of the soapstone amulet which she had carved with little adult assistance (Figure 18). Of this she was very proud.

June 12, 1996.

R O C K

first creation of Earth.

dark, smooth

rough, light

concrete, bricks, house

rock; beautiful picture.

R O C K



Figure 16. Haiku by Jess describing her rock collection (from Jess's journal)

April 10, 1996

The Museum

The museum was; cool, great and neat,
It made me feel kind, soft and sweet.

The museum was; bold and daring,
Like trying to catch a wild car or looting.
An idea of mine?
I had a good time.

The weather felt good,
Through my sweater's hood.
An ice sculpture, was about to rupture.
But it would melt faster, than a hurricane
disaster.

I liked that museum. I had a lot of fun.
Just like when a kid learns how to run.
And this poem, you see, was made up by none
other, than me.

Figure 17. Poem by Jess describing her visit to the Redpath Museum. (from Jess's journal)

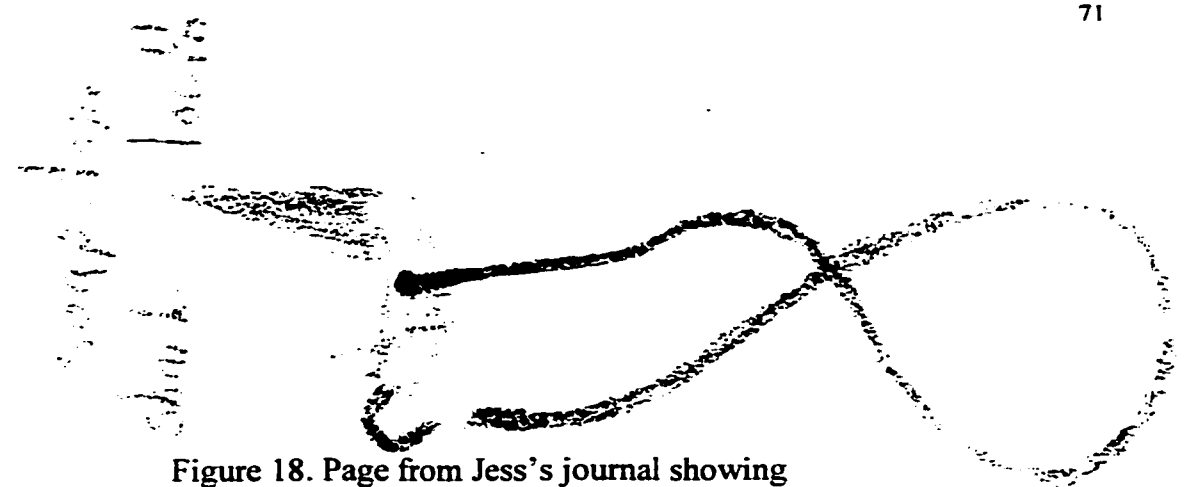
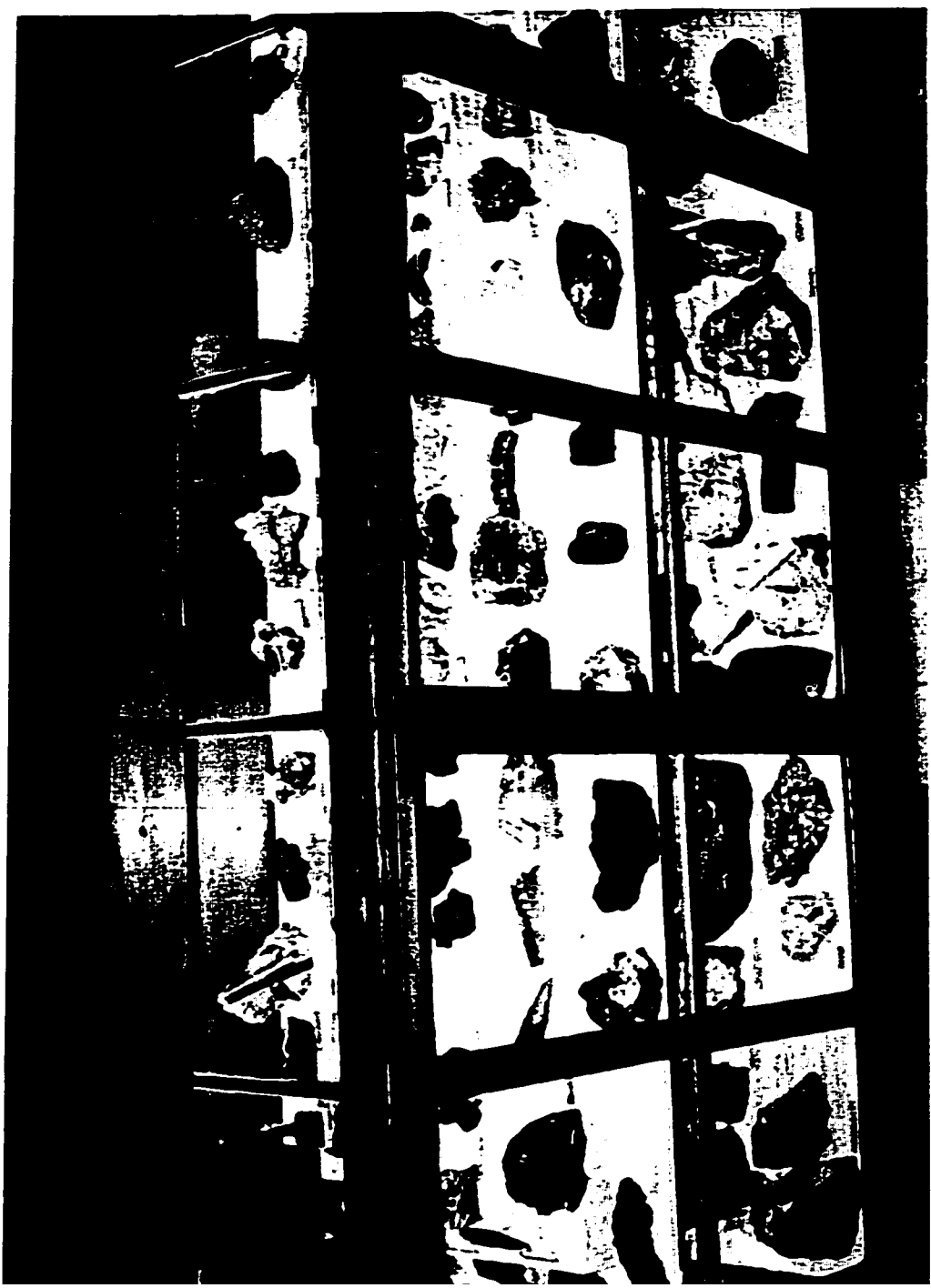


Figure 18. Page from Jess's journal showing a sketch of her soapstone amulet in the form of a shark's tooth.



Handwritten text on the right side of the page, likely from Jess's journal, which is partially obscured and difficult to read due to the high contrast of the scan. The text appears to be a list or description of items, possibly related to the amulets shown in the photograph.

The journal entries of her visit to the MMFA included the sketch of her still life ensemble from the Educational and Cultural Carrefour and sketches done of the pre-Colombian, Inuit, and Modern Sculpture collections (Figures 19, 20, 21). When I questioned Jess about her knowledge of these exemplars, she claimed to be interested only in using them as inspiration for her own artmaking. She then explained that the pastels in the journal (Figure 22) had been inspired by what she had seen at the MMFA, although she could not point to any specific work which had been the motivation.

Jess had produced a quite whimsical rendition of our return trip by car (Figure 23). The intricate highway system had reminded her of a roller coaster ride. This once again demonstrated Jess's ability to use metaphor as a form of response to her experiences of the physical world.

When I questioned Jess as to whether she saw a connection between her collections and those housed in a museum, she replied that she found it boring to walk around even with earphones on. However, she had enjoyed visits to the Museum of Man and the nature museum in Ottawa because there had been opportunities to interact with the exhibits. As regards working with her own collection, Jess felt that it was very personal, not like the collections in the museum. She had no desire to catalogue or to document her specimens. She preferred to keep her collection "flexible" so that she could "touch it, look at it, and rearrange the stones". I was reminded of her comment about the set of gemstones which had been ordered from the catalogue. They had come in a box complete with labels. However, Jess had chosen to store these separately from the collection of rocks which she had personally gathered. The rocks purchased by her mother belonged to the adult world. They were untouchable.

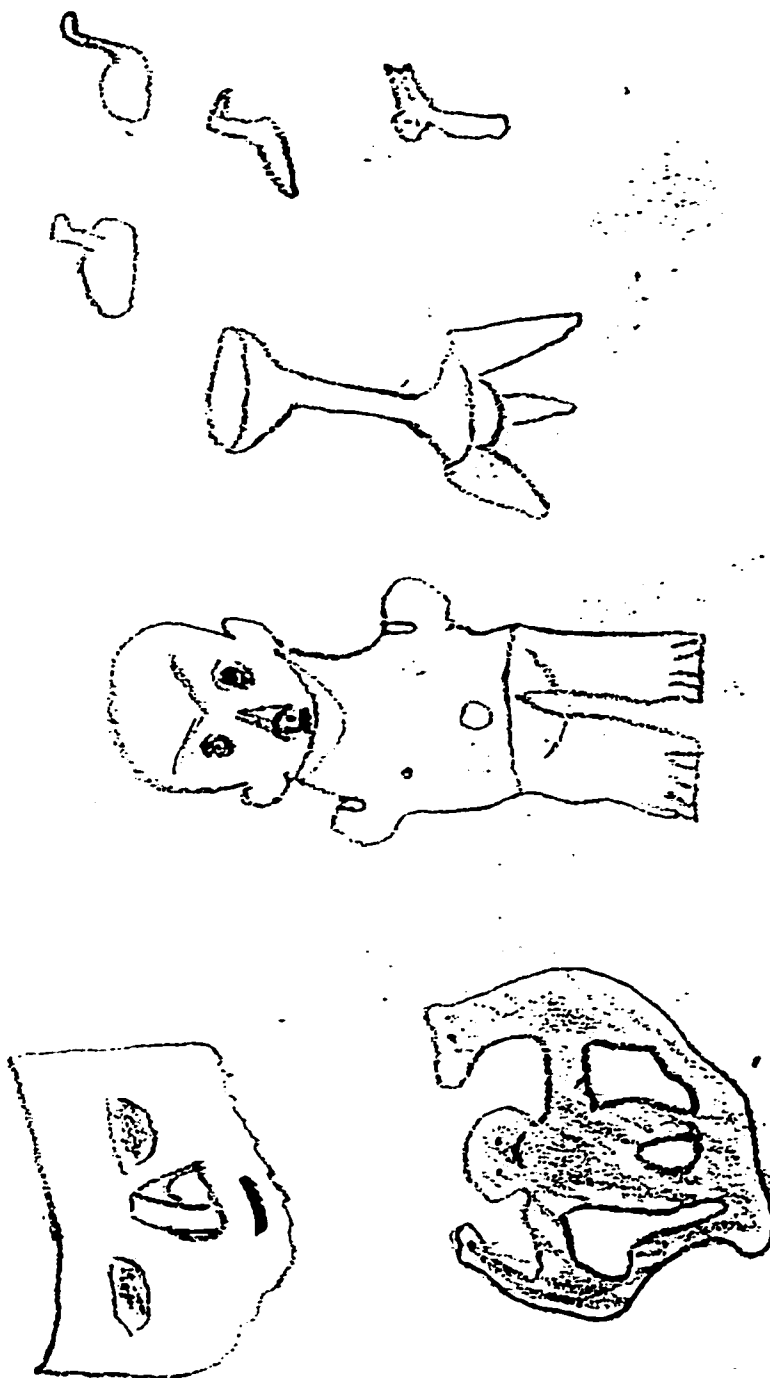


Figure 19. Sketches from Jess's journal of sculptural forms seen at the MMFA.

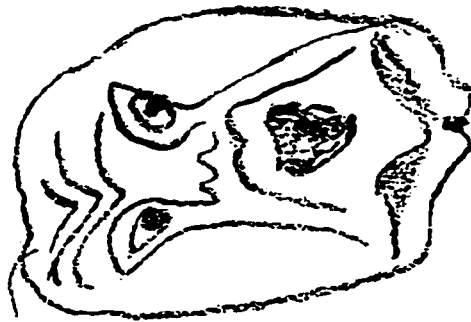
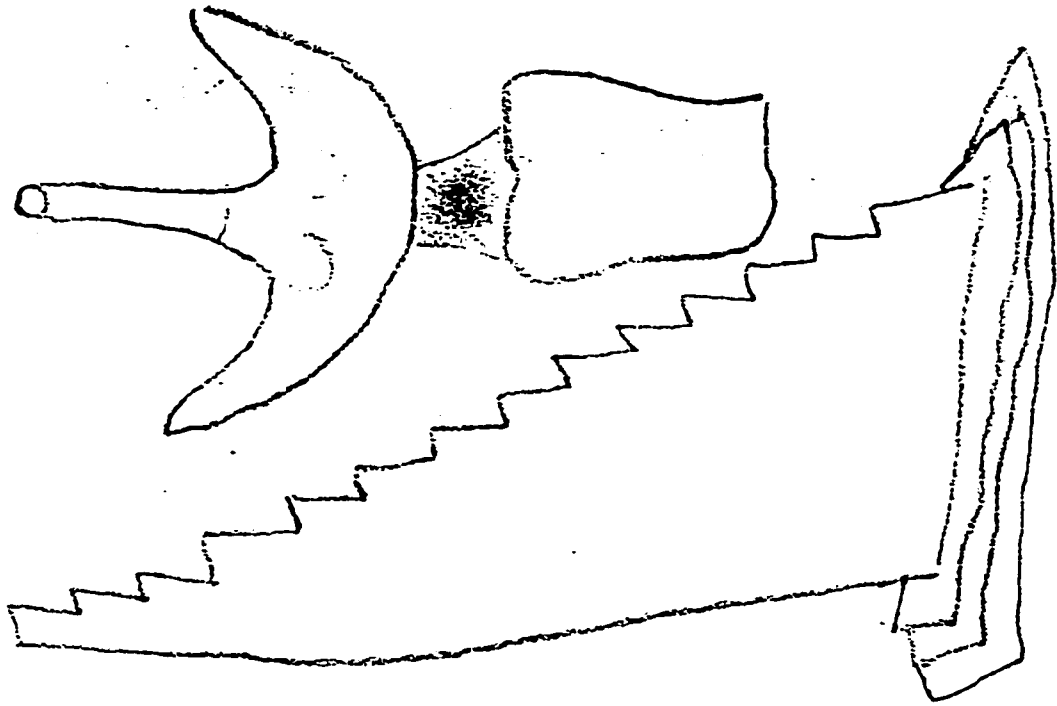


Figure 20. Sketches from Jess's journal of sculptural forms seen at the MMFA.

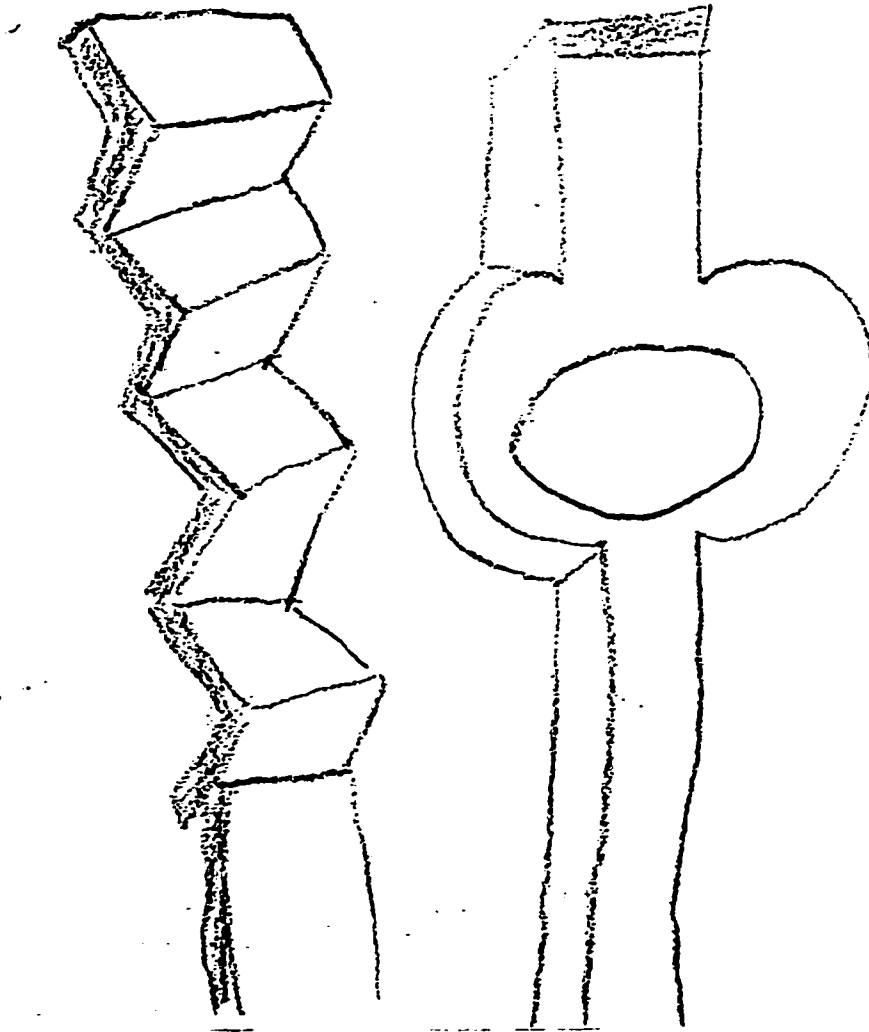


Figure 21. Sketches from Jess's journal of modern sculpture seen at the MMFA



Figure 22. Pastel sketch from Jess's journal inspired by her visit to the MMFA.

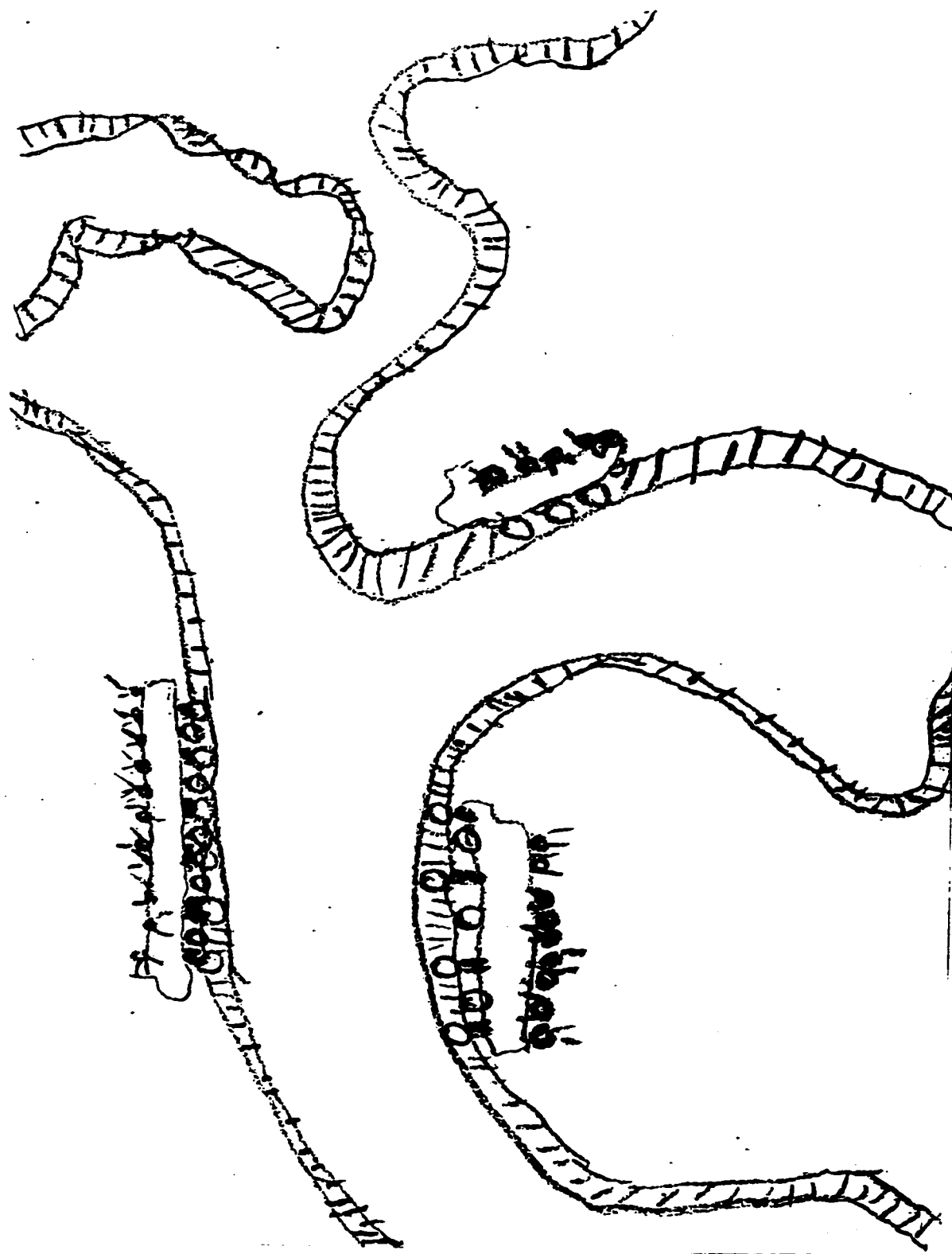


Figure 23. Jess's visual interpretation of our drive home on the highway system.

As a final response, Jess, asked to play with a game I had recently acquired. It was called *Make your own Museum* and comprised various styles of exhibition halls, paintings, sculptures, furniture of a variety of styles and periods, and cardboard cut-outs of guards and visitors. As was her usual modus operandi, Jess designed several eclectic shows using practically every possible choice available with absolutely no discrimination as to period, style, or cultural origins.

Analysis

Jess was able to participate fully in Horner's dream-space orientation where the viewer engages with the objects in an open and non judgmental stance; where memories and fantasies can be accessed in a fusion with the time-space of the readymades. Not so much as regards a fusion with individual objects but rather with the whole museum space. She wandered from object to object from room to room in total silence. Her time was spent looking, sampling, and exploring. She seemed to be immersing herself totally in the visual world. However, her first choice and her favourite orientation was that of the play-space where she could explore, manipulate, and recreate her own versions of the world.

As regards the metaphoric-space orientation, where the viewer discovers the intrinsic meaning of the objects supported by what has been experienced in the dream-space and the play-space orientations, Jess proved to be intuitively adept. Her choice of responding to events was through poetry and artworks with a delightfully whimsical sense of humour. My assumptions about the form of response to the conceptual-space

orientation were thwarted. It appeared as if Jess had not accumulated any new knowledge about art collections and art museums. There was no desire to transfer her experiences with museum collections to her own collections. However, as I looked through her journal entries I realized that the knowledge had not been conceptualized through the spoken word or an academic text but had appeared in the form of poetry, pencil sketches, and pastel landscapes. These were no doubt Jess's preferred modes of response which one could interpret in terms of Gardner's MI theory (1995) with their concomitant differences in learning style, that is, Jess was displaying a strong preference for the aesthetic and narrational points of entry into knowledge. It could also be argued that Jess, as a relative neophyte in the world of art, had not yet acquired the necessary tools (language, grammar, and syntax) of the symbolic systems with which the culture communicates verbal or textual information and knowledge about the world of art.

B Terri's Story

Terri was an eleven-year-old, grade six student in the English stream of a local alternative school. At the initial brainstorming sessions we met in the staff room of the school and Terri brought her gemstone collection which consisted mainly of a large number of tumbled stones. We eventually succeeded in attaining a good enough shot of the variety of colours, patterns and textures (Figure 24).

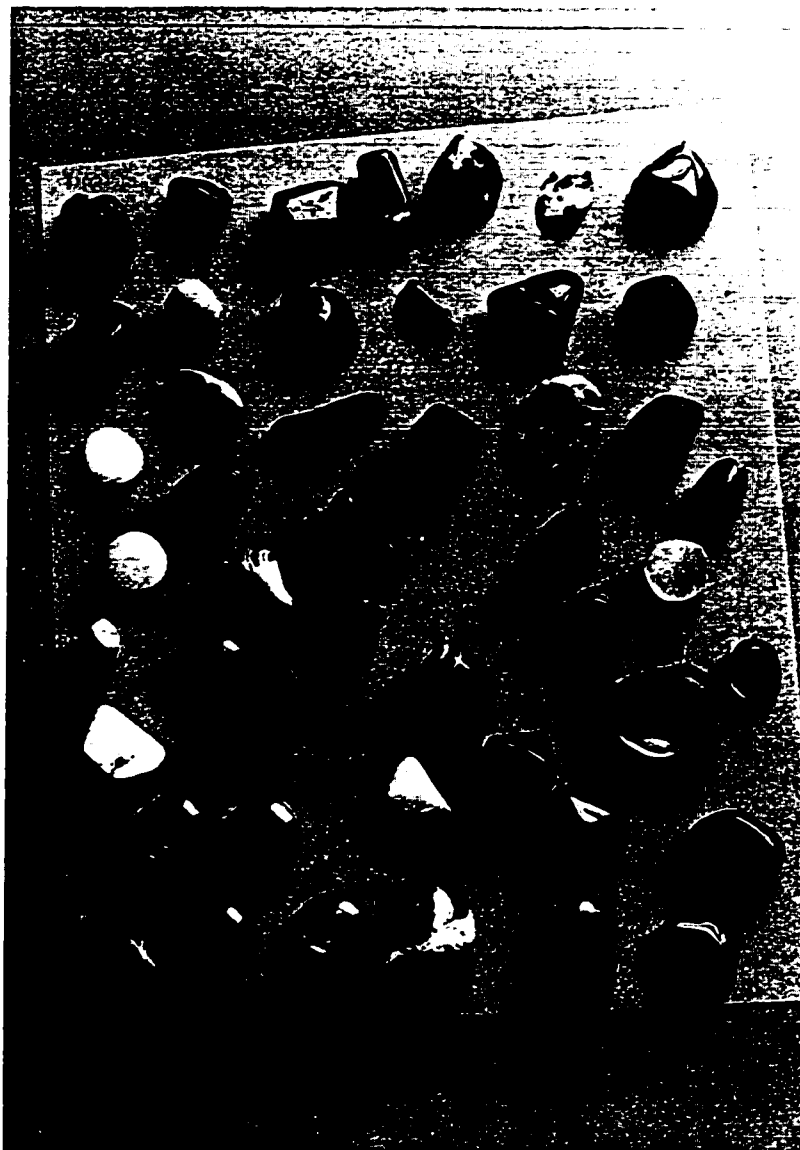


Figure 24. Terri's gemstone collection.

Activity I: Horner's dream-space orientation (rehearsal)

To enter into the **dream-space** orientation, we pretended that Terri was being interviewed for the class newsletter. As I had done with Jess, I asked how the collection had begun. "A friend gave me a few from her collection because I said I liked them." After that Terri had requested additions to her collection as gifts from aunts and uncles "when they went places". Terri had been accumulating her collection over three years but had decided to stop this year. She also used to have a sticker collection and a spoon collection which she kept in her cupboard.

I asked Terri if she had a favourite gemstone. She selected several (Figure 25). Some had been purchased by a friend while visiting Detroit. Terri knew the names of several of these specimens - an agate, an amethyst, and a turquoise. Her mother had given her a bloodstone and a smokey stone. The stone with the appearance of leopard skin had been purchased in a store. Terri then admitted that her most favourite stone was a tiger's eye which had been her very first acquisition (Figure 26). "I like the shape, it's smooth. It has dark brown swirls."

Terri was able to identify many of the gemstones in her collection because she had been given a set of four books in a series titled *Science Close Up*. The individual titles were: *Minerals*, *Gemstones*, *Rocks*, and *Crystals*. She had brought the books along to be photographed (Figure 27). Terri pointed out a map in one of the books which showed the provenance of various precious and semi-precious stones. I then asked Terri how she stored her collection and whether she organized them according to any system. Terri said her collection was stored in boxes with a separate section for each stone.

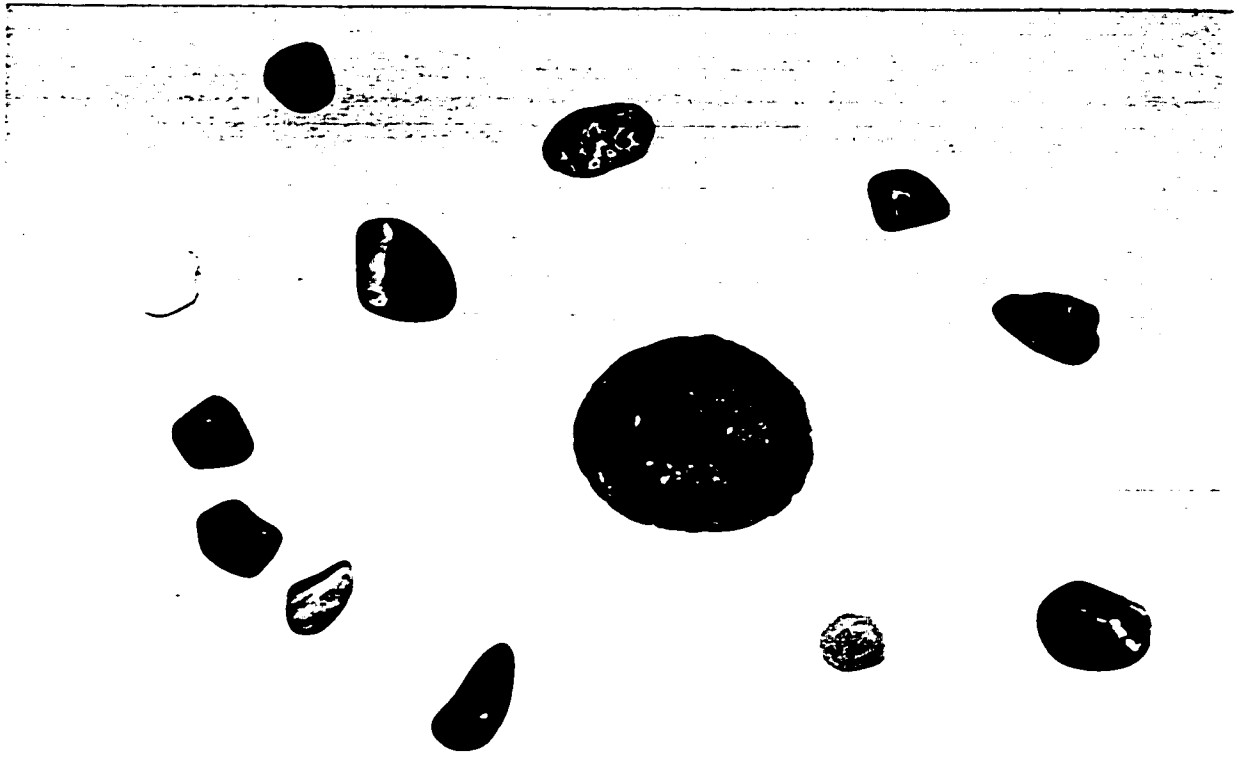


Figure 25. Terri's favourite stones.

These are
 the books
 I have on
 rocks. They are
 very interesting.
 I think my
 favorite one is
CRYSTALS.

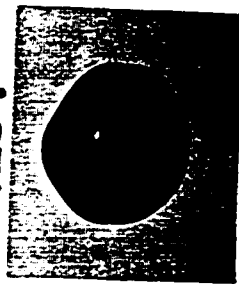


Figure 26. The tiger's eye, Terri's first acquisition and her most favourite specimen.

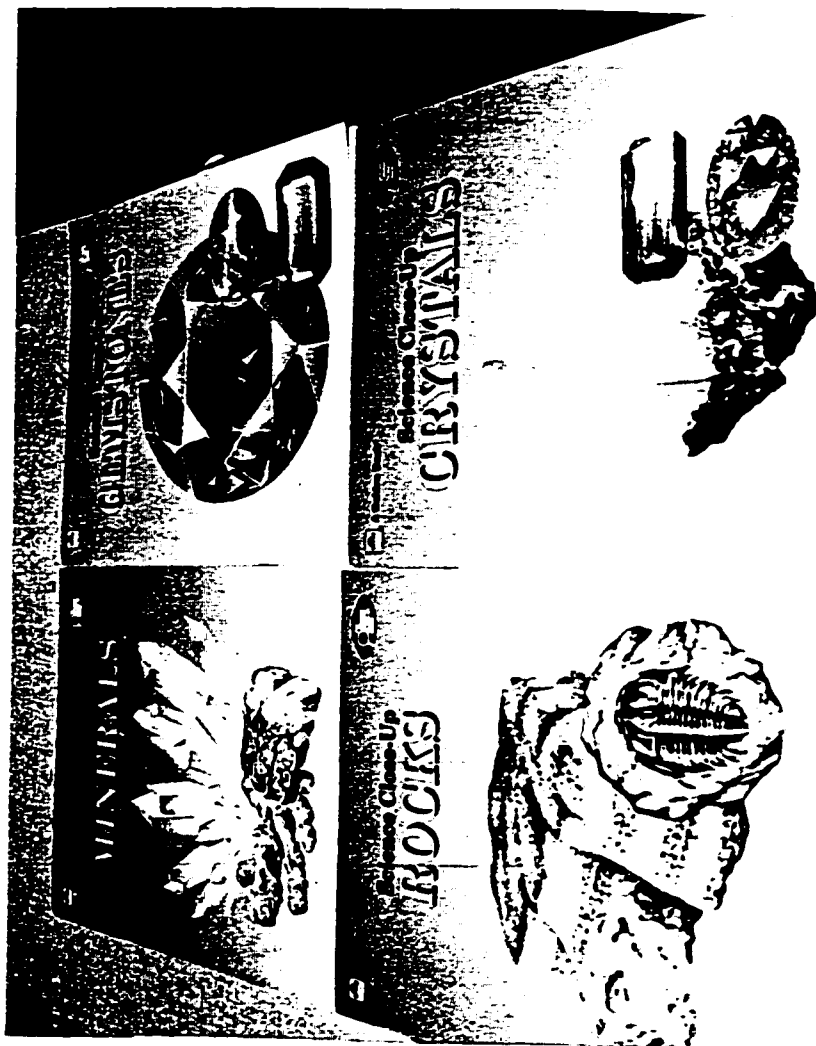


Figure 27. Terri's books with information about rocks, minerals, gemstones, and crystals.

Activity II: Horner's play-space orientation (rehearsal)

I presented Terri with the *Magical Travelling Museum-in-a-box* and explained that she could open all the boxes and use any of the materials and objects to build her own version of a museum. Terri chose a circular table and carefully arranged a room bounded by blocks. The entrance was marked by two red standing columns each placed on top of a blue block (Figure 28).

Terri described her museum as follows: “ this is one room, one hall in the museum. When you walk in you want everything in pairs. There are always different sections. Often there is a big statue in the middle” (Figure 29). Some of the objects were used as decoration. The ceramic shell which “was too big to put with the others” was put in its box at the door as a marker. The tiny, Guatemalan trouble dolls were placed on top of a shelf to add interest and colour. Apart from these choices, Terri did not seem to have any other rationale for the placement of the exhibition pieces, although in her journal Terri had written, “ What I did was I put everything that is in the same family together. Just like in a real museum.” Terri's notion of a museum setting did inspire Jess to try another version which ended up looking quite similar to Terri's version but retained Jess's original groupings of animals and humans with clusters of earth-related forms (Figure 8). Terri had focussed primarily on the physical space and the placement of objects therein rather than on the subject matter or material nature of the objects.

I then asked Terri to choose a favourite piece. She chose one of the stone pieces from Southern Africa (Figure 30a). Her comment was, “It's very different, you won't find it in Canada”. I asked Terri if she could name the



Figure 28. Terri's museum construction.

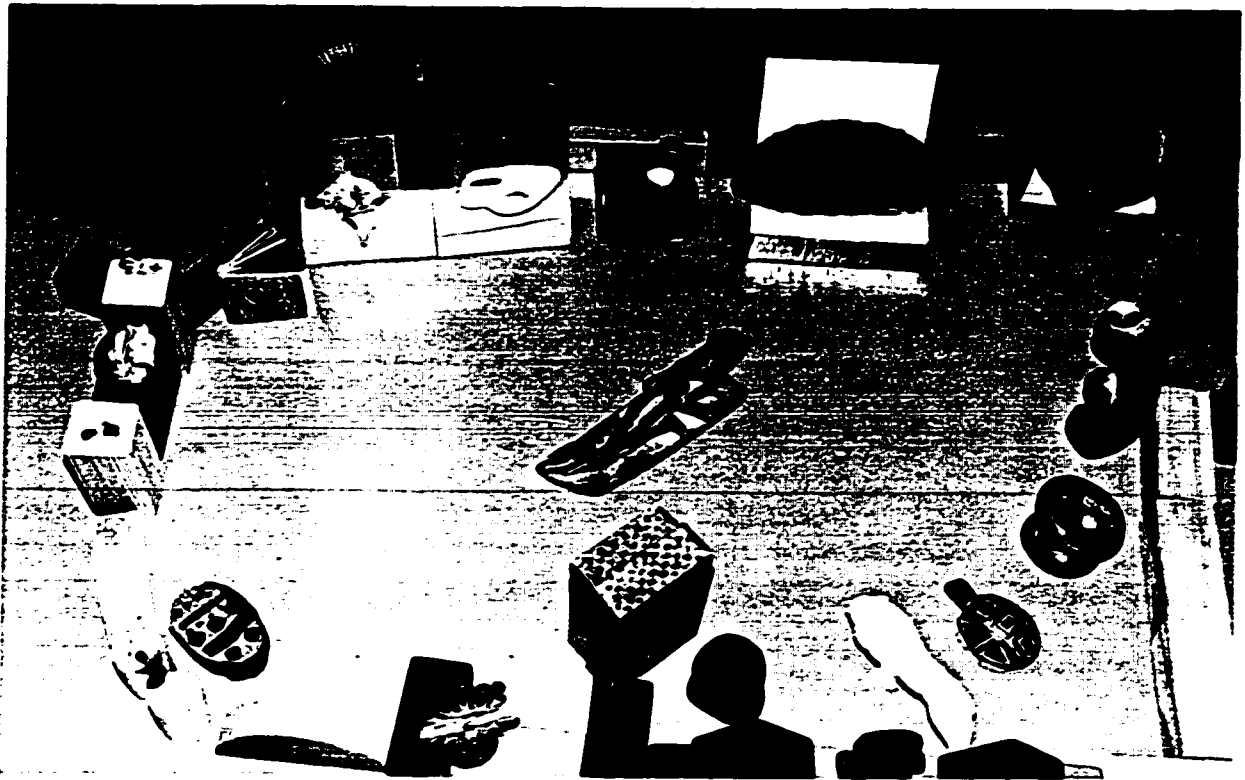


Figure 29. Side view of Terri's museum showing the chameleon, the ceramic shell, and the Guatemalan trouble dolls



Figure 30a. Figure sculpture, verdite,
Southern Africa.



Figure 30b. Basuto head, verdite, Southern
Africa.

material used for the little green statue. She was not certain of the type of stone used but she thought that it was old because it resembled the work of ancient cultures whereas she believed the Basuto head (Figure 30b) to be more modern as it was in a style more familiar to her, a realistic portrayal.

Activity III: Horner's dream/play/metaphoric-space orientations

Since both Terri and Jess had chosen to work with similar collections of rocks and gemstones, they had both expressed an interest in visiting the Redpath Museum which housed an extensive collection of rocks, crystals, and gemstones. We arrived with a little time to survey the contents housed in an imposing Victorian Neo-Classical stone building. We made a note to take some photographs before we left.

As soon as we entered the museum space we saw the skeleton of a dinosaur-like creature. It filled the central well of the exhibition areas. Both the girls wanted a photograph (Figure 9). Thereafter Terri went to study the rocks and minerals which were stored in row upon row of glass cases (Figure 10). She moved silently among the cases seemingly absorbed but also overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of the specimens.

It was time to go downstairs for the workshop. Terri listened very quietly to the animator and then proceeded to collect materials and to very efficiently put together her mask. Terri had chosen the colour red for her mask because "red is an important colour in Taiwanese culture" (Figure 31). Terri's father is from Taiwan. She was well satisfied with the finished product and confessed to having made several masks at school. On our way out I photographed the two girls at the doorway.

When everyone was finished their
Mask.



Figure 31. Terri holding her red mask, back row, left, (from Terri's journal).

Like Jess, Terri chose the MMFA as the site for her visit to an art museum. She also chose to visit the Educational and Cultural Carrefour first because we had read that there was an exhibition of children's artwork on display. The exhibition comprised works done by children in response to artworks in the museum or to special shows. Terri was mainly interested in how the works had been done and wondered if she would be able to duplicate the effects. She was particularly struck by the portraits with elaborate frames. We took a photograph so that she could have a visual example from which to work. This photograph she later included in her journal where she noted some details of how the frame was constructed (Figure 32).

Like Jess before her, Terri had no previous experience on which to base a selection process so she too wanted to see as much of the museum as we could in the time available. For the most part her viewing was done in silence. In the African section, Terri asked if I thought it would have been difficult to carve the huge elephant tusk. As we continued through the section on Ancient Cultures and Asian Art, Terri showed a special interest in examples of Chinese pottery, clothing and other household artifacts because as she reminded me "my background is Taiwanese". It was important and satisfying for her to make these cultural/family connections. These were images to which she could relate.

We passed the self-serve kiosk where we could pick up activity sheets to use in the museum. Terri was not as interested as I was. Nonetheless we tried one which had us searching for butterflies, beetles, bees, and flowers in the Dutch and Flemish paintings of the eighteenth century. However, what proved to be of greater interest to Terri was the room with religious paintings and artifacts. Some of the icons reminded her of similar



Figure 32. Portrait made by a school child,
Educational Carrefour, MMFA. (from
Terri's journal).

artworks in her own home. Another genre of painting which interested Terri was the portraits of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She commented on the beautiful “costumes” worn by the subjects.

Before we left the museum I tried another strategy to hone in on the possibility of finding out more about Terri’s tastes in art. I asked if she would like to select a few postcards from the museum store. She very modestly chose two to which she felt attracted: a brightly coloured portrait in the style of Paul Klee and a snow scene done in subdued tones with a fairly expressionistic brushstroke. These she chose later to put in her journal. I was surprised that neither of her choices related to her earlier expressed predilection for elaborate frames, sumptuous costumes, and religious iconography. Like Jess before her, Terri’s taste, as yet undeveloped, was eclectic in nature.

Activity IV: Horner’s conceptual-space orientation

As a closure to our series of activities Terri was given the choice of working with her collection or she was free to choose an activity of her own design. Terri decided to make a container or storage box for her gemstone collection. She had seen an idea in one of my books, *The Amazing Outdoor Activity Book* (Wilkes, 1996), and was eager to try it out. It was a project on how to construct a nature museum. I gathered all the necessary materials and helped Terri build a set of drawers to hold some of her collection of stones (Figure 33). When I asked her if she wanted to label the drawers as in the book, she declined saying, “I want to be able to move them around”.

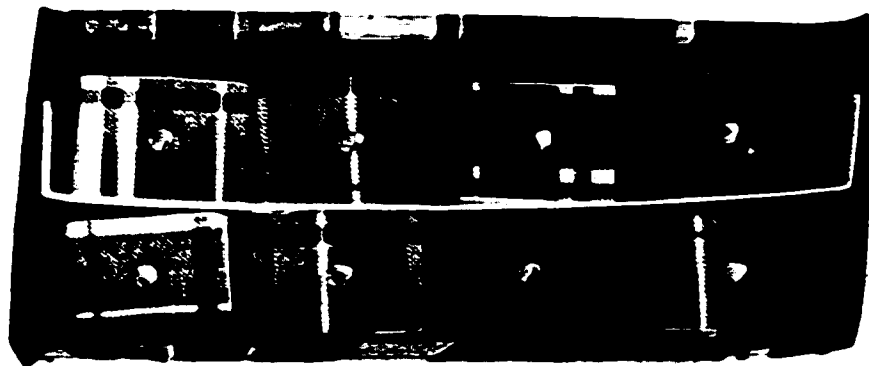


Figure 33. Set of drawers made by Terri.

Terri had also chosen to keep a journal of the activities and experiences we had shared. Her journal was more in the nature of a scrapbook, the photographs were very neatly organized in a linear fashion.

Analysis

Terri was a most cooperative participant. She had acquired some factual knowledge about the stones in her collection but had already decided to store it away in her cupboard as if a part of her vanishing childhood. She was in her last year in elementary school. In general, however she seemed to be most interested in making and doing and in gathering information, that is, she seemed most comfortable in the **play-space** and **conceptual-space** orientations.

During the activity with the museum-in-a-box, Terri willingly engaged in the **play-space** orientation. She applied memories of previous experiences of visits to museums to construct her museum hall. She paid particular attention to the interior space and to its decoration. She was less involved with the aesthetic integrity of the individual pieces. She did not talk about similarity of subject matter, style, or material but rather of how the pieces filled the space she had created with the blocks. However, later in her journal she wrote of having made family groupings just like in a real museum.

In all instances Terri seemed to feel most comfortable in the **play-space** orientation where she could engage in artmaking and in the **conceptual-space** orientation where she searched for familiar subjects. She appeared not to immerse herself in the **dream-space** orientation, as Jess had, but rather she scanned the museum for recognizable themes, for things she could relate to her home and school experiences.

Then she recorded the experiences in a straightforward linear, narrative sequence - less to do with metaphor, and more to do with a literal, concrete interpretation.

C Jay's Story

Jay was the third student to agree to collaborate in the research project. He was nine years old and in a French Immersion grade four class in a local alternative school. Even though his mother had spoken of a box of "treasures" which Jay kept under his bed, he chose to bring his comic book collection to our first meeting (Figure 34).

Activity I: Horner's dream-space orientation (rehearsal)

I asked Jay to imagine that he was being interviewed by a local TV station and to tell the audience about his comic book collection. I asked him how he had started his collecting. "I gave my friend money to go to the comic book store and get me a comic book. He got me *Venom: the Madness*" (Figure 35). This had happened about a year ago and now Jay owned a dozen or so comic books. He had selected ten to show to me.

When asked to choose his favourite, Jay spoke with excitement about a new villain in the Spiderman series called Annex. "His leg had to be amputated but he was given a new leg with a robot suit and an arm he could change to anything he wanted" (Figure 36). Adding to his collection was a slow process because he had to use his own pocket money.



Figure 34. Jay's comic book collection.



Figure 35. Venom, The Madness, Jay's first acquisition.



Figure 36. Spiderman:Annex, Jay's current favourite.

Activity II: Horner's play-space orientation (rehearsal)

Jay was eager to try the activity with the *Magical Travelling Museum-in-a-box*. I explained how he could unpack the contents of the box in order to build his own version of a museum space. He began to unpack the objects from the containers. He then selected only a few objects and began his construction. He built a rectangle with two pillars at one end. A soapstone chameleon was put in place as a decorative lintel. An agate slice was balanced on top of the rectangle. "I've used the rock as a pool. All the things around it have to do with water", explained Jay. These were a bronze shell, a geode, a small verdite figure, and a soapstone turtle. He then added three of the Guatemalan trouble dolls which were dressed in outfits vaguely reminiscent of martial arts outfits. Martial Arts was another one of Jay's current passions (Figure 37).

It seemed as if Jay had quite forgotten the intent of his task which was to construct a miniature version of a museum or museum show. So I inquired as to whether he recalled ever having visited a museum with a pool. Jay was not sure but said that they had a swimming pool at home. He had used the objects to create a familiar setting related to his home environment.

When asked to choose an interesting or favourite object from amongst the museum-in-a-box collection, Jay picked up the verdite figure from Southern Africa, which had been perched in the front of his pool (Figure 38). I asked if, while he was holding it, he could describe what it was made of. At first he was unsure. Then he said, "it feels like the blue rock and it's a statue of something". I asked if he thought that it looked like an animal or a human form. We agreed that it was a human figure and Jay

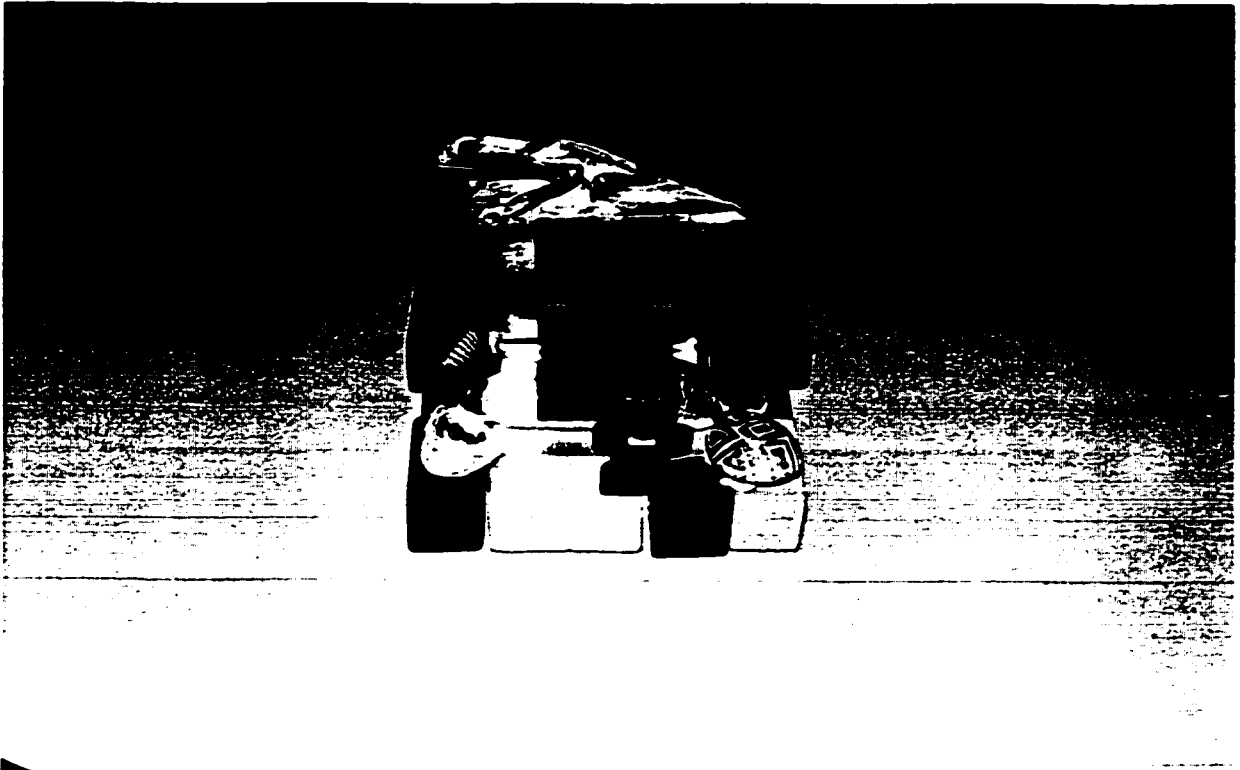


Figure 37. Jay's construction of a pool surrounded by objects relating to water.



Figure 38. Verdite sculpture, Southern Africa.

added that “it looks like a person that’s mad. When pressed for a reason for his choice, Jay said, “I just liked the colour and it looked neat.”

Activity III: Horner’s dream/play/metaphoric-space orientations

After discussing the possibilities for visits to museum sites, Jay chose to visit the Redpath Museum which had advertised the following: “Find out how Shredder, Darth Vader and the Samurai protected themselves and make a miniature suit of armour or a life-size helmet to take home”(Redpath Museum, 1997). This topic related closely to his current interest in comic book heroes, cartoon characters, and role playing games like Dungeons and Dragons which were all a part of popular culture.

We arrived early so that Jay could look around before the workshop was due to begin. He immediately went to the case which displayed two Egyptian mummies including a mummified cat. Jay knew about mummies from comic books and some TV cartoons. We tried to take a photograph but it turned out to be too dark. Two other exhibits caught Jay’s attention, a Roman sarcophagus with the ashes of the reclining figure interred within and a ritualistic Kongo carving from Zaire. Next we went upstairs to look at the dinosaur skeleton and the rock and mineral collection. As was his style, Jay darted from one thing to another often looking into odd corners.

At 3.30 p.m. we returned downstairs for the workshop. There was a Samurai warrior’s suit of armour on display . We learnt some facts about the similarities and differences between the Samurai suit and a mediaeval knight’s suit of armour. One of the facts which intrigued Jay was that the inside of the Samurai’s armour was dyed red so that it would produce a scary red glow. For the artmaking there was a choice of three

kinds of helmets (Figure 39). The materials available were: aluminum plates, crepe paper, bristol board, butterfly pins, pipe cleaners, scissors, glue, and staplers.

All the participants worked busily for about forty minutes. Jay needed some help with the fine-tuning. He had chosen to make a helmet with a moveable visor. When everybody was finished the animator and I took photographs of the children's accomplishments (Figure 40). Jay wanted to return to the museum space to finish looking at the various animal specimens. He treated the whole museum as a **play-space**. His journey resembled a zig-zag path as he flitted from a familiar object to an exotic or unusual sight. He pretended to attack a grizzly bear, hung his helmet from a pair of antlers (Figure 41), and admired the stately horns of a sable antelope. Suddenly, he remembered having passed a dodo bird and ran back down to see it. Next he wanted to have his photograph taken in front of a cougar (Figure 42). Jay said that he knew about these animals from projects he, his sister, and his friends had done for school. Finally Jay decided to pose in front of the elaborately carved doors at the entrance.

For Jay's visit to an art museum he had chosen to visit the Asterix show at the MMFA. It was most fortuitous that the duration of this show coincided with the period of time during which I was working with Jay. Cartoon characters, comic book heroes, and Dungeons and Dragons characters were his abiding interest. On our arrival at the museum we had to pass through the sections on the ancient cultures. Jay was hoping to find another Egyptian mummy but was disappointed to see only a small fragment with Hieroglyphs. In the main hall of the Asterix show he displayed the same behaviour as he had at the Redpath. He would dart here and there as something caught his attention. Often he was more interested in peering behind screens and peeking into spaces which were not

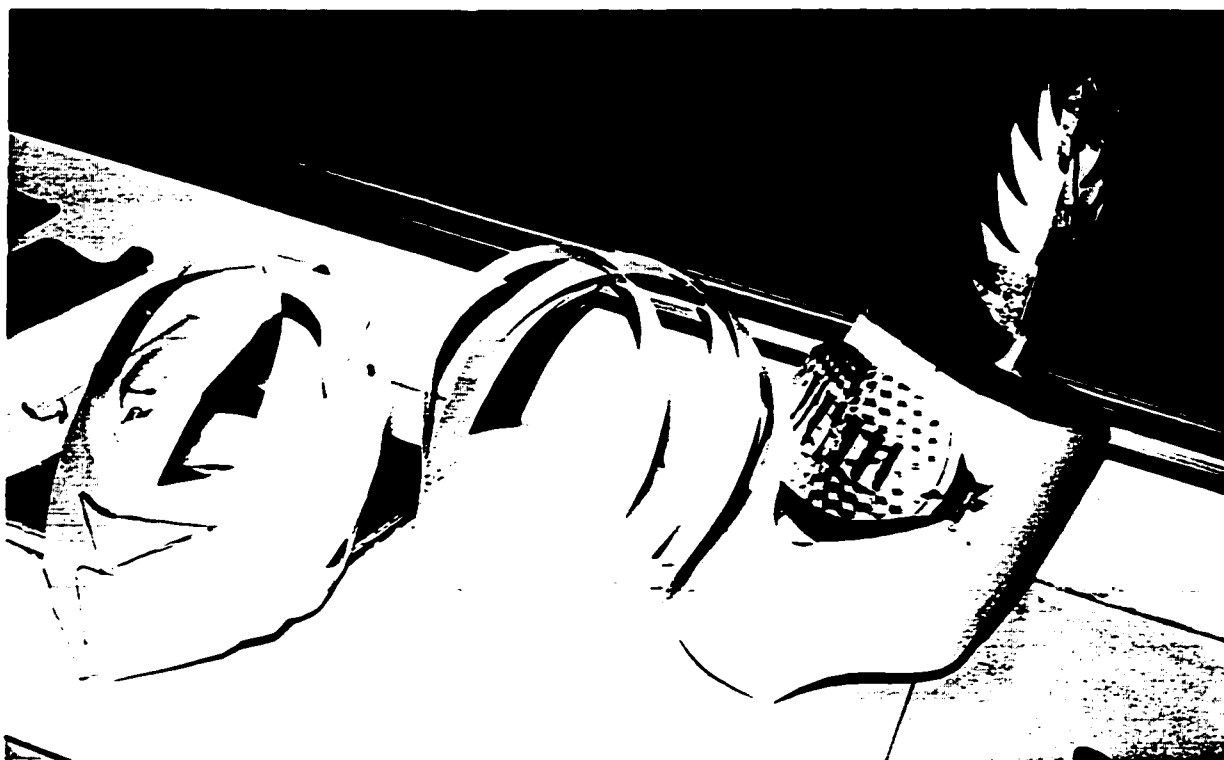


Figure 39. Examples of mediaeval helmets.



Figure 40. Jay displaying his completed helmet on his lap.



Figure 41. Jay hanging his helmet from a pair of antlers, Redpath Museum, Montreal.



Figure 42. Jay facing a fierce cougar, Redpath Museum, Montreal.

his concern. He “checked out” the artist’s original sketches, moved on to a case containing daggers and spears, and looked at re-constructions of wagons and a chariot. A tiny bronze casting of a wild boar and the maquette of a Gaulish village particularly enchanted him. He remarked on the delicacy and smallness of the constructions made of twigs and straw.

Next he moved to the bank of computers to try them out. He found the instructions too difficult just as he found the didactic panels too long to read. He suddenly spied the boutique which was selling items connected with the Asterix show and started browsing. I asked if he would like to choose a souvenir to take home with him. He looked at all the items carefully checking the prices. After I had told him how much he could spend, he chose a soft toy version of Obelix. Jay was absolutely delighted and some time later gave me a thank you note with his drawing of Obelix on the front (Figure 43).

Before we left Jay posed with one of the cartoon characters. He also took a photo of a warrior-like deity in the Asian section.. Weapons and warriors most often got his attention. He explained that this interest related to the Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game he played in the after-school programme. He was responsible for creating a character with various attributes and weapons skills. Finally, on our way out, we took a photo of the huge banner advertising the Asterix exhibition.



Thanks

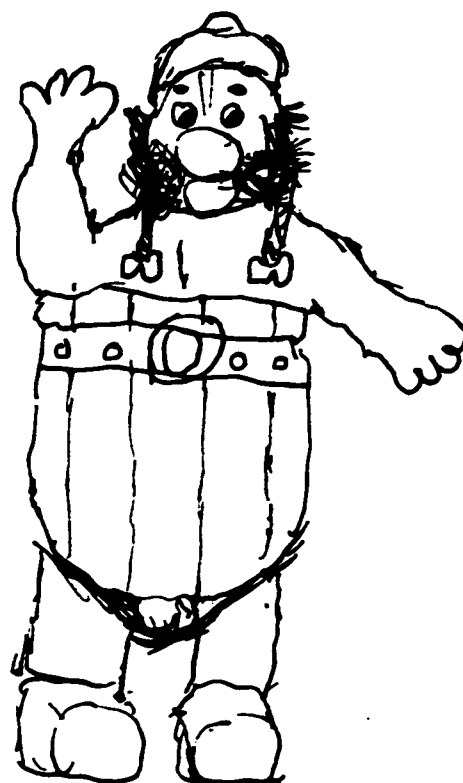


Figure 43. Jay holding a stuffed toy version of Obelix and the thank you note with a sketch of Obelix.

Activity IV: Horner's conceptual-space orientation

At our post-museum visit meeting I asked Jay to choose from the options available or to suggest something of his own devising. Jay decided to create a new superhero out of plasticine. He worked in a focussed manner for some forty minutes on a winged creature who was to act as a sidekick for Spiderman. At the end of this period he was quite satisfied with his effort and so we photographed the superhero (Figure 44). Unfortunately he did not have time to design a story-board with the new character. He also declined the opportunity to catalogue his comic book collection. For him there was no connection between his own collection of comic books and the current Asterix exhibition.

Analysis

Jay approached all activities in a playful manner. Every site became a **play-space** which he explored in his own eccentric way. His attention span was too short to engage in the **dream-space** orientation. His attention was given briefly to items which related to his current interests and hobbies which centred around comic books and role-playing games. Like many boys his age, he devoted his energy to active pursuits and rarely became involved in **metaphoric-space** orientations or **conceptual-space** orientations unless under duress by adults such as teachers or parents. However, he did show an appreciation for artistic techniques which resulted in "realistic" appearances such as the maquette of a Gaulish village, and was able to focus for an extended period of time during artmaking.



Figure 44. Jay's superhero made of plasticine.

D Ewan's Story

Ewan was an eight-year-old student in a grade three English class. He was most eager to work with me and expressed an interest in visiting museums. Because he lived close by, Ewan came to my house for the first two planned activities. However, he had decided that he wanted to visit a museum before any of the other planned activities. He had already visited some museums with his family and with his class, and was most anxious to try an art museum. One of the features which influenced Ewan's choice was the workshop offered in conjunction with the exhibition of Joe Fafard sculptures. He was especially interested in acquiring new skills.

Activity IV – Horner's dream/play/metaphoric-space orientation

When we arrived at the museum Ewan wanted to go straight to the main show, *Joe Fafard: The Bronze Years*. He methodically moved through the spaces remarking on pieces he liked. The "flat" cows and horses intrigued him. Later when we watched the video on Fafard's working methods, we were amazed to discover that the "flat" sculptures had been fashioned from styrofoam sheets and then placed in sand baths in preparation for the lost-wax method of casting.

In one of the galleries Ewan recognised a sculpture of the painter, van Gogh. I asked if he knew anything about van Gogh. He admitted, "I know about his ear being cut off". At the end he professed that his most favourite piece in the show was the large-scale photograph of *The Pasture*. The photograph showed Fafard's bronze sculptures of resting cattle in situ at the Toronto-Dominion Centre. "It looks so peaceful," he said. Ewan's

focus was waning at this point so we took a lunch break. After lunch, on our way to the workshop, we passed through several other sections.

In the Ancient Cultures section Ewan stopped at the Egyptian hieroglyphics. He tried to decipher some of the symbols. Apparently he had been given a kit which explained how to read hieroglyphics. As we progressed through the galleries I noticed that Ewan was not really able to attend to the objects on display because he was becoming anxious about the workshop which had now become his main focus. He did mention that he liked all the bronze and soapstone sculptures we had passed by and also the architecture of the building.

The workshop was entitled *Joe Fafard's Entourage*. The participants were encouraged to model a clay head of an animal or human form. Ewan was excited to be using clay as this was a material with which he was already familiar. He spent some time trying different possibilities of animal heads but then settled on producing a space alien in a pointed hat. Unfortunately the clay head did not survive long enough to be photographed. Ewan had experienced a very full day and was ready to go home. He declared himself to be very impressed with the art museum. "I'm going to come back with my family", he said.

Activity I: Horner's dream-space (rehearsal)

Ewan arrived at my house with not one but four collections. When I explained that we would pretend to be conducting an interview for a local TV station, he entered quickly into the spirit of the game and selected his sport card collection to talk about. His first cards had been passed on to him by his dad when he was about four years of age. He

was still collecting, "I have a whole bunch in the basement but there are no more pages in the binders". When I asked how he added to his collection he said that his older brother traveled and brought him cards from all over the world. Some of the cards came in packages from stores and some he found when people were careless and dropped them (Figure 45).

I asked if he was able to choose one favourite from such a large number of cards. His most favourite was a card of hockey player, Brett Hull and one of football player, Thurman Thomas which was even more special because it was a holographic card. "I have more in bags at home." The numbers of cards in the collection seemed really important to Ewan.

The second collection Ewan unpacked was a collection of POGs (Figure 46). POGs are a cross between marbles and baseball cards. Some seventy years ago in Hawaii, milk bottle tops were used to play games. This was revived in 1990 using tops from Passion-Orange-Guava Juice. Hence the name POGs. The discs are decorated with a variety of designs such as cultural icons, advertizing symbols, or cartoon characters. (Rothman, 1994). The POGs came in a plastic container and Ewan surmised that he had at least a thousand POGs. There were several different kinds - some had three-dimensional effects and some had jokes. "You get blank ones to paint. I designed my own in cartooning class. I sometimes play games with my friends. I don't mind losing them because they're easy to get." I asked Ewan if he had any favourites. He showed me a Ben & Jerry's and a Frankenpog. However, the most important thing for Ewan was the size of the collection.

והתחייבות חובט ל המעיל וט וולו י .כ.ד אוערז י

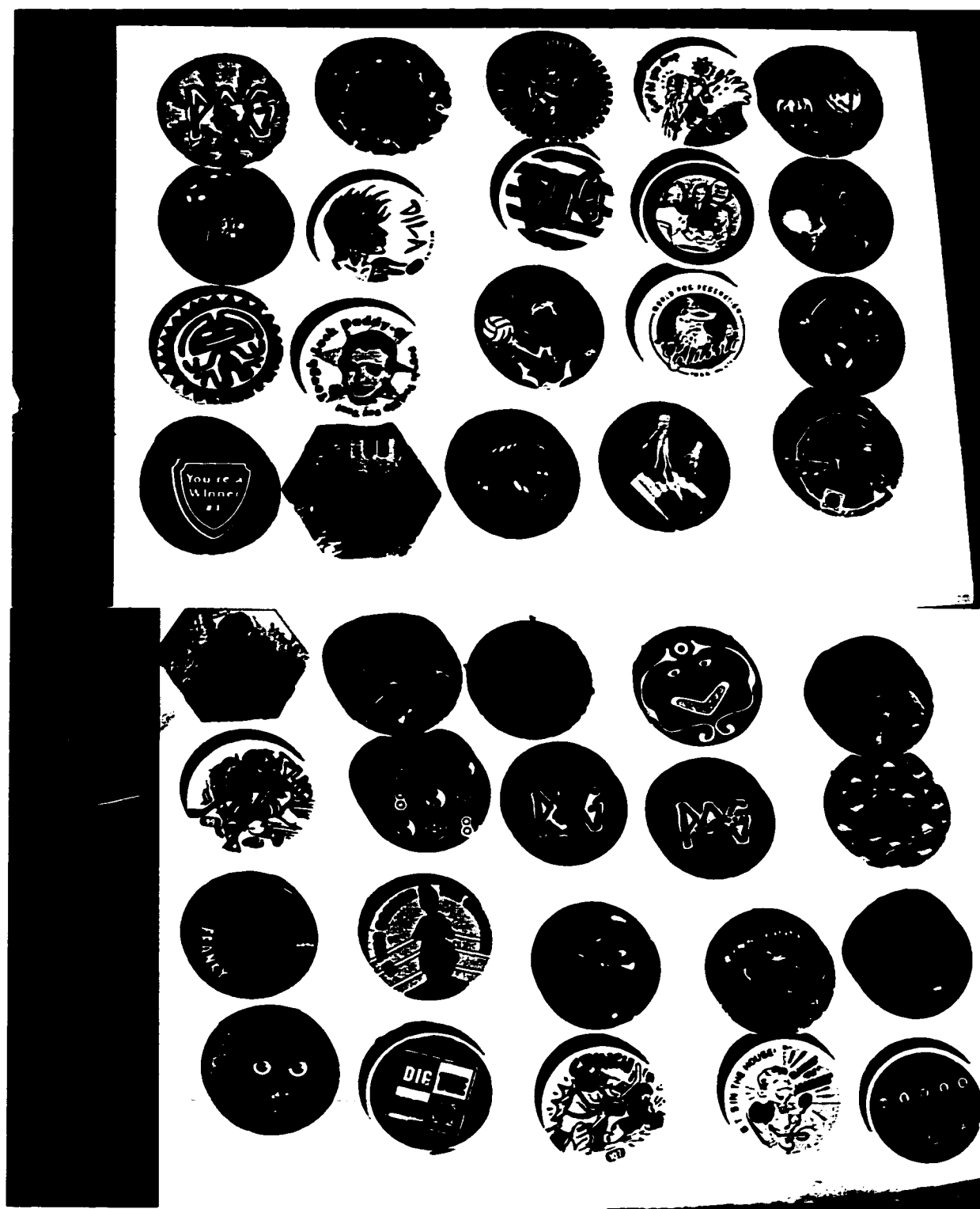


Figure 46. Part of Ewan's POG collection.

Next Ewan produced what he called his string collection. The strings were silk embroidery threads carefully stored in a blue plastic box with several compartments (figure 47). He used the threads to make friendship bracelets. He proudly told me that he had learned several patterns. I asked what they were. "I know Tiger Tail, Chinese Staircase, Barracuda, and Arrowhead (Figure 48). I'm going to W.H. Perron to get more thread. I also collect beads to use with thongs and thread. I've got sparkly beads I keep in a big bookshelf. I make bracelets and necklaces to give to friends and I might even make some to sell." I then asked if he had a favourite colour or colours that he liked to work with. Ewan said that Electric Blue was the one he liked best.

Finally, Ewan brought out his most prized collection, "his shell and fossil collection" as he called it. He had started it with a large shell given to him by a friend of his brother. There was a piece of coral from Miami with fossils in it. "I have shell fossils and bone fossils, they might be dinosaur bones" (Figure 49). He pointed out some pieces. It had been a large rock which he had found in the wooded park near his home. He had broken it into several pieces. When I asked, Ewan professed to know that this area had been under the sea long before the age of the dinosaurs. He had also found fossilized shells. Among his most prized specimens were some rocks which he believed contained diamonds. One of these with the "shiny, white diamonds" was his favourite (Figure 50).

Ewan then told me that his grandfather was bringing him a shark's tooth from Miami which he would add to his collection but mostly he kept the specimens for what was in them or on them. The rock and fossil collection was kept together with the other collections on a large bookcase in his bedroom so that he could have easy access to them.



Figure 47. Part of Ewan's collection of threads.



Figure 48. *Tiger Tail, Chinese Staircase, Barracuda, and Arrowhead* weaving patterns used for friendship bracelets.

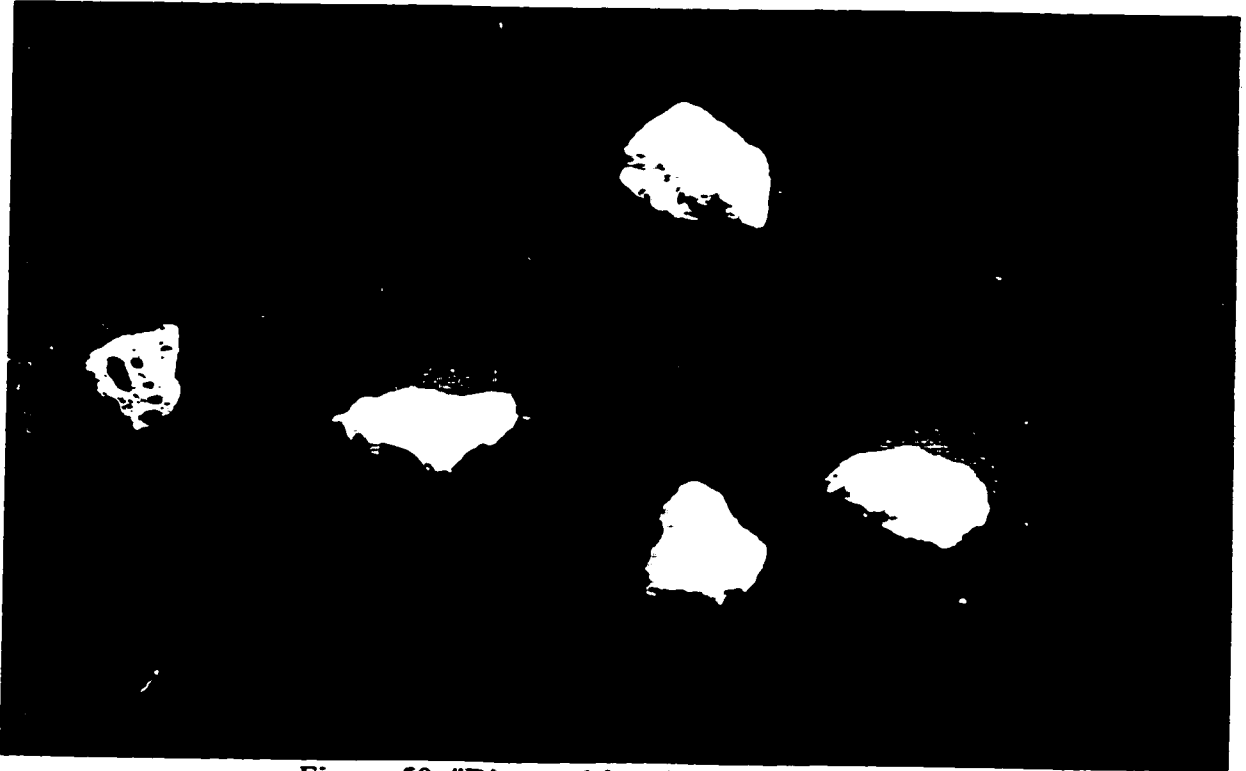


Figure 50. "Diamond-bearing rocks" from Ewan's collection.

Together Ewan and I photographed the collections. Ewan was very excited at being allowed to handle the camera. I helped set the focus for him when he had difficulties. Then we cleared the space for the next activity.

Activity II: Horner's play-space orientation, *Magical Traveling Museum-in-a-box*

I presented Ewan with the museum-in-a-box and explained that he should open the containers, explore the contents and then construct his own version of a museum or museum exhibition. Ewan very carefully and slowly opened each box and placed each object on top of its own container. He especially commented on the beauty of the glass shell, the geode, and the slice of agate, all objects which related to his own collection, all of which he found aesthetically appealing.

Next Ewan began to build his museum. He constructed an imposing entrance by placing two cylindrical green blocks on top of two blue wooden cubes. To crown these he chose the two verdite pieces from Southern Africa. He then picked out some rectangular blocks to build the "rim". He decided that the museum needed a roof and noticed that I had another set of blocks in the corner of the room. We brought the box out and Ewan tried to construct a roof. Unfortunately there were not enough blocks to cover the whole of the open space so Ewan was momentarily thwarted. Then he said, "I'll make an opening to let the light in." He happily continued by placing trees down one side. Next he found a block in the shape of a cow and put that into the museum - a memory of the Joe Fafard show we had recently seen at the MMFA (Figure 51).

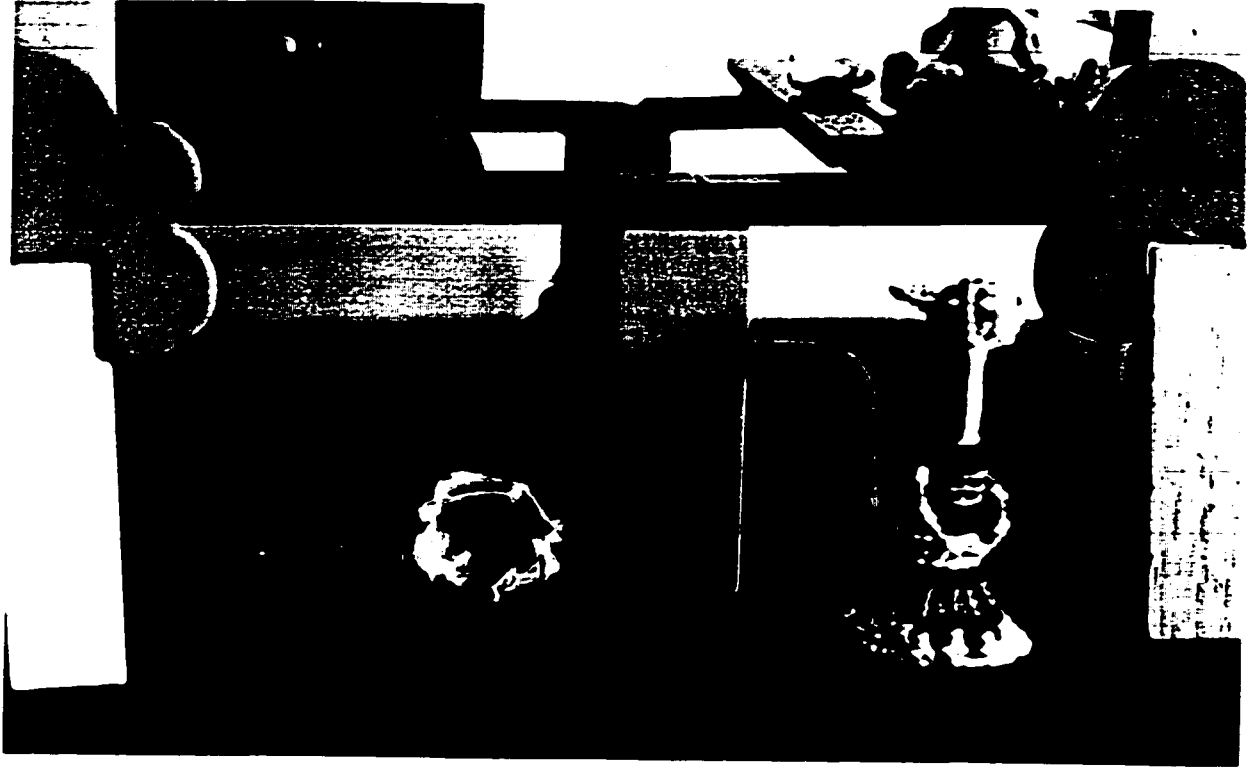


Figure 51. Side view of Ewan's museum construction.

He then carefully selected objects he found most pleasing to place in the museum. These were an ivory lion, Guatemalan trouble dolls, a Chinese ceramic of a female form seated on a cushion, and a Ndebele beaded doll. He suspended a glass shell between two blocks. He placed a male and female form at the entrance (Figure 52). Then he had an idea to use a piece of cardboard to form another level. He even used several blocks to form a chimney to put on top of the roof. Ewan had thus constructed a magnificent two-story version of a museum (Figure 53). Finally, he asked for paper and pen so that he could make a sign for the museum (Figure 54). Ewan had participated fully in the play-space orientation and had made many decisions based on his experiences at the MMFA where he had professed to liking the architecture. This was not stated explicitly by Ewan but I recognised several of the architectural features such as the use of several levels, the elaborate entrance, the skylight, and the choice of precious objects placed within.

Ewan was very pleased with the result and eagerly took photographs from every angle. I asked which object in the museum was his favourite. He chose the glass shell. He admired its transparency and the way it had been “carved”, “It looks real like my shells” (Figure 55).

Not wanting to miss out on the fact that the other participants had also visited the Redpath Museum, Ewan chose to attend on the day of a workshop on meteorites. As on the other occasions we arrived some thirty minutes before the start of the workshop so that we could look around the museum. Ewan decided to go to the second floor. He then walked slowly from case to case until his eye was caught by something: by the bright colour of a yellow stone or a sparking crystal or some familiar creature such as a fox or a flying squirrel.

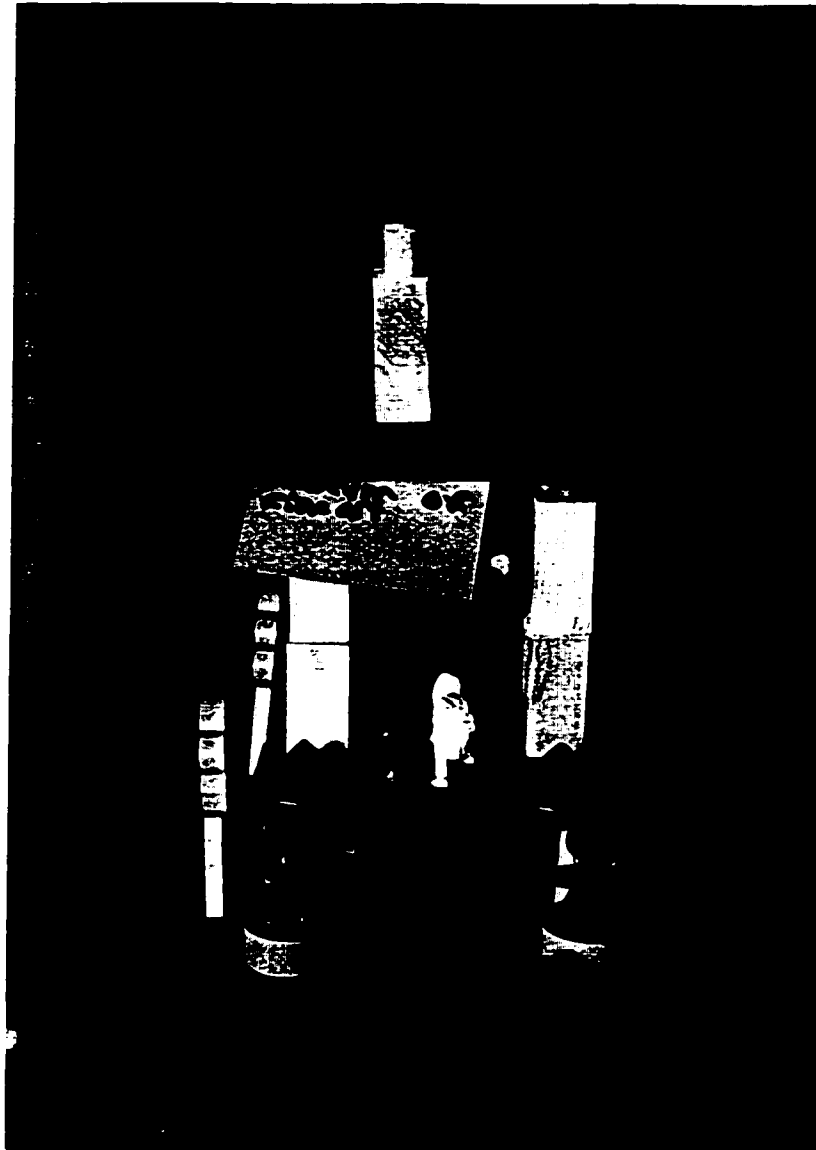


Figure 54. Front view of the completed museum with sign saying "museum of fine art".



Figure 55. Glass shell.

Sometimes Ewan would ask me to read a label to him but for the most part he was just happy to look and to snap photographs with a throw-away camera.

We returned to the ground floor for the scheduled workshop. All the participants were taken upstairs to see an actual specimen of a meteorite (Figure 56). It was dark with a hole burnt right through it. Back in the workshop the participants were encouraged to handle pieces of meteorites and tectonite (aerodynamic rocks which form in the atmosphere after impact). There were magnifying glasses and magnets with which to explore the characteristics of the meteorites. Ewan made sure to get his turn with the exploration tools. Some of the facts which interested us both were: a lake in Quebec was formed by a meteor, the dinosaurs were probably destroyed by a meteor, and a meteor landed on the South Shore about two years ago.

The art activity was to build a model of a crater. The materials to be used were: aluminum foil plates, clay, sand, marbles, and green and black tempera paints. Ewan constructed his model quickly following the animator's instructions. He was very pleased with the results and posed with his creation for some photographs (Figure 57). We then went back upstairs to finish our visit of the exhibits. Ewan was anxious to continue using the throw-away camera which I had purchased for the occasion and which turned out to be the most suitable for a young child's capabilities. He chose to photograph specimens with which he was already familiar, such as a lion, a snowy owl, a falcon, a penguin, a bat, an assortment of horns and antlers, sea creatures and some rock specimens which reminded him of his "diamond" bearing rocks (Figure 58). Ewan was very happy with this visit and asked if I would bring him again to try some of the other workshops

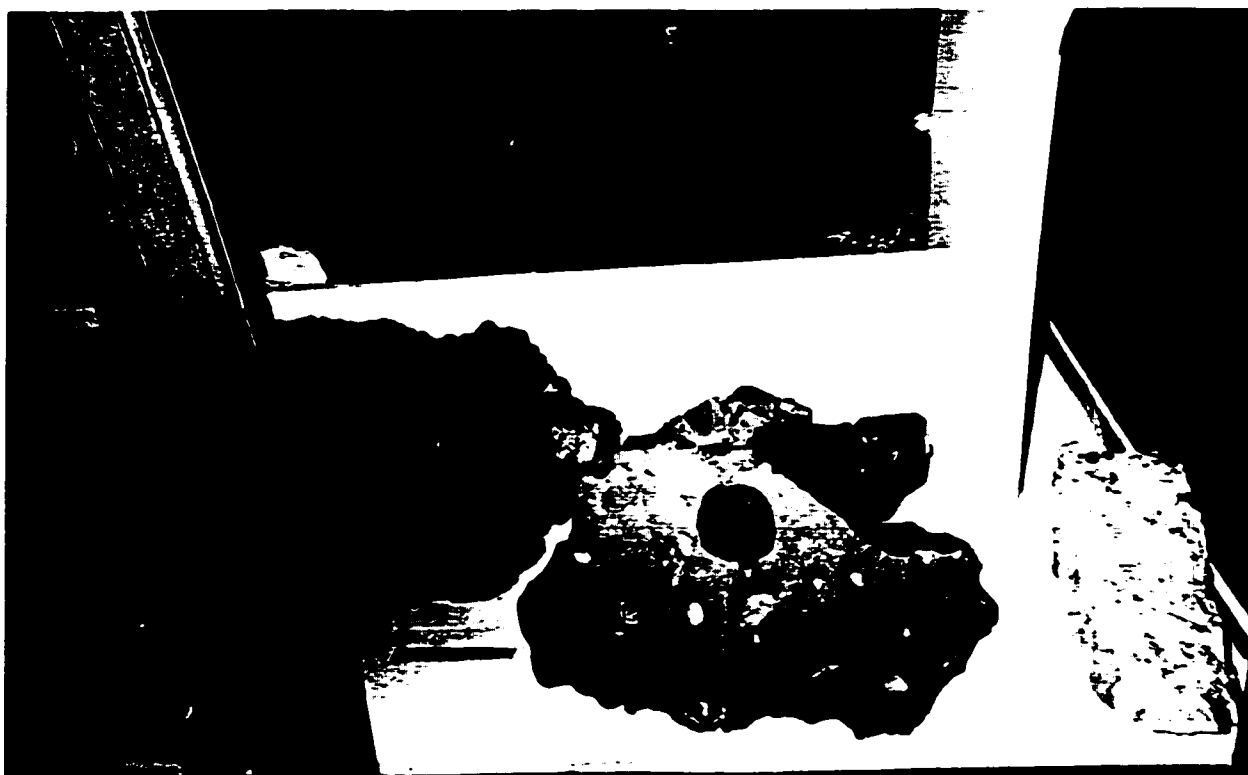


Figure 56. A meteorite fragment, Redpath Museum, Montreal.

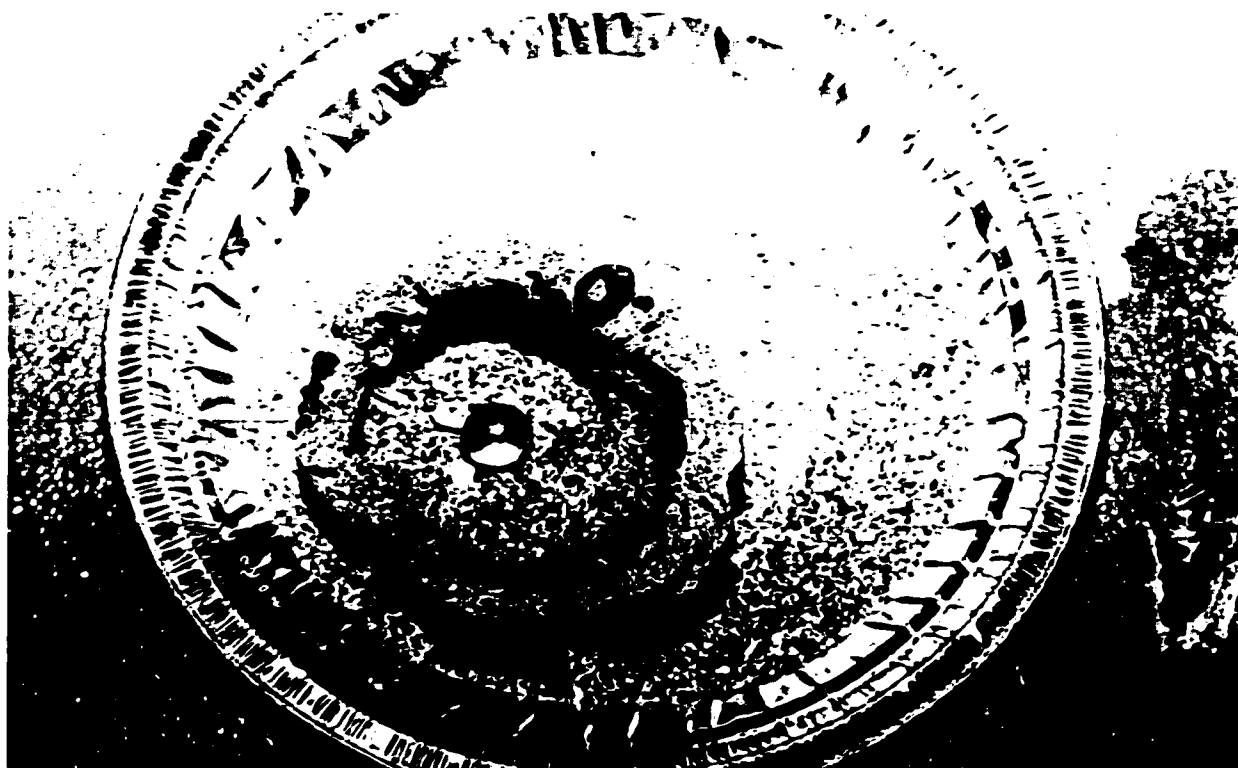


Figure 57. Ewan's model of a crater with a meteorite and tectonite.



Figure 58. Ewan's photograph of rocks which reminded him of his own collection, Redpath Museum, Montreal.

which he had seen advertised. He was definitely most interested in the activities associated with the contents of the museum.

Activity IV: Horner's conceptual-space orientation.

As promised, and in accordance with what I had done for the other three participants, I presented Ewan with all the photographs and a sketchbook. I reminded him of the choices we had devised to bring closure and to encapsulate the museum experiences. I also reminded Ewan that he could create his own method of response. Ewan was thrilled with the photographs but said, "I like to keep my collections on my bookcase in my bedroom so I can sort through them." It appeared that the photographs would be kept as a collection in a pile on a shelf. Once again Ewan expressed his desire to try another museum workshop. Later, I heard from his mother that he had indeed escorted his whole family to the MMFA.

Analysis

Ewan, like Jess, was able to enter the **dream-space** orientation with his collections. He had an almost magical connection with his shell and fossil collection, in which he believed that he had found fossilized dinosaur bones and diamond bearing rocks. He also used his collections as cultural capital in that he knew they had a monetary value as well as a certain amount of bargaining power he could use with his peers.

At the museums he entered most actively into the **play-space** orientations. His selection process had been based, in both instances, on the availability of an interactive, studio-based workshop. His viewing behaviour was more conservative than the other children's. It was based on previous experience and his stated predilection for three-

dimensional forms, sculptural and architectural. He operated in a very concrete manner as though he had skipped right to the **conceptual-space** orientation - but in a somewhat superficial way, a brief survey rather than a desire to understand the context and purpose of the objects. He was interested in picking up bits of interesting information which he could then impart to friends and family - a sort of **personal bank** of facts and figures. He likewise collected experiences of making and doing to add to his bank of **creative skills**. He was in some sense the most serious collector of the four participants, relying on his collections of objects and of knowledge to provide him with a certain social cachet.

CHAPTER 6

Analyses and Findings

The last two decades have seen a tremendous growth in museum education... simultaneously, our ideas about learning theory, about what it means to learn, have undergone a sea change, not so much in that there are dramatic new ideas, but in that a coherent and interrelated set of ideas advocated by a steady stream of thoughtful commentators from Dewey and Piaget to Vigotsky as well as a wave of current writers now receives wide acceptance. These ideas cluster around the notion that the most important issues involved in understanding learning are derived from analysing the actions of the learner rather than in probing the nature of the subject to be learned. We now talk about *constructivism*, how the learner constructs meaning out of experience. (Hein, 1995, p. 189)

In this study I had set out to explore the notion that children's collections of objects could be used as a link to visits to art museums. The question I posed was **how could children's experiences of collecting and arranging their own personal collections be used to provide a link or a bridge to facilitate responses to objects in art museums?** I was able to come to some useful conclusions from the gathered data regarding my question. However, as made explicit in the quote above, I have also discovered a rich source of information in looking at how my subjects made meaning of the experiences I attempted to stage for them. Even though I had tried to construct an atmosphere and events conducive to learning, as Hein has intimated, teaching and learning are not necessarily logically connected with each other (p.191). Thus the first

section of the final analysis deals with the question as posed. Thereafter, I have used Gardner's (1991) five entry points into the understanding of knowledge, (**narrational, logical-quantitative, foundational, aesthetic, and experiential**), in order to categorize the different learning styles of my subjects. From this information I propose modifications and/or additions to my original study.

In the section on implications for teachers I have attempted to show that collaboration between the museum's educational staff and the classroom teacher plus a flexible pedagogy is of the utmost importance in providing meaningful learning experiences for the visiting students. A "pedagogy of focus" serves to set up the optimal conditions for the required learning to take place. Since this is a vast field of study in itself I have had to narrow it down to the area which relates directly to my question.

A. Analysis of Activity I: Horner's dream-space orientation.

The first activity which I had planned for the participants was based on Horner's **dream-space** orientation. It was designed to gather information about the children's personal collections, their attachment to their collections, and the function of their collections in their daily lives. The strategy used was to set up a pretend interview session (with a local TV station, a radio station, or a newspaper reporter) where the collectors could talk freely about their collections. If necessary, the interviewer could prompt responses with a few planned questions. This format proved to be accessible to all the students, although Ewan entered the most fully into the role of interviewee. He presented his collections with great aplomb. He saved what he considered the best for last - the

fossils and precious stones. The other three students needed more prompting. However, Jess seemed to be the most attached to her collection, touching and playing with her rocks on a regular basis. I believe that part of the reason for their difficulty in engaging with the **dream-space** orientation could be explained developmentally and by a learning style geared toward a more concrete outlook. As a society we often act as though fantasy ends with the completion of Kindergarten.

As found in research presented by Ulbricht (1980), collecting activities began for these participants at an early age. Ewan recalled starting his card collection at four years of age, Jess began her collection of rocks at five or six years of age, and Terri and Jay both began collecting at seven or eight years of age. Three of the children chose to bring in rock collections. However, for each child their collections held distinct meanings and functions. Jess had the strongest attachment to her collection. It held strong aesthetic meaning for her but she could not find the words to describe the aesthetic attributes which attracted her to certain objects. She lacked a visual art vocabulary. As Jess had mentioned, children are often attracted to pebbles with interesting shapes or markings. They pick them up, carry them in pockets or lunchboxes, and show them to friends and family as curiosities. If family and friends support this interest through added contributions, the pocketful of objects can develop into a full-fledged collection as it did for Jess, Terri, and Ewan.

For Jess, the stones she collected herself were stored separately from those her mother had bought through a catalogue. She had a more intimate relationship with personal finds. These were kept in a basket where she could play with them and study their attributes. In this regard it is interesting to note that Jay's mother had made mention

of an intriguing box of “treasures” which were stored under Jay’s bed. These he declined to bring in for the study. From this I realized that there was a distinction made between personal, private collections belonging to the world of the child and collections they were prepared to share or believed would be more acceptable to the adult world. Sexson (1982) makes an interesting comment very relevant to this finding:

Why do children collect feathers, hide gold paper, delicately perch a marble in the arms of an unresisting house plant, or stick shells under their beds or stones into their mattresses? The ‘junk’ that is precious to children – and to adults – is precisely the stuff of the sacred (p. 5).

For the most part students chose to share collections that they believed were substantial enough in number or in value to impress the adult world. Jay had brought in his comic book collection. He knew that these items had a monetary value depending on their mint condition and scarcity. He used his collection to participate in popular culture. He collected information about weaponry and special abilities for the superheroes and role-playing, adventure characters he designed. He used them as inspiration for his artwork. Likewise, Ewan knew that some of the cards in his collection, inherited from his father, were valuable. He also collected POGs which were a part of popular culture. They were used in games and in bartering with his friends. His collection of silk threads was used to make gifts for friends. Finally, his special collection which he believed to contain fossilized dinosaur bones and pieces of diamonds, was used to obtain a certain social cachet, to impress a willing audience.

Terri was the only one who used her collection to gain some cognitive knowledge. She had books showing maps and specimen details which enabled her to identify the provenance and type of rocks and gemstones in her collection. From this I concluded that collections fulfil different functions and occupy different categories for each individual.

B. Analysis of Activity II: Horner's play-space orientation.

The intention behind the planning of this activity was to find out the participants' knowledge regarding museums and their function. I also wanted to provide a link between the students' collections and art museums by using my own collection of art objects in a playful, interactive situation. Each of the four participants were willing and eager to interact with the *Magical Travelling Museum-in-a-box*. Each happily entered into the **play-space** orientation in the role of curator of an art museum.

Jess followed the instructions very literally and built her exhibition in the actual box. However, she carefully grouped clusters of objects and arranged them sequentially to represent a hierarchy of earth materials, then animals, and finally, human forms. This could also be seen as representing the narrative of the creation story in Genesis. She felt comfortable during this activity because it reminded her of building a doll's house for her little sister. This was a familiar activity. Both Terri and Ewan incorporated their memories of museum buildings into their structures. They showed a strong awareness of the gallery spaces. They chose objects for their special qualities and decorative possibilities. These three students demonstrated by their constructions their ideas of museums as imposing, majestic structures with grand entrances and hallways housing beautiful and exotic objects. (Figures 5, 8, 54). In hindsight, I wonder if Ewan chose to

visit the art museum first as a way of familiarizing himself with the structure before he attempted to construct his own version. His structure was certainly the most elaborate and detailed version of the four constructions. Herein is a strong pointer to the need for rehearsal activities as scaffolding for the acquisition of knowledge.

Jay, in contrast, became totally involved with the playful possibilities of the readymades and, instead of constructing a museum space, built a pool surrounded by objects which he associated with water.

From the results of this activity, I concluded that children's perceptions of museum buildings was that of something grand, something special; certainly not something connected to their world. Thus the link or bridge which I had tried to construct between the child's world and the child's collections and the adult world or art world proved to be tenuous.

This finding was further supported when the students were invited to choose their favourite object from my collection and to explain their choice in words, I discovered the paucity of their art vocabulary and realized the difficulty they experienced in talking about art objects. They could remark on broad categories of materials, textures, and qualities such as wood, stone, cold, hard, different. This lack of a descriptive vocabulary is best exemplified by Jay's response to his choice of a Southern African figure in verdite: "I just liked the colour and it looked neat".

Jess who had had no previous experience of visiting an art museum, believed that the markings on the soapstone carving of a chameleon were signs of age. She believed that museums housed objects of antiquity. This is supported by her comment that a book could be exhibited in a museum "if its old. Not if it's a child's book written like about a

year ago". Terri had chosen the same verdite figure carving as had Jay. Her reason was, "it is different. You won't find it in Canada." She also stated that it looked like the work of ancient cultures. These responses reveal again their notion that a museum is a grand edifice housing exotic objects of some antiquity. I discovered from these responses that at this stage there was no link or connection for the students between their collections of found objects, natural objects, commercial objects of pop culture and the crafted objects from other cultures which constituted my collection.

Ewan's choice of a glass shell form was made because he admired the craftsmanship and the fact that it looked "real" like the shells in his collection. As I reread my field notes and pondered on the significance of this response, I realized that the students' choice of museum sites to visit had been based on a desire to be skilled at making things look "real". Their school art experiences were making and doing. Their vocabulary was that of studio art. Thus, for the next activity, they all had chosen sites and occasions where they could participate in a hands-on workshop or studio activity, events with which they were familiar. According to Ingle (1994), the majority of pupils in a survey conducted on pupils' perceptions of museum education sessions liked touching and using objects in a museum. "Furthermore objects touched had appeal even if they were not as impressive as those displayed in the galleries" (p. 318). This observation hearkens back to the findings of Csikszentmihalyi's and Rochberg-Halton's ethnographic study. It was found that children preferred objects related to action and would even use objects made for contemplation in an active manner.

C Analysis of Activity III: Horner's dream/play/metaphoric-space orientation

The two previous activities had been planned as rehearsals for the main event, a visit to an art museum. Jess and Terri had chosen to attend a workshop at the Redpath Museum on carving soapstone amulets. The Redpath museum is a natural history museum with an eclectic collection of rocks and minerals, animal habitats, a few dinosaur fossils, some Egyptian mummies, a Samurai suit of armour, a small collection of African artifacts, etc. In other words it functions as a cabinet of curiosities to neophytes and family groups. The objects are familiar and accessible to the majority of viewers. An art educator had been hired to animate studio art activities which related to artifacts housed in the museum. This proved attractive to my participants. Thus in the spirit of emergent curriculum and constructing knowledge in collaboration with my students, we had agreed to make the visit to an art museum on our second trip (except in the case of Ewan). As mentioned above, the workshop on soapstone carving was cancelled and the two girls attended a workshop on making masks offered in its place. They were both very comfortable with this change because they had had experience with mask making in school. The animator kindly supplied us with materials to accomplish the amulet carving on our own. Once again the students experienced success and maintained a somewhat tenuous link with their rock and gemstone collections.

When we did make our visit to the MMFA, each chose to start in an area with which they were familiar. In the Educational Carrefour, Jess constructed a still life with the life-like samples of fruit, vegetables, fish, glasses, vases, bowls, etc. and thereafter sketched her efforts. The remainder of her time was spent trying to view every gallery and hall in the museum buildings. She moved silently and doggedly trying to absorb the

visual imagery not stopping to read any labels or information panels. When I questioned her on her responses, she was inarticulate. She had no verbal means with which to describe her experiences. Her responses appeared in her journal in the form of poems and artworks.

Terri manifested a similar pattern of behaviour. She began her journey in a section devoted to an exhibition of children's works. She was interested in discovering the techniques used to produce these artworks. Again the familiarity with the vocabulary of studio skills forms a contrast with the lack of a vocabulary dealing with art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. Like Jess, Terri showed little ability to choose her viewing preferences. However, as we walked the halls she would point out examples that reminded her of her Taiwanese background or religious imagery similar to pictures hanging in her home. Once again there was a strong reliance on familiar experiences and familiar imagery.

Jay treated his visits to both the Redpath and the MMFA as venues for entertainment and play. It is pertinent to note here that Hein (1995) remarks that many visitors to museums expect to be entertained. However, this form of motivation does not preclude learning from taking place (p. 202). Jay darted about peeking behind screens and touching objects in a somewhat playful and curious manner. Responses were made to subject matter he recognized from school learning or which related to his interest in popular culture in the form of comic books and superheroes. His choice of workshop and several of the photos he took supported this finding. Thus there remained a strong link between his responses and his collection of comic books. The world of comic books and superheroes is favoured not only by children and adolescents but also adults. From this

finding I realized that here was one category of collecting eminently suitable for providing a potential link with collections in art museums, such as superheroes from other cultures and the Pop Art movement as exemplified by the work of Lichtenstein.

Ewan proved to be the most experienced museumgoer. His selections were made to add knowledge and experience to his repertoire. He was eager to attend several of the workshops at the Redpath which related to his collection of rocks, fossils, and precious stones. He was the only student who was discriminating enough to select one collection or exhibit to view at the MMFA. His choice was to visit the current exhibition of the contemporary sculptures of Joe Fafard. An added attraction was the complementary clay workshop where we could sculpt an entourage for the Fafard figures. As I reflected on Ewan's choice, I perceived a pattern in his selections. He had a predilection for realism which he had expressed in his choice of the glass shell from the museum-in-a-box and was clearly reflected in the sculptures by Fafard. Likewise Ewan's collections contained imagery of the real world and were functional as currency in exchanges.

D Analysis of Activity IV: Horner's conceptual space orientation.

This activity was planned to provide evidence of learning in the form of works of art or products related to their collections. I had planned it to bring the students back full circle to their own collections in order to reflect on the relationship between their experiences of collecting and their own personal collections and their response experiences in the MMFA. Several possibilities were suggested such as journal keeping, constructing storage containers, starting a cataloguing system, building display units,

creating an artwork inspired by a collection, or any other appropriate response devised by a participant.

Both Jess and Terri had chosen to keep journals which provided insight into their learning styles, which will be discussed later. Terri chose to construct storage containers for her gem collection similar to the cases in the Redpath museum. We had found the idea in a book on nature crafts. This was a small concession to the world of adults, for she balked at cataloguing and labelling her collection. She wished to keep her options flexible so that she could rearrange her collection at will. Jay crafted a superhero figure out of plasticine which he said was inspired by his comic book collection. Ewan was satisfied to add his photos to his collections which are stored on a shelf in his bedroom where he can sort through them and show them to friends.

I concluded from their choices that one very important aspect of their collections was that the objects remain touchable. They wanted to be able to play with their collections. This is in direct contrast to collections housed in art museums. They are for the most part untouchable. Response to objects is usually mediated through another medium such as reproductions, copies, written texts, music, and drama. On the other hand museums such as nature museums, science and technology museums, or history museums are often able to allow handling of actual, authentic objects in discovery rooms.

Thus I concluded that in this respect the link between children's collections and objects in art museums is rendered tenuous because of museology practices. The constraints necessitated by the nature of the objects housed in the collections of art museums mitigate against a strong link being made with the playful, tactile qualities inherent in the children's personal, private collections.

In reflecting on the data gathered from the children's presentations of their collections, I started to find the skeletal beginnings of different learning styles using Gardner's openings for different styles of learning. These entry points were **narrational, logical-quantitative, foundational, aesthetic, and experiential**. Terri and Ewan represented the logical-quantitative entry point. Terri was interested in factual information regarding provenance and type. Ewan gathered facts to serve as cultural cachet and numerical quantities as material cachet. Jess most closely represented the aesthetic entry point. She was drawn to objects because of certain shapes or markings. She kept these objects relatively private for her own enjoyment and contemplation. Jay seemed to represent the experiential entry point. He used his collection to produce artworks dealing with popular culture. However, all the children could be said to benefit from the experiential entry point as all were eager to participate in hands-on, interactive events. Often seen as an early developmental stage, playful experiences are now viewed as beneficial to learners of all ages (Wasserman, 1992) and to museumgoers (Cohen, 1989).

As I retraced Terri's journey through the various activities I noticed that her learning style most consistently modeled the logical-quantitative entry point into knowledge. She constructed her museum based on memories of previous museum visits. At the museums she liked to collect information or experiences which would add to her cognitive and practical knowledge. The journal she assembled showed a linear progression of events as they followed one after the other. Finally, the work with which she chose to conclude was a set of drawers to neatly house her gem collection similar to the storage or display units in a museum context.

Jess had displayed an approach to learning which was strongly aesthetic and narrational. Her responses to each activity were more affective than cognitive. She produced artworks in the form of sketches and poems to illustrate the learning she was acquiring. These were her responses to the objects housed in museums. I also found a narrative element in the way she organized her first museum structure as if to illustrate the story of Genesis. Her poems were likewise narrative in style.

Ewan collected facts and skills with which to facilitate social interaction. He enjoyed contributing his knowledge to a community of learners. He preferred gathering his information in interactive and hands-on situations. Thus I found that his entry points were experiential and logical-quantitative, the former being the preferred mode. Even though Jay presented as more playful and less serious in intent than Ewan, he likewise showed preference for experiential opportunities and used his experiences to contribute to his expertise in the popular culture of his peer group.

Thus Gardner's various entry points into the acquisition of knowledge were useful in describing the different modes of response or different styles of learning. This information is useful in devising a needs assessment for a group or individuals.

E Modifications

To sum up, there were steps missing in the sequence of activities I had planned which impeded rather than facilitated the learning potential. The first impediment was the participants' lack of a vocabulary dealing with the visual arts. Unfortunately, since art specialists are a rare commodity in elementary schools in my school board, students receive little if any art education but most often do "bricolage" for seasonal events. Thus

I would build in initial activity/activities to allow for the acquisition of appropriate visual art vocabulary and vocabulary dealing with collections.

Secondly, in order to encourage the participants to enter more fully into Horner's **dream-space** orientation, I would plan tactile activities using each child's collection as the inspiration. These activities might include feeling the shape and texture of a rock, tracing with one's finger the patterns on a pebble or gemstone - a sort of journey into the form of the rocks and gemstones. These activities would emphasize the aesthetic and experiential entry points into knowledge.

Thirdly, in order to diminish the gap which might exist between the child's collection of objects and the objects housed in an art museum I would include a visit to a museum which I have recently discovered. It is a local museum, Musee regionale de Vaudreuil-Soulanges, which specializes in collections and the art of collecting in relation to popular culture in contrast to fine art specimens. Here there is a toy collection and a sort of "cabinet of curiosities" gathered from collections of local inhabitants plus, currently, an exhibition of wooden toy boats and one of carved decoys. These collections relate closely to the world of the child but are displayed in the manner of objects in an art museum with didactic labels. To reinforce the learning at this stage, developmentally appropriate, sequenced activities using classroom collections could be instituted as described by Plourde (1994), a classroom teacher, in *Teaching with Collections*. Activities include collecting in small groups, sorting, describing, and also visits by adult collectors. These activities would emphasize the logical-quantitative entry point into knowledge. Ulbricht (1980) suggested the following classroom activities for collections:

acquisition, classification, restoration, and preservation. Plus he advocated using student's collections for personally, meaningful creations or artworks.

Finally, the visit to the art museum lacked sufficient pedagogical focus or scaffolding considering the developmental level and inexperience of the participants. Herein, as intimated by Carr and Kemmis (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 113), lies a probable weakness in the constructivist approach. The participants may have been expected to assume a role beyond their current expertise or competence. Hein (1995) maintains that "constructivists, with their concern with the schemas and ideas that are already in learner's minds, will be more likely to ask whether the environment is one with which the learner can make any connections" (p. 38). The students needed a series of questions or strategies to help direct them to parts of the art museum's collections which would relate to their own collections. Since museums have been cited as contextually rich environments and excellent sites for individually centred learning, it should be possible to plan museum activities which would encompass all five of Gardner's openings into learning styles.

F Implications for teachers

Thus far the following findings, garnered from my research, are useful in teaching practice. It is important to begin with familiar objects and familiar experiences on which to build new experiences in a developmentally appropriate, sequential manner. Activities and events should be planned to allow for different learning styles or different points of entry into the acquisition of knowledge. I also suggest that teachers plan pre-museum visit activities in collaboration with the museum's art educators. In this respect I believe

that collections, the children's as well as the teacher's or even a collaborative classroom collection (such as postcards of artworks or hand-size sculptural objects), can provide rich possibilities for rehearsal activities.

Activities at the museum should allow for interactive and hands-on experiences of a playful nature. Once again teachers and museum educators should plan for different learning styles. On the other hand, in her study on children's perceptions of museum experiences, Jensen pointed out that children found visits which were too tightly controlled by teacher-planned activities to be boring and were thus counterproductive. Jensen suggested encouraging children to pose their own questions and to pursue their own line of investigation (Jensen, 1994, p. 322).

In a similar manner, Barret (1997), an art educator from Ohio State University, suggested that the museum educator act as a facilitator of enquiry:

The educator ... sets an attitude of openness and respect for the art and for one another. The educator [presents] a minimal amount of information with which the visitors could begin to approach the exhibition. The information may simply be in the form of questions...The educator can move the discussion along by rephrasing the question, by encouraging individuals who are reluctant to join the conversation, or by adding a new bit of contextual information that may further the thinking of the group (p. 9).

This modus operandi fits well with the constructivist approach where the teacher plays the role of the facilitator and orchestrates the sharing of mutual learning. Furthermore, Weltzl-Fairchild (1992) in her study of aesthetic response emphasized the

importance of questioning as a powerful teaching tool. Open-ended questioning based on phenomenological description allows for authentic, personal aesthetic response. Thus I would suggest that the classroom teacher in collaboration with the museum educator plan a script of sample questions to motivate the students, to provide scaffolding for a diversity of learning styles and to establish a community of learners. The ideal situation as expressed by art educators Bolin and Mayer (1998) would be:

A district or school art program, in which works from the local art museum are integrated into the curriculum, where visits to the museum occur throughout the school year and art teacher, docent, and museum educational staff work collaboratively to coordinate pre-visit, in-museum, and post-visit activities leads to the kind of rich art learning that continues throughout a lifetime (p. 2)

G Conclusions

One of the most significant findings from my research on **how children's experiences of collecting and arranging their own personal collections could be used to provide a link or bridge to facilitate responses to objects in art museums** was that the participants chose to bring collections that they believed were validated by the adult world, such as gemstones, baseball cards, and comic books. I feel that Jess's collection of rocks (found objects), which she picked up as she was drawn to their colours and markings, came closest to my assumptions of the nature of children's collections or "treasures". However, all the children used their collections in a playful manner, touching, arranging, re-arranging, or bartering and exchanging the pieces with great flexibility. The function of the children's collections was in strict contrast to the function

of collections of objects in art museums. The latter were to be seen but not touched! Thus there were not sufficient similarities in form or function to make a strong link or a bridge from the children's collections or the child's world to the artworld or objects in art museums. Notwithstanding this finding, I believe that children's collections are potentially useful learning tools in facilitating responses to objects in art museums.

Another significant finding was the children's lack of a competent visual art vocabulary. As I discovered, their art expertise derived mainly from "bricolage". They had little or no experience of art history, art criticism, or aesthetics. Therefore they responded most enthusiastically to hands-on workshops and studio activities. They were eager to add to their repertoire of practical skills and to participate in interactive experiences. On the other hand, responding to objects on display in an art museum was an unfamiliar activity. Even though they embarked on the journey through the museum halls with curiosity, they were unable to adequately describe their responses in any but the most rudimentary terms. They learned but were unable to articulate what they learned. This pointed to the need for a series of rehearsal activities which would enrich the students visual art vocabulary and expand their experience of studio art to include art history, art criticism, and aesthetics.

Further research into what kinds of collections would be the most useful for classroom experiences is needed. It would also be useful to research which types of activities and collecting behaviours, using these collections, would be the most effective and productive in facilitating responses to objects in art museums.

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Appendix A

Version 1

Dear Parents/Guardian of _____

Jeanette Klein-Ritchie of the department of Art Education at Concord University is conducting a research project for the purpose of providing an enriched pluralistic/linterdisciplinary approach to learning. Art Education will be used as the catalyst for research, problem solving, and presentation of the knowledge acquired.

The tape recordings and photographs used to document this project will be for educational purposes only.

I give permission for _____

to participate in the abovementioned project.

Signed _____

Date _____

Version 2

Beechwood School
 13155 Shelborne Rd.
 Pierrefonds, Que.
 H9A 1C9

Re: research toward a Master's in Art Education, Concordia University.

Dear Parents/Guardian of _____

I am currently engaged in research for a Master's in Art Education. My thesis topic concerns children's personal collections of objects and how these might relate to museum education. I would like your permission to work with your child on the following activities: interviews regarding their personal collections, visits to museums, interviews and activities relating to museum visits, and journal keeping.

Tape recordings and photographs will be used to document the various research activities. All these materials will be used for educational purposes only and your child will be identified by the initial of his/her first name.

Thank you for your kind attention
 Yours sincerely

Jeanette Klein Ritchie

Please complete and return to Jeanette Klein Ritchie

I, the undersigned _____
 Do hereby give permission for _____
 To participate in the research activities as listed above and for tape recordings and photographs to be used as stated above.

Signed _____
 Dated _____

Appendix B

Dear _____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my thesis project. As your classroom teacher has already explained to you, I am interested in talking to and working with students who have collections of objects. Could you please bring your collection, or as much of your collection as you are able, with you to school on the following day

We will be meeting in ___ The library,
 ___ Room #12
 ___ Resource Room

during: ___ recess
 ___ lunch hour
 ___ period #

I am looking forward to meeting with you at the time and place arranged. If you are unable to meet with me, please leave a message with your classroom teacher or with the secretary,

Jeanette Klein-Ritchie

Appendix C

Magical Travelling Museum-in-a-Box

This personal collection of found objects and readymades has been structured to function as a teaching tool in several different contexts. In this study the collection has been transformed into a travelling museum-in-a-box. The objects are housed in a variety of containers which will double as accessories for mini exhibits/displays. A number of children's wooden toy blocks have been included to serve the same function; as plinths, pedestals, and/or dividers. They also serve to enhance the playfulness of the tasks.

The contents have been carefully and deliberately selected so that the task of grouping the objects can be made in a variety of ways; there is no right way, a diversity of options exist. For example, using the theme of female figures there are five figures each of a different material and style (Figure 1). If one chose to group by similar material, there are several objects made from soapstone: a queen, a turtle, a chameleon, and a bust (Figure 2).

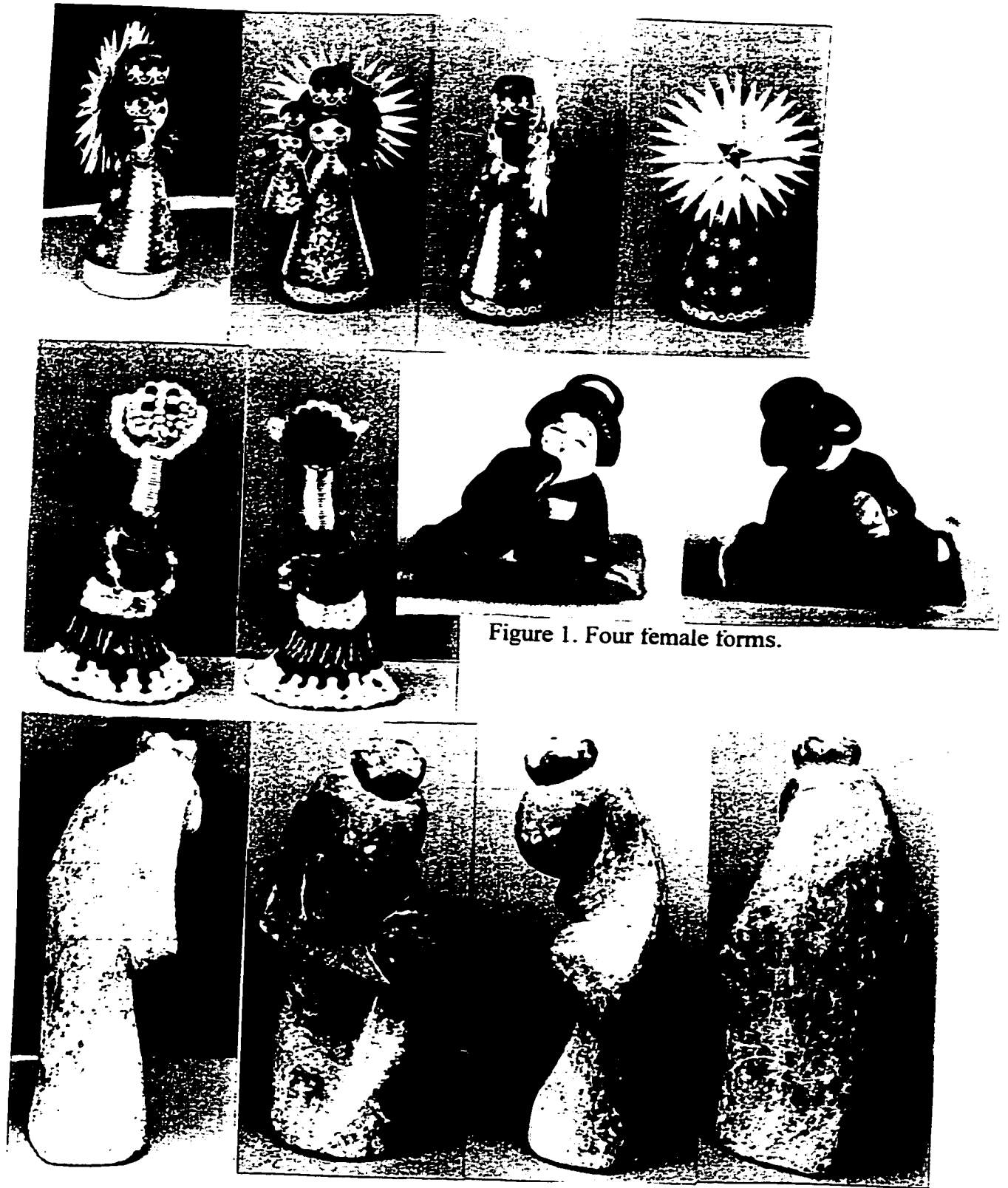


Figure 1. Four female forms.

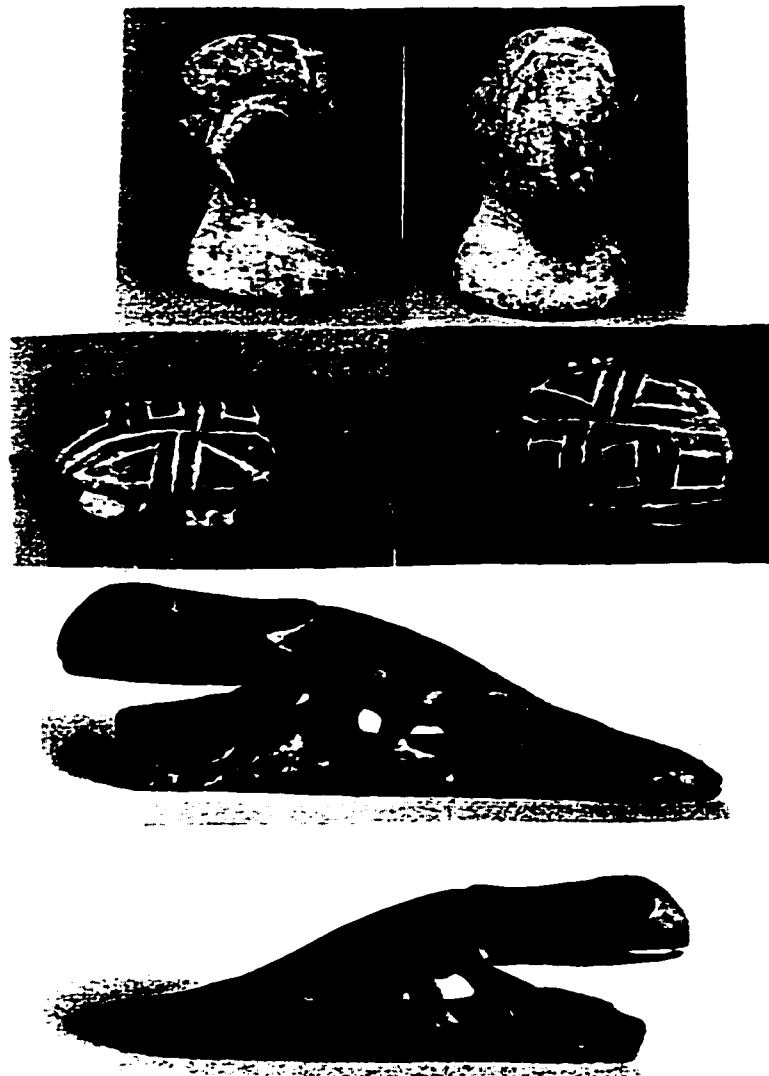


Figure 2. Soapstone sculptures.