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YOUR HANDS ARE ON MY EYES

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Le résumé

Le fait de travailler avec des matières variées à partir de concepts ouverts, se prête à des changements continuels et à des renouvellements. En plus, les stimuli extérieures et notre imagination nous apportent une multitude d'expériences. Mes pièces sont composées de panneaux-fragments, placés les uns à côté des autres. Bien que chaque panneau soit individuel, l'assemblage produit un terrain favorable au mouvement et à la relativité. Cet écrit initie une analyse d'une de mes oeuvres. Les éléments perceptibles et l'assemblage de l'oeuvre sont analysés et liés à un propos poétique.

L'Avant Propos

I hope I can communicate my appreciation for George Bogardi. A species of contemplation, George Bogardi has taught me to pay close attention to the forms and vagaries of my paintings. As we orbited across theory and dug into the different strata of my work, he jolted me out of inertia by asking acute questions -*the cuttings of my sight are rooting, while gardeners keep cultivating.* George Bogardi has conducted me to read more poetry, and spurred my interest in writing. Meanwhile I love painting even more!

I would also like to thank Jocelyne Alloucherie, Marcel Jean, Francine Chaîné and Michel Labbé for taking a special interest in my work. Finally, I want to thank Pierre Gagnon the woodwork technician for helping me materialize some of my projects and my fellow classmates whose work, ideas and friendship I value.

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INTRODUCTION

I live my life in growing orbits
 which move out over the things of the world.
 Perhaps I can never achieve the last,
 but that will be my attempt.

I am circling around God, around the ancient tower,
 and I have been circling for a thousand years,
 and I still don't know if I am a falcon, or a storm,
 or a great song.

In this poem Rilke becomes a storm, a falcon, a song. He swallows the exterior into his interior until the exterior and self are explored in an ever expanding circle. There is a voyage and a swelling; a dynamism in the will of the process. The repeated circling speaks to us about intense continuing movement whose fundamental activity is that of going on and on and on. My work reflects this notion of voyage and repeated searching-swelling. It goes 'on and on and on' not because it is running on empty but rather because one thing begets another.

Being and everything it entails is vast, and its totality continually effervescent: the excessiveness of emotion and thought, overwhelming amounts of external stimuli, memories that are changed or disintegrate, future fantasies, the apprehension of death, the infinitesimal in experience, the sensuality of the

¹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. Robert Bly (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1981), 13.

physical. The sheer vastness of it all induces movement: As Rilke wrote "My eyes resemble ponds / and moving shapes / flow across them ²."

Operating like visual poems, my work comes from an open need to explore, express essences of being, release physical energy, and from a desire to drift freely. Poetry is an otherness, it's what allows us to roam without restraint into the imagination, experiment with arrangement, and celebrate different networks of meaning.

This thesis attempts to evoke a poetic sensibility all the while trying to attain a coherent survey and description of the work. It is divided into two main chapters. Chapter One, *Analysis*, contains a detailed study of a piece called *Vagrant Wonder*. Chapter Two, *My Art Muses*, will explore those elements that are essential such as light, texture, and space but whose complex attributes can only be remotely conveyed in words: through poetry, particle-ideas, and short-snippet-stories. Like my paintings which are made up of gathered fragments this section will contain a gathering of writing.

² Rainer Maria Rilke, *Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. Robert Bly (New York: Harper and Row, Publisher, 1981), 91.

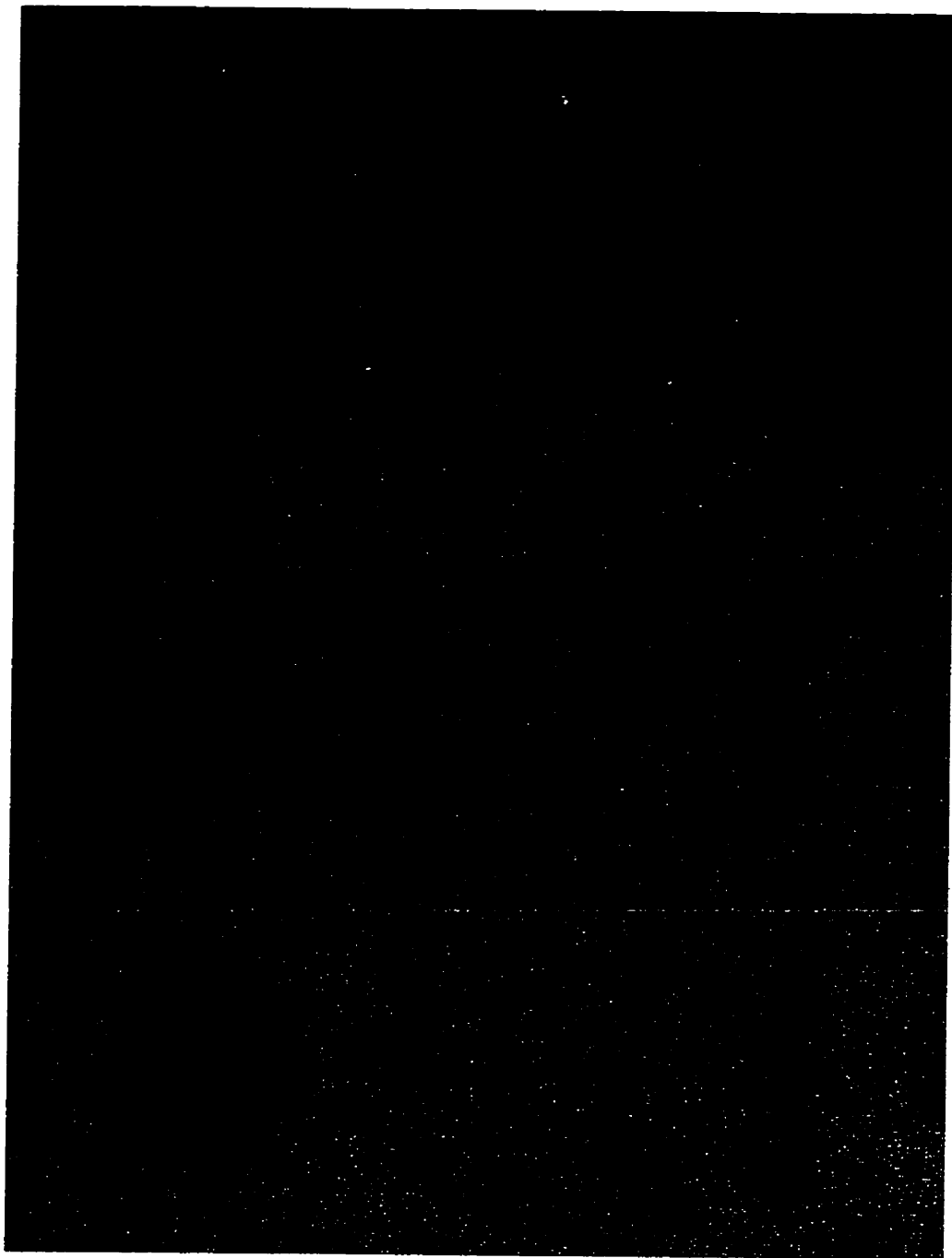
CHAPTER 1

VAGRANT WONDER

"[...] and I still don't know if I am a falcon, or a storm, or a great song ³."

The combination and sequence of words in Rilke's poem *I Live My Life*, previously looked at in the Introduction, is important. A falcon is a bird plus a hunter, the storm is chaos which can ground the bird-hunter, the song can be a bird in wind or sound through wind. Furthermore, the song as art may represent a symbolic twine between the material world and creativity. The pattern of words suggests a building block in which each word leads to the furthering narration. Once the pattern is examined however, we are led to mix and change the sense. Hence, the combination of words augments the possibility of forming connections while the words "I still don't know if I am" augment the transition that comes from repeated self-search. Since the answer is not found as an "I am...", the spiralling quest continues.

³ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. Robert Bly (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1981), 13.



VAGRANT WONDER
PANELS C, D AND E

The panorama of *Vagrant Wonder* is not an intact whole; Even if we think we have an impression, that an idea or the like is being presented, the forms we are looking at are already in transformation. It eludes and thus alludes to our powers of interpretation, inciting us to put things in rapport all the while adopting new perspectives. Looking at the work, we recognize the shifting of our moving perception. When one reads a five-stanza poem, each verse accompanies and conducts the others. In this visual choreographic exchange each panel is disrobed and redressed by the presence of another.

*A flow of becomings and extinctions, departing
 You gave me wetness
 in tribute to farewells breath and preludes
 delicate in their repeated procession*

In panel A of *Vagrant Wonder* the repetition of free vertical and horizontal brush-strokes amplifies the uniform build-up of the vaporously-pale ivory, slow, liquid trickling. As emerging light and obscuring light try to assert themselves they reside in rhythmic counterbalance. In the midst, longer ill-defined vertical formations produce a slight arrest but the action nevertheless continues. Its continuous flow parallels the unobstructed automation that leads the mind unconsciously to something different from logical sequence. While the light shifts back and forth, the repeated motif builds up the

ritualistic procession of drips under vertical lines.

<<When two strange images meet, [...] pursuing [...]>> different entities they often <<[...] strengthen each other [...]>>, and "move" into an "elsewhere".⁴

An abrupt change in sensation is caused by the next panel's dark and chaotic atmosphere. As we move from the ivory pallor of A to the sultry blackness of B the sudden difference in colour creates the disintegration necessary for transmutation. The rhythm of the previous panel turns into a dark entanglement of configurations and feelings, a mish-mash of impetuous actions. We feel deep insides and deep outsides of unknown spheres like that of a closing night setting.

With closer inspection we notice outbursts of blue clusters; dimensions of barely remembered bodies of water pulled by the moon's force. A black molten wax relief of groping forms tries to surge but remains caught and muffled by the tarry oil of the physical material. In the left-top corner a lawless fleck of grey breaks up the fabric of the surface. Distinct areas of luminosity play against each other shaping avenues for sensation. Surging and altering red and yellow light

⁴ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Orion, 1964), 53 and 59. This idea is made up of a combination of sentences from Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. The first two parts <<in French quotation marks>> are from page 59, and the words "in English quotation marks" from page 53.

passionately pierces, and melts the darkness into echoing-chiaroscuros of ancient cathedrals, smelting nightclubs, and trembling forests.

This panel captures the gaze trapped in complex shifts. The strokes try to arrest physical roughness, formation and deformation: light disappears, weakens and reawakens: forms are indistinct and blurred: the material surface is to the end revealing, concealing and developing. The texture arrests awareness, and signals to the dark and ominous skin. This is a place of consciousness at the limit of logic, an encounter with otherness that is uncontainable because it gets away from us, remains nebulous and inaccessible.

*Absence as a pure clean plane can seize one "[...] with the sensation of something vast, deep, boundless", but also something forgotten, lost loves, expired lives and deathly stillness.*⁵

The blackness of panel B resides in tireless contrast beside the liquid pallor of panel A. Panel C is a composite of both A and B; it is the synthesis of a dialectic. The lightness of A and the darkness of B co-exist on the same picture plane in C which binds the previous elements into new unions. The thin whiteness of A

⁵ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Orion, 1964), 43.
In *The Poetics of Space* we find a description of the silence before a storm in Henri Bosco's *Malicroix*. I see a certain correlation between the absence of sound and a pure, clean, pictorial plane. Here, the description is applied to painting.

has matured into a dense white build-up of mirror-like paint in C. Polished, presented frontally for our contemplation, mirroring our own viewing consciousness, panel C signals intense articulation against the disintegrating and inarticulate depth of B. There is a plastic, raised, surface quality to this conscious merging of implicit opposites. The shadowed and the profoundly lit are placed in perfect symmetry; through their 'inclusion' a balance is struck.

Within this cleansed and meditative atmosphere shaped by the absolute field of pale coloured hues and accumulated light, an abundantly thick oval nest/womb of black lines wants to float but doesn't. It is at one moment streaming on the surface, at another moment a black void of silence. This coiling black seems to hover between the hidden and the manifest, the static and vigorous. From far it looks like a cosmic black hole but as we get closer its tangible sensuality turns into a warm concentration of dark deeds. The cruciform perspective of C cajoles the eye towards this amorphous form that dwells at the nucleus. The vertical upsurge amplifies the subtle inherent movement in the figure; like a long manneristic finger it points us towards its centre.

The black-amorphous-shape-dark-central-seed which circles around itself as if continuously searching its centre greets us at eye level. Its undoing transformation, still in its continuous

blackness but still moving in its perpetual gesture possesses a living sense of rhythmic germination, and decay. The marriage of fragments which makes up the ordered cosmos of C can be seen as part and whole, many and one, still and moving. There is a conscious cutting away at excess in order to strip the piece into transparency. The composition becomes an emblem to some undisclosed event and the symmetry evokes a contemplative focus. The force of this central image presses towards consciousness, transformation, and illumination - it is the seed at the core bound to link, yet bound to voyage.

When *Vagrant Wonder* is viewed as a whole, C, the middle panel, has the effect of a sacred epiphany. It shows forth an obscure order that converges at a focal point. A composite of encounters, it unites elements (colours, figures and textures present in the other panels) into interdependent collective relationships. Clearly, the centre is not divisive but rather a place of return, recovery and integration of symbols. Compared to the other panels, C seems iconic, yet there isn't much to provide a key to its symbolism. The viewer must draw from inside herself/himself some deeper response that mirrors the resonance of the work.

At the bottom of panel C a rectangular area has been deliberately scraped to make the flesh of the paint fall away. This searching archeological elimination reveals an otherness which when looked

at from a microscopic looking glass reveals only more of the same. Although the turquoise tint hints at visions of the azure, its disappearance into transparency continues to evoke both being and nonbeing, both substance and shadow, and that which is seen but also seen through.

To balance the composition of C, a blue vertical support shimmers underneath the radiant white field. This subtle grid emphasizes a compositional order. The planes and figures are fields of free expression, but the grid places them into an organized relationship. Hence, the painting reveals accident as it does intention. The atmosphere of balance between the reasoned, the emotional, and the physical provokes meditation, while the irradiating light awakens our sense of marvel.

"Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement⁶."

An explosive breaking occurs as the image of the balanced centre tries to undo itself. The suspended static image of C is transformed into that of the dance which scatters and spreads widely. As our eyes move along the light field of panel C into the light ground of panel D and E (a visual alliteration) the restrained regularity of C unravels into a shimmering of paint, and we become aware of the smooth transition. In spite of this

⁶ T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton" in *T.S. Eliot, The Complete Poems and Plays 1909 - 1950*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1971), 119.

ease there is a radical change in mood. We recognize a mutation: not negation but reflection and change.

Exhilarating, the infinitesimal division of pale colours produces a rhythmic sea of joyance, while the vigorous brush strokes become a celebration of the physical energy transcribed from the artist's body to the ready surface. About to explode, the feathery brush-strokes create inflection not just displacement. We move from a contemplative atmosphere to a pagan revelry. This frenzy prepares us for the vital coupling that takes place in the middle of panels D and E.

In D and E the black horizontal oval of panel C transmutes into two or more white ovals. Although the oval changes axis (horizontal to vertical) it remains centred. However, its centre is now the juncture of two panels rather than the centre of one. Its frontality is modified by the meeting ground of the two panels which creates a tangent: it is a decentralized centre. The oval bypasses the centre, turns away from it, absorbs it and goes beyond it at the limit of breaking apart (all the while the juncture bypasses the edge, absorbs it, and goes beyond it at the limit of breaking apart). This is a projection of structure as cycle, metaphors in continuous series, painting whose sensual depth divides into spectral multiplicity.

*An open wide fusion an embrace layer on layer of paint skin on
 skin
 you me hunts me, calms you
 heads spreading across, enmeshed
 limber intercourse, extensions, veins, and organic thoughts
 burst our frames into
 a graceful intertwining of steaming
 limbs, heads and foliage
 edify into raptures of phosphorescent white
 striving towards some imaginary symmetry coming from impressions
 of fertile contacts, like some lush fruit.*

As the poem above suggests, the oval shape opens up and initiates a coupling fecund with promise and growth. The two panels amplify the importance of this interconnecting-intercourse/primal-embrace while the iridescent brightness throws a healing light on the event. Looked at together the work moves from mute (panels A and C especially) to giving (D and E).

We were introduced to the view-finder rectangle in panel C, given a foreshadow-hint of it in panel B, and now a variation in panel D. Not in the middle of panel D but rather moving along the joint of C and D, the looking glass is connected to a place of transformation. Like a refrain, this repeated continuation of passage adheres to the persistent movement of search and vagrant wonder.

"Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her,
 Alone, shall come fulfilment to our dreams
 And our desires ⁷."

As we have seen, each panel is part of a panoramic passage. We perceive individual fragments which modify one another. The imagination relentlessly pursues reality to create abstractions in what it sees. However in a pluralistic universe, a centre like that in C, dissolves as quickly as it is achieved. It undergoes a transformation similar to light, to the shaping imagination, changing and relating like the organic components of living forms.

Vagrant Wonder is a system of stanzas that literally incites the viewer to action. Unable to get the gestalt of the five large panels (92 cm. X 205 cm. each - 462 cm. X 205 cm. together) in just one glance, the work withdraws from being read for its message (a point or idea to be conveyed). No matter how symbolic some imagery may be, the images and ideas being evoked change. Each part asks to be sensed before passing to the other; to read the simultaneously-present-panels closely we advance our eyes, and our bodies (many independent movements). Through this movement in space, we become aware that the surface awakens a 'sensitivity' (capacity for sensation, perception, feelings, reasoning, responding).

⁷ Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, INC., 1957), 68.

As the changing view of each painted fragment implies, there is no supremacy of meaning or primacy of imagery, just a continuous will for renewal, immersion and voyage. *Soul becomes a perspective towards things rather than the thing itself.*⁸ The recovery of this movement, transformations, and persisting cycles comes from a desire to celebrate living in a physical world and all that it incorporates (tentativeness, despair, joy, sensuality, construction...). Wallace Stevens describes the hope that emanates from our wondering perceptions. In his poem, *Sunday Morning*, a woman turns away from Christian dogma. The pluralism of the material world and her perception of the natural cycles ie. seasons, life and death suggest an otherness far removed from stagnation. She rejects notions of a fixed heaven. Instead she reconciles with her continually revolving and metamorphosing reality.

Vagrant Wonder, simultaneously 'part and whole', 'still and still moving', is the transformation of "So many selves, so many sensuous worlds [...] ⁹". It is in virtue of our bodies (perceiving, thinking, historical, contingent, emoting, mortal flesh) that we come into our own; it is our way of belonging to the world. Letting go of the need for absolute truths so that the

⁸ James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harpers and Row, 1975), x. Hillman states that soul "[...] is a perspective rather than a substance, a view point towards things rather than a thing itself."

⁹ Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1957), 326.

deep structures within us, implicit in chaos and order may rise, requires a movement away from imposition towards discovery.¹⁰

Vagrant Wonder's discursive piecemeal combination, compels an image-by-image reading (temporal), yet blocks the reading through its ruptures and ambiguity (as it lights it remains partly in shadow). The material surface creases and buries into deep changing interior metaphors: in essence the body (the physical structure of the painting/human body) no longer opposes the soul. Soul becomes a metonymical extension of the body. The body in these paintings could ellipse into body spirit, body carnal, body material, body alive, body dead, body reasoned. Concepts of the body are frayed not to fool or make unclear but to open the aggregate of elements so that there isn't one final sense. Without a clear assignable meaning the work lives between morsels of possible readings.

I am not opposed to what is unchanging and static but see very little evidence of this permanence in daily life. Propelled by curiosity, I take more pleasure in exploring the mutable rhythms of our existence and the relationships co-existing fragments can

¹⁰ Michael Sexson, *The Quest of the Self In the Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 126.

This sentence was paraphrased from: "The seventh canto, one of the most memorable in the entire corpus, is Stevens' "letting go," his total suspension of the need to order chaos so that the deep structures implicit in chaos may rise of their own accord to the surface to be discovered. The result of this movement from imposition to discovery can only be described in religious terms as a mystical moment, a moment of grace."

build. This brings us back to the perishing earth of *Sunday Morning*: Stevens shows that bliss is not inaccessible but accessible and expressible even to those living without a notion of an absolute, permanent and immutable heaven.¹¹ Acknowledging death helps the woman in the poem embrace the luscious surroundings of the physical world with new immediacy and hope. Realising she can attain some bliss here and now on earth, she lives ceremoniously:

Complacencies of the peignoir, and late
Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,
And the green freedom of a cockatoo
Upon a rug mingle to dissipate
The holy hush of ancient sacrifice ¹².

Like *Sunday Morning*, *Vagrant Wonder*, however evocative, remains entrenched in the physical reality which gives us entrance into the skin of its sign system. Each fragment expresses something obtuse and abstract, unencumbered by a need for representation, like forces of nature, free to evolve on its own accord. Nonetheless, these hand-made images mark themselves in visual places or states of being; they may be used as metaphoric tools with which we understand something else, but also as tools

¹¹ Michael Sexson, *The Quest of Self In the Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 131. This sentence was paraphrased from: "It is the human song which brings us back to the perishing earth of *Sunday Morning* [...] Bliss is not inaccessible and unutterable, the exclusive right of dwellers in permanence, but both accessible and expressible [...]"

¹² Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems Of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, INC., 1957), 66.

to feel and view the reality of the object itself and its existence in the material world.

In *Sunday Morning* change is celebrated as the woman gains the ability to analyze and appreciate life. Impermanence gives rise to meditation and releases her creativity. On 'extended wings' she gains the freedom to question, suffer, enjoy and explore her world all the while integrating her imagination in the choices she makes. Wallace Stevens' image of the creative, perpetually centering self in an ever changing world invokes a sacred response (regard with reverence):

We live in an old chaos of the sun,
 Or old dependency of day and night,
 Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,
 Of that wide water, inescapable.
 Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
 Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;
 Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;
 And, in the isolation of the sky,
 At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
 Ambiguous undulations as they sink,
 Downward to darkness, on extended wings ¹³.

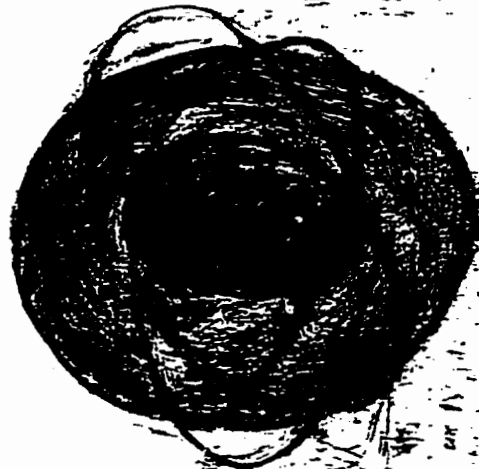
Each panel a stanza, a page which journeys on an open road, *Vagrant Wonder* is a meeting ground for divergence. Passages and memories fuse or depart; cross references, cross relevance, and themes vary; connotations invert; depictions of states of mind form restless mutations. Discrepancies escape and dislodge us; making us aware of the evocative and changing nature of our existence. By suggesting a number of pictorial stanzas, a

¹³ Wallace Stevens, *The Collected poems Of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, INC., 1957), 70.

trembling but relentless urge to revise and redefine traditional pictorial space is being explored. Concerned with possibility of renewal, the play of diverse fragments requires a manifold deformation and reformation from panel to panel, from piece in totality to sections. It asks for centering, crosslinking, displacement, permutations, invention and wonder, on extended wings.



MY



ART MUSES

CHAPTER 2

The following section will be structured more loosely in order to allow free passage into the more remote areas of my work. Even if the connections between these writings and my work remain obscure I hope the written fragments will at least communicate the pleasure of <<L'action qui fait, que la chose faite ¹⁴.>> and seize the feeling of swelling-searching and wandering-wonder.

¹⁴ Paul Valéry, *Introduction a la poétique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1937), 27.

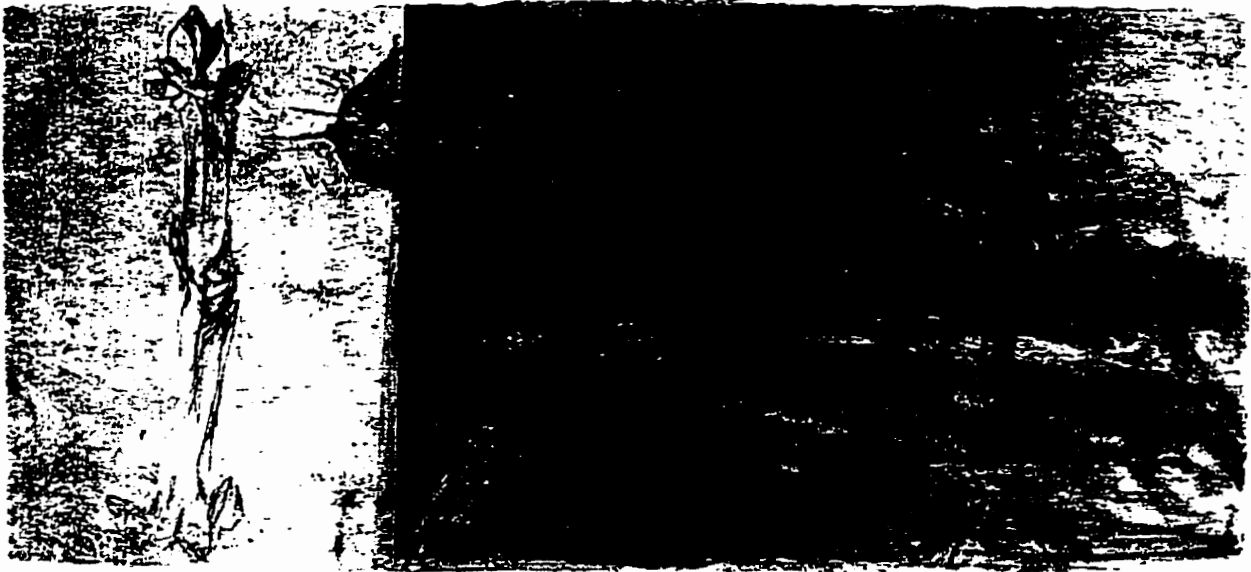
search. It is a mental river that is imagination with elements and flow: brain waves, banks of reason, crystal of emotion where restless thoughts cause avalanches, where brain faded with quietude finds solace, jolts, new des

YOU SEEM TO BE TALKING IN TONGUES, POETRY, SAYING ALMOST ANYTHING!

For me at this second it is poetry, like poetry the interior the capacity to roam. Being within, being outside, seeing seeing out: consciousness flows at different axes: synchronic, diachronic, and other anonymous axes. Within, there are spaces not developed, felt voids, interruptions, rhythmic superimpositions. It is a myriad of possibilities. The sometimes capricious behaviour of the interior courts its liaisons with change. As such, the interior is many things and can speak in many tongues.

WELL!?.

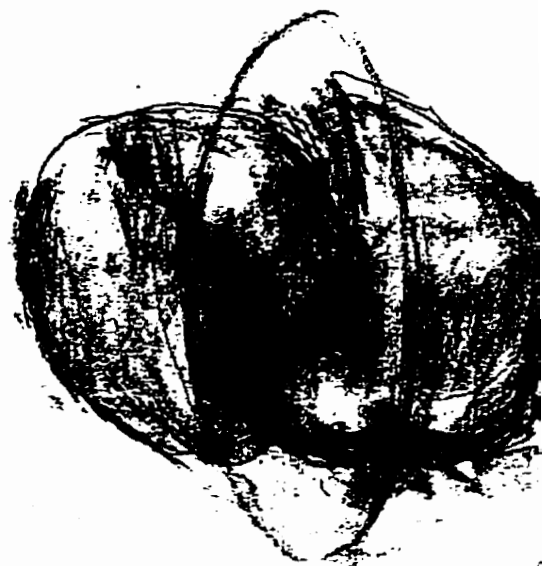
PASSAGE



This summer while driving on the highway and looking at the strata on the cut-rock by the side of the road, the lines became a sultry bid into the imagination assuming the forms of my lover's body. The fields further ahead seemed infinite. A pain in my back from the many hours of travelling made me conscious of the fragility of my body. The movement of the car had a lulling effect and in a numb haze the voyage continued to take shape. Experiences are never really closed, even the most definite exterior ie. cut rock encloses an infinity of possible readings.

The Thinking Reed

We need more and different flags.
What is the worm of the world that spoils exultation?
One who has become all eyes does not see.
To try to understand is to court misunderstanding.
Not to know but to go on.
Anything is a mirror.
There are two endless directions. In and out.
(Agnes Martin)¹⁵



Reason, feelings, sensations, desires, memories, fantasies cross into the act of painting. For me art is a response to the inner and outer realities of daily life. It is not confined exclusively to what is given in visual experience but integrally linked to things given in other orders of experience. Passage, the capacity to act or pass from one place or condition to another is fascinating in both art and life.

¹⁵ Barbara Haskell, *Agnes Martin* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1992), 24.



For oft when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood.
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude,
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the Daffodils¹⁶.

Wordsworth passes through experience, he moves from the solitary reality of his couch to an inward exultation of dancing with daffodils. Cleverly, his rhyming structural flow allures us to drift along with him in an imaginary intoxication from one state to another. Pay heed, however, for as Wordsworth subtly warns, in a 'flash' this sense will come and pass. The sheer flow suggests that experience can only be felt in fragments, no matter how essentially integral the morsel may feel. Even beauty is transitory. Fragment is a condition of passage, it accompanies traversal.


In the middle of the journey of our life I came
 to myself within a dark wood where the straight
 way was lost. [...] I cannot rightly tell how
 I entered there, I was so full of sleep at that
 moment when I left the true way [...] ¹⁷

¹⁶ William Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 304.

¹⁷ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, vol. 1, *Inferno*, trans. John D. Sinclair (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 23.





Fragment



<<*Dis-cursus*, c'est, originellement. l'action de courir ç'à et là, ce sont des allées et venues, des "démarches", des "intrigues" ¹⁸.>>

Painting fragments is not a means to fix reality but a way of living a tie between life and art. A fragment may be broken away, taken apart or else extracted. The unrealisation of the 'total' doesn't prevent its essence from being signified through momentary suspension: to see it in breaking it; to capture it for a moment. Used as a metonymical device, the fragment constitutes a part of something total, a concentration that keeps the flavour of the whole, an essence. It affirms itself in its development, carves, emphasizes and gives force to itself. The fragment also interrupts, cuts, divides and spaces itself. The spontaneous 'felt instant' becomes a moment of affirmation without extension, energy that exalts itself by disappearing.



¹⁸ Roland Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* in Roland Barthes *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Éric Marty (Paris: Seuil, 1995), 461.



PORTRAIT OF A FRAGMENT 1



PORTRAIT OF A FRAGMENT 2



PORTRAIT OF A FRAGMENT 3

Arising from the arrangement of fragments together, the possibility for contact and dialogue is further catalyzed. It occasions ever-widening spaces of exploration. Fragment as language is felt as action, observation, concentration, production, transformation, process, displacement and expanse.

BUILDING WITH FRAGMENTS

Working with fragments frees us from the obsession of an ultimate idea, religion, doctrine and/or visual concept. Putting fragments together creates a flow that lights the real rather than rendering real fixed and opaque. With this freedom comes the ability to arrange and re-arrange pieces in which the pleasure of the plural is affirmed, the pleasure of many in many, or the many in one. Fragments assembled together seek encounter, reversibility and circulation. Relating to one another, sounding, resounding, echoing, spilling over, and spreading in many directions, the spaces between fragments become open to contingency, and discovery. A 'yet to be' or 'becoming' exists within each nascence and rupture. With the entrance of each fragment-and the trace of the last, a continuity is developed in the movement.

To employ the fragment is to seize pieces of the world in their instantaneous, swiftly gone flow. Painting fragments allows me to play with form, content, systems. As I play, the manner in which the object unfolds is wrought by my changing perceptions, more precisely by the material components that awaken my senses. We apprehend ourselves, mind, spirit, soul, volition, feeling, instinct and everything around us through our body. My work is grounded in this material state. The content often evolves out of form seized and shaped by means of the material elements that 'come over me'; it is rarely form made to suit an idea (literary, political ...).

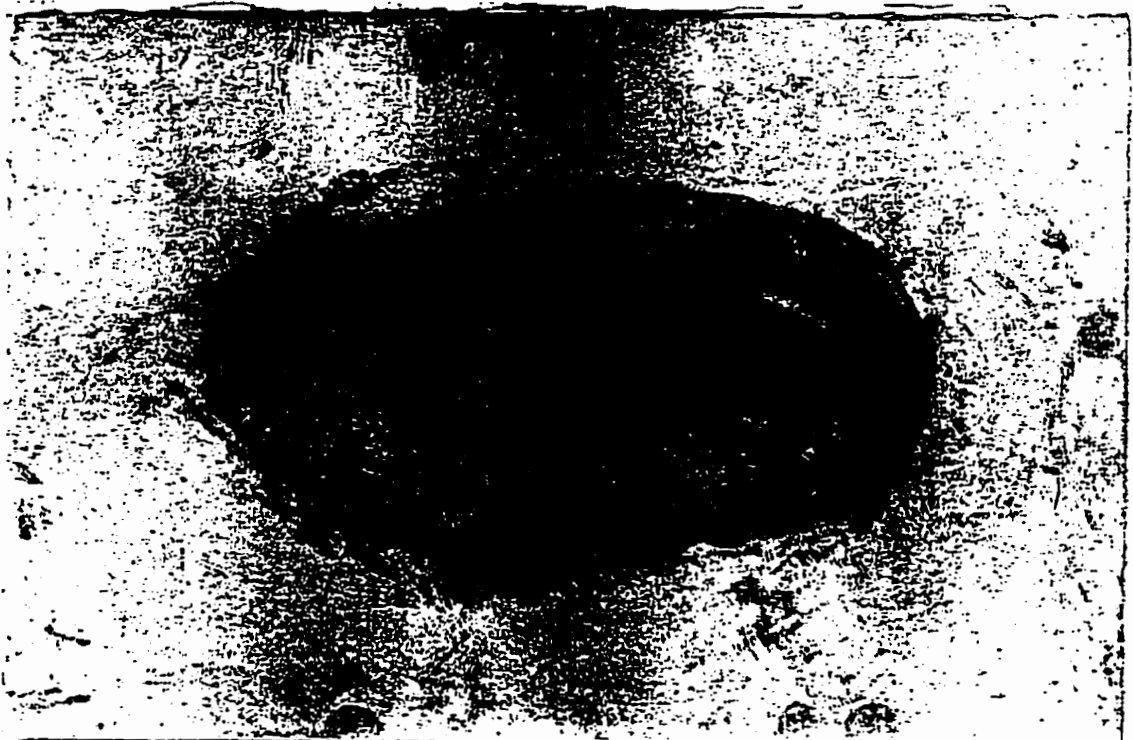
Engaged in building on and giving shape to something that illuminates being, certain conditions generate freshness and difference. Light, surface, colour and space are manipulated and played with; forms come in such a way as to yield a certain content. Never enough, my natural desire is to start again: to get behind, beside and through the fragment, to relate it to another fragment, or move to something else entirely, to find some intrigue, profound sense, light. Each transgression is precarious, differed and displaced.



Fragment unlimits itself by proliferation, not one or the other, a coming and going to, an imaginary point which flows with the movement of paint. In the cleavage we experience the 'no longer'. If the fragment is a portion, division, essence or share it remains in a territory between nothing and everything.

The discourse amongst fragments is filled with intermittent essences/desires/life, but also with intermittent cuts/voids/death.

My paintings are similar to multi-stanza poems, my re-occurring concern with interrelating fragments is obvious. Using the fragment in painting is a way of expressing a foreknowledge of what is not, or that which cannot ultimately be anticipated or known. Painting no longer serves as the image of "[...] immutability and unconditionality but the sign of radical temporality and the richness of contingency ¹⁹."



¹⁹ Dennis J. Schmidt, "The Future As Not Yet" in *Writing the Future*, ed. David Wood (New York: Routledge, 1990), 72.



LIGHT-

sun linked to the brilliance of my grandmother's
marbled moon apparition
whose sugar cyclic refrain
has raised us as grown me.
morning sun, Van Gogh sun, setting sun i loiter within your gaze
9:00 AM curtains drawn back, the suspended movement on the
morning hard wood floor orbits conducting belief
surrendering to your transmutations, expectant
reflection refraction array.
multiple illumination your heat weans, comforts

At the beginning of the painting process anything can occur:
fields of decay and freshness, kinetic excitement, static void.
Enthralled by the luminosity that slowly develops, my obsessive
play with shifting light often cleanses the planes until what
prevails is irradiated light. Eventually the accumulated marks
turn into barely noticeable traces living under an incandescent
surface.

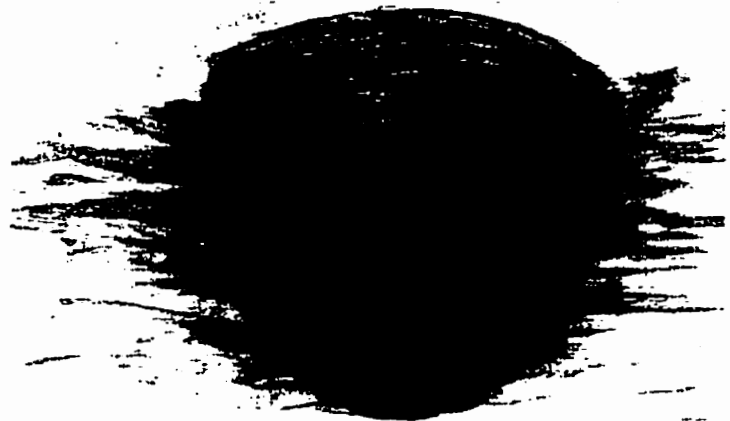
caress not withheld breath

luminous mouth full of ready saliva spreading seeds

bright empty meditation penetrate me escape me

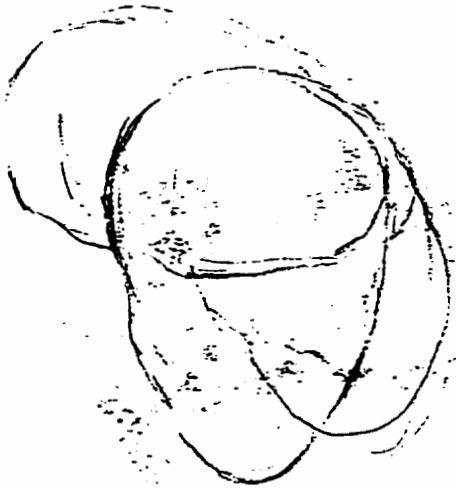
" The 'caress of the consoler [...] concerns the very instant of physical pain, which is then no longer condemned to itself, is transported "elsewhere" by the movement of the caress'²⁰."

The quiet interior light in Morandi's paintings calms me. This healing quality of light is generated by its ability to takes us elsewhere. Like a caress, light has the power to transform states - a capacity to alter.



²⁰ Tina Chanter, "The Alterity and Immodesty of Time: Death as Future and Eros as Feminine in Levinas" in *Writing the Future*, ed. David Wood (New York: Routledge, 1990), 144. Levinas cited by Tina Chanter.

"Every morning new light comes warmly into the open house, and you have a feeling that moves from face to face, and that leads you astray to caring ²¹."

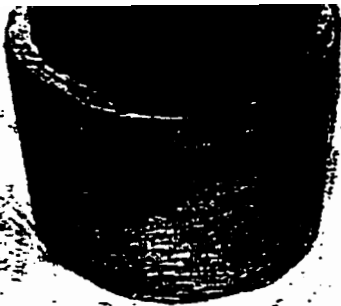


Light engaged with colour cultivates force.

Sonority of many scopes

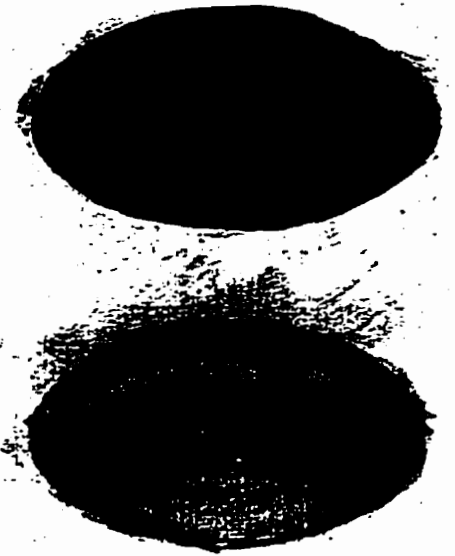
KALEIDOSCOPE densities and intensities. INEXPLICABLE migrations!

²¹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. Robert Bly (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1981), 115.

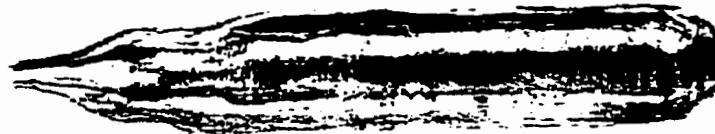


It is often said,

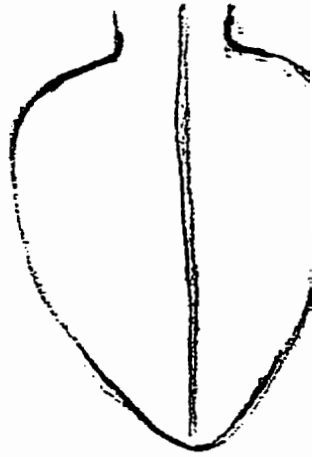
"light needs the shadow otherwise there
would be nothing to elucidate, lucidity
is part light and part shadow"



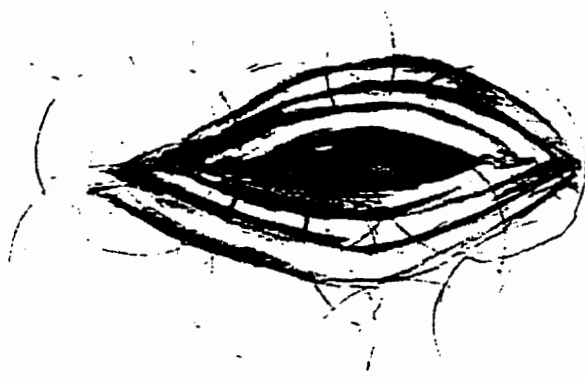
energy at work conductive, chemical, electrical circuit parabolic
mirror, solar vibration at the end of the visible electromagnetic
spectrum, just beyond
the red infrared heat just
beyond the infra violet burn.



Sun beam energy exploding reactions, radiating into space
changing forms: translucent light, opaque light, blinding light,
shadowy light, sombre light, delicate haze



Rilke describes an experience in which he dusted his piano until
it grew bright: "[...] I felt moved, as though something were
happening, something, to tell the truth, which was not purely
superficial but immense, and which touched my very soul: [...]"²²



²² Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas
(New York: Orion, 1964), 70.

shine on shores, shrivelling sideshow, silicon sights slur
sprouting staleness scram, scrawl, shift

succumb to successions and sighs

swift sways, skin, and szechwan.



I remember a phrase, "Light in its simplicity becomes
nurturing and in its magnificence audacious."

Pierre Faucher wrote to me:

"Tu montres le tableau à l'extérieur, Tu vois la peinture à l'intérieur.

Quand je te vois dans la lumière,
je dois te voir dans le noir.

Quand tu me montres la lumière,
Tu me montres l'obscurité.

Je dois toujours te voir dans la lumière comme dans l'obscurité
quand je vois le noir, je vois le blanc,
je vois la lumière

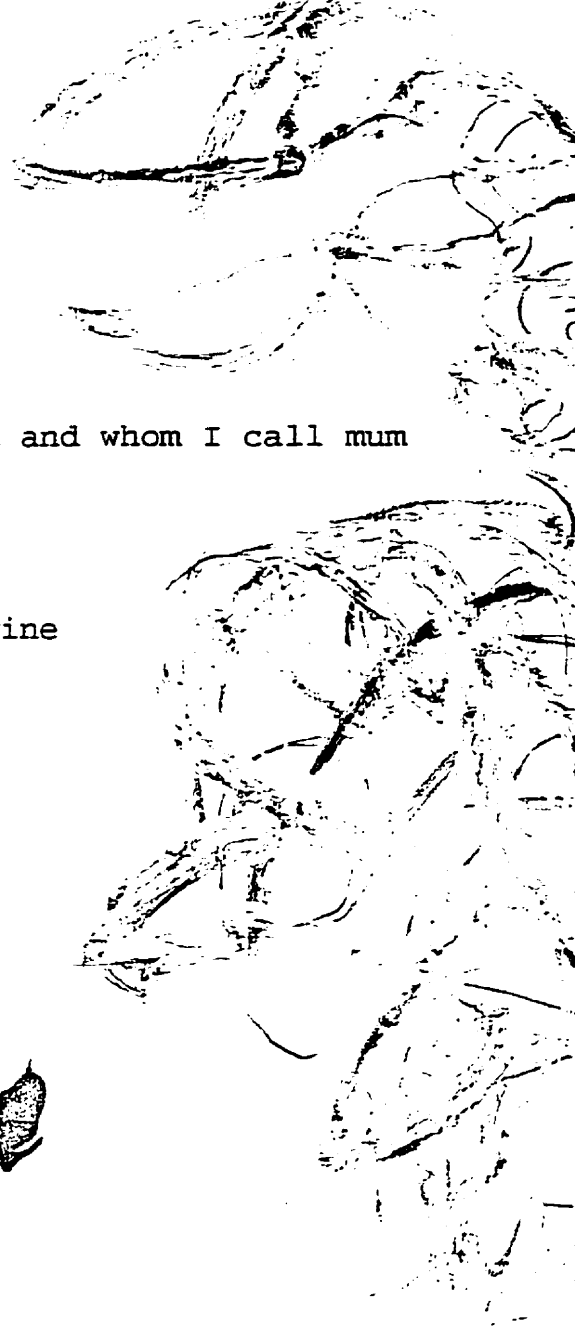
Tu as su me montrer mon noir et j'ai pu voir mon blanc: à présent
je vois, je te vois"

SURFACE CONNECTIONS, CORPOREALITY

To Giusepinna who calls herself Josée and whom I call mum
Your pasta
garlic odours
in courtyards of sauce, vinegar and wine
words and peppers
basil and olive oil
you feed me
Josée mum Giuseppina



interior touching folly gestures
while projecting being into images
from interior surfaces to exterior depths
to live hope to sing body to paint music
into fragments of rhythm
emerging elusive flowing process surfacing, incidence of light,
movement of the eye, auto dynamic, into and out of each other.
infinity inherent in the transitions. nature, material, fruit,
paradise, yellow sphere, head or sun



The spontaneous register of paint to a surface favours continuous traversal from the exterior to the interior, the mind to the body to the imaginary to the formal to the ephemeral to the material, from I to Other. Paintings' fluidity parallels the fluidity of voyage: through it I can express the excitedness of being.



When plunging into painting life becomes a reference. The signs become emblematic traces of something experienced: a state of mind, a memory of a luminous effect, a desire to relive a close contact, a sense of impending future, an incertitude, a fantasy, the corporal...a leaf of lettuce. Thoughts, emotions, concepts, desires, intermingle with the physical act of painting trans-

forming experience into shape, form, and colour. Exteriority is projected inwards as codes and sensations, while interiority is projected outwards and formed into matter. The work conserves signs of these multiple and morselled realities. It contains its own flux.

"When you have grasped its meaning with your will, then tenderly your eyes will let it go ²³..."

At different points in the process the chain of analogies and associations move from a personal sphere into a concrete awareness of the act of painting (the formal sphere). During this passage painting becomes an event, 'a deposit of energy' in which one explores and relishes the possibility of the medium: the colours, the planes of shifting light, the relationship of elements, and the movement of line.



In *Nuova Immagine* Fontana states that matter imposes its own spatial laws. An occasion for experience is created when the artist looks for the various conditions of matter which enter into pacts and agreements with one another; the artist highlights the nature of this reality.²⁴ Although I could not comfortably assert that spatial laws of matter are as concrete as Fontana

²³ Rainer Maria Rilke, "Initiation" in *Rilke, Selected Poems*, trans. C.F. MacIntyre (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1940), 21.

²⁴ Flavio Caroli, *Nuova Immagine / New Image* (Milano: Gabriele Mazzotta editore, 1980), 158-159.

describes, or that an artist has the capacity to put these laws into evidence, Fontana portrays remarkably well how the material connotes before the hand shapes it. I savour the surface tactile qualities of paint and delight in the pacts the form, colour and texture of the material express.

Experiences that occur in the physical world are integrally linked to our internal worlds. The two are joined; the same yet distinct. My work summons this interconnection. The surface, embraces the raw tangible nature of the physical - the body. Curiously, we can imagine touching its flesh. Like skin, it can be described as blistered, smooth, peeled, scraped, cut, wounded, glowing, dirty, pulsating, clean, or unwrinkled. Impulses and vital powers are expressed in the marks that traverse the work. They seduce our tactile senses all the while embracing the palpable world. Texture becomes the embodiment of life: the weariness of mortal flesh, psychological space, and the exuberance for physical reality (flesh as the limit of the interior and exterior).

Aunt Margo your heart is quietly singing its
final verse but I can't hear the words.

tubes entangle your frail body impervious to your alto that
ripped through the domes of churches and bedrooms When I turn
back I can still hear its pulse. They warned us you were dying
without knowing the lion in your tenor which at its peaks

resonates with terrifying pitch. We warned them it's
sci-fy scrawl, shifting sealed seasons
root with anima no longer palpable
decimating coldness of aunt Margo's death,
its stiff decay still
chills
incapable to still its skin
I decide nothing
Margo is it safe? Is it like mud,
froth or like liquid
evaporation?
theory has no body, it denies flesh
but is it insightful?
Scott's hardness implicit in chaos,
Meta's softness implicit in
order
to body
My mother's leg heavy and tired on my thin eager support
My brother's brazen glow. The oak tree stump. old re-b
in acts of discovery jagged and scorched need
thoughts of famined skin drying on brittle bones
deep structured city, susceptible concrete
while shipwrecked selves search for selective
sometimes senile answers
still

In the paintings; immobile swirlings of paint, emerging coagulations, foldings, gashes and articulations. Microcosmic worlds appear. They ask for closer reading. Texture becomes a place where sensual joy can be affirmed and intimacy asked for. My exuberance for physical reality and our carnal form is expressed through its variations.

"I want to touch you" whispered in the caves of my ears
 my hands quietly wait like the moon
 your absence my expectations your migrations my presence
 your nights my days
 aligned hearts we lend ourselves to yeast ridden emotions
 unyielding i feel my soul and yet I question its existence you
 want me to touch you!
 a tropical dart, paint mixed with turpentine flows freely like
 hands upon flesh



To be open to the material is not to impose a personal order on things but to allow oneself to be invaded by the depths and compose from there.

THE PANORAMAS (WIDE VIEW IN ALL DIRECTIONS OFTEN CHANGING)



My most recent works are painted panoramas that express the many-sidedness of being. The panoramas consist of several distinct panels united together. The assemblage of these images together creates movement, rest and capacity for relationship.

I see a certain amount of decomposition necessary for transmutations for binding elements into new unions, clarity, elegance. *When two strange images meet, pursuing different entities they often strengthen each other, countercheck for phenomenological analysis, move elsewhere without difficulty; into other times, and on different planes of dream and memory.*²⁵

As our vision wanders from panel to panel, each distinct part calls attention to and is energized by the presence of the other. Each one has the potential to affect or be affected. When wind

²⁵ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, (New York: Orion, 1964), 53 and 59. This paragraph is made up of segments of Bachelard's writing. I have indicated the parts that come directly from his book *The Poetics of Space* in italics.

and water interact, possibility is released ie. breeze, gentle wave/hurricane, tidal wave. Likewise, the intersections and interconnecting panels organize a series of echoes, reversals, permutations and oscillations from which a polyphony of possible experience comes to be.

The encounter of different painted panels triggers strings of associations which allow us to shape and form varied senses. The viewer can abstract from, juxtapose, contrast, and connect the multiple stimuli. As we consider each piece in relation to the other, our position (visual, emotional, intellectual...) requires adjusting. It is precisely the pleasure of our moving and expanding orientation that reveals the strength divergent scopes supply. Hence the perception of the joined-heterogeneous-panels gratifies an optical response, as the work gains 'potency', it becomes an object for contemplation.

A panorama only feels complete when it expresses difference in its many nuances and when it creates distinction, movement and poetic linkage. It should contain the power of metamorphosis yet retain a sense of coherent continuity. The motions of intercourse, dialogue, breathing, eating, thinking, and caressing repeat.²⁶ They often convey rhythms more than meaning. When looked at historically there is a mystical timelessness in these rhythms.

²⁶ Gertrude Stein, *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein*, Ed., Carl Van Vechten (New York Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1957). This section was influenced by Gertrude Stein's depiction of repetition with variation in *The Gradual Making of the Making of Americans*.

RHYTHM, RENEWAL, RETURN, RELEASE, REPETITION

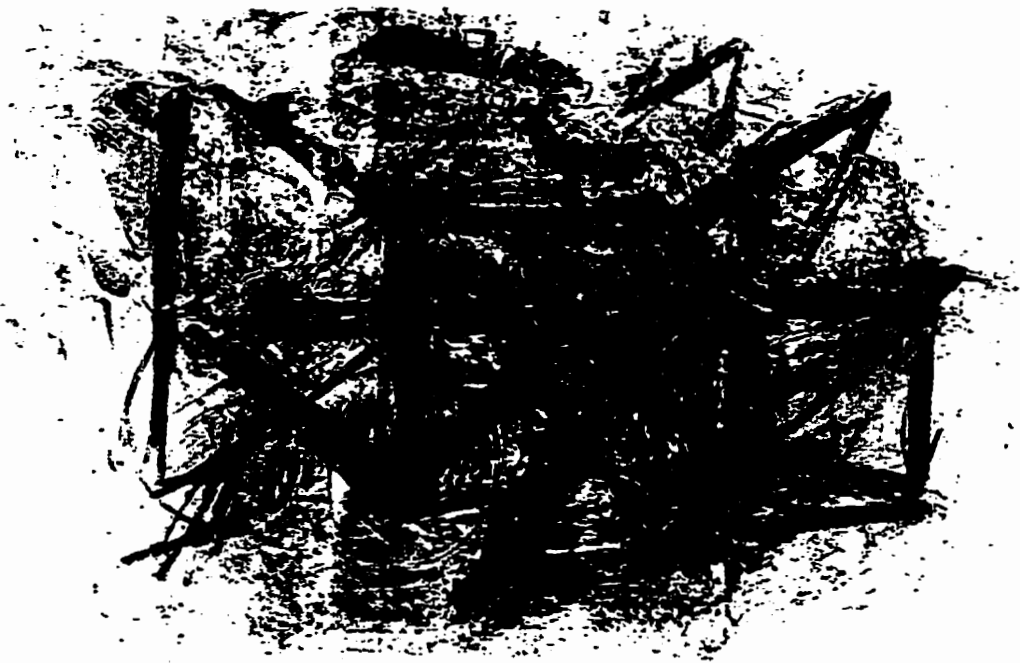
"Repetition is the strongest assurance an author can give of order: the extraordinary complexity of the variation is the reminder that the order is so involute that it must remain a mystery ²⁷."

Repetition with variation is an essential aspect of the painted panoramas. The repeated panels reinforce the feeling of exchange and flow while the interwoven context lyricizes the impression of rhythm. They evoke the energy of motion but also convey the changes involved in the actual making of the work (traces of the living-process). The repeated structures become spatial juxtapositions, emphatic about their existence. Colour, thought, emotion, event, process so large one portrayal is not enough. Even if some images or techniques reappear, the recurrent content is never identical. The capacity to find new and unexpected connections remains and with it the sense of pleasure, discovery, and rediscovery.

In these paintings time is experienced synchronically but also diachronically. Like a film, the panorama-painting is a ribbon of repeating frames. One image follows another. This succession creates a 'perceived diachrony'. Since the different parts are unified, they can also be experienced instantaneously. Unlike cinema, which is linear but unidirectional, these panoramas allow

²⁷ E. K. Brown, *Rhythm In the Novel* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 115.

the viewer to choose the direction and duration of the unfoldings. The panels can bind and inter-illuminate each other so that every beginning imparts a further reality to the union, or they can be looked at simultaneously in their entire synchronicity. The rhythm created by the many panels produces a flowing vitality and the joined assemblage is the assurance of its continuation. These pieces are in fundamental sympathy with the rhythms of my desires, existence, emotions and thoughts.



Visual Variables as Traces of Being → Personal Conceptual Symbols

fine granulation · dust

coarse granulation: the harsh & painful
relief: topography of lands, cities, objects & humans

glazed glass: reflection, mirror, intuition,
the fluid & organic, water

red lines: the raw, flesh,
the fragile, the mortal

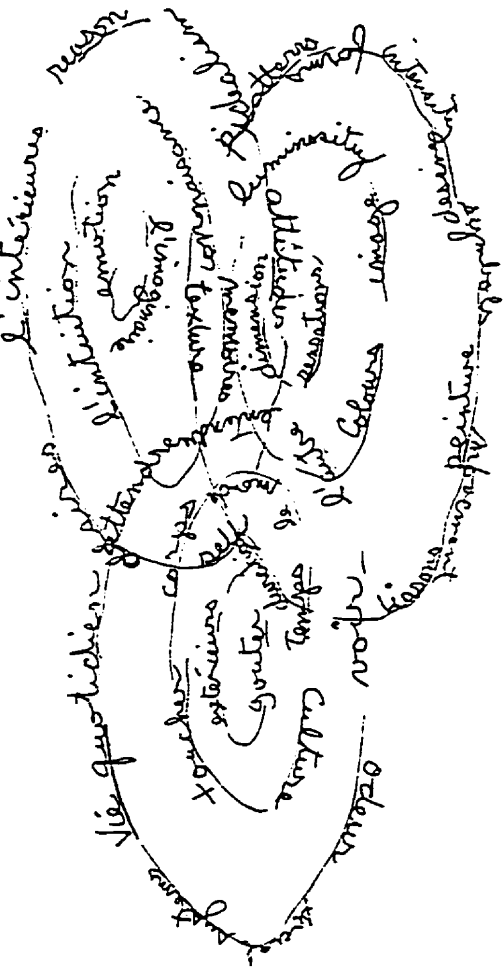
texture: (firm, smooth
wrinkled), skin touch
the corporal

relationships: next, following
separate, envelope, merge

geometric grid: reason or
cognitive order

rhythms of brushstrokes: time -
duration - helix, curve, fast, patterned

Schema Du Processus De Creation



stratified surface (scrapped, thick) symbol of accumulated experience

changing memories, changing emotion, changing concepts

monochromatic planes: cleansing
meditation, Kelpose

shifting light: vibration, passage, cycles
transformations, metamorphosis, energy, hope

floating objects in absolute space: (not planes with no reference points) the
vast and cosmic, infinite, potential of organic fluidity, not least expanding
drips: affirmation of the hatched, L'interieur - L'exterieur

SPACE

Spaces and places
torn between three lovers
organic, concrete, flowing
the main, trout, sewers
my home cracks without the three of you
towards you I fumble in your metropolis forests, your chaotic
heights, and your buried bridges. As I throw myself on all your
beds country, metropolis, and invisible city you look upon me
with uncommitted eyes
and I crave more

Montreal

Immobile silence permeates my tired bones
on my couch 300 km away
touch me with your savage hands
cut the stagnant settlement of my small town comfort
the beat, the heat, the meat, make me breath from your
carcinogenic treats

Chibougamau

anchored to your rivers and the smell of pike
you lose me in your forests
you drown me in your cold
expand me through the blowing memory of your skies
I release a cry to your changing testing seasons

Venice

crystal black canals

reflecting infinite spaces infinite pathways

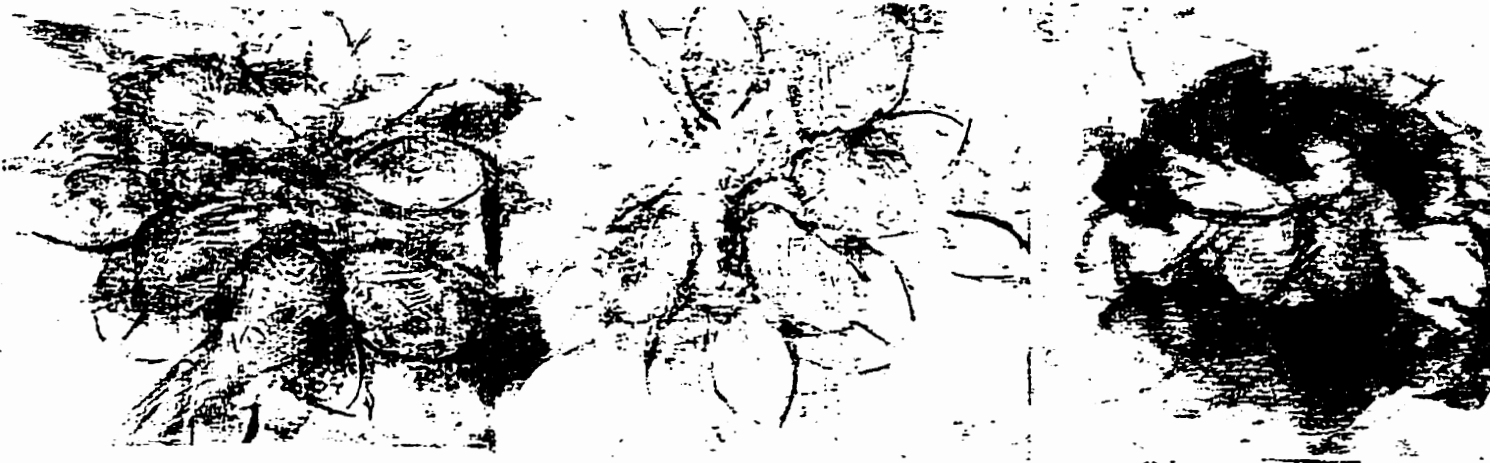


Not wanting to describe the appearance of things. poetry sets me free, turns the process loose, frees it from projects and propositions it gives me space...you call this a poem?

I broiled some trout and made myself a salad. As I washed a leaf of Boston lettuce I became enthralled by the water tension that gave each vein a microscopic importance.

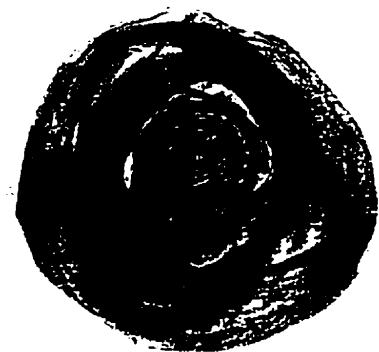


The girl's impeccable skin cries out for differentiation from that of the woman's, the place where i am. the space between petals,

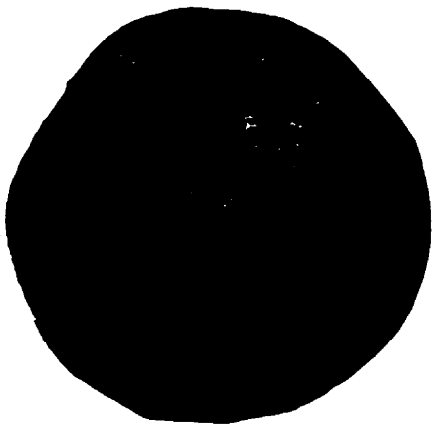




interior space concomitant with reality.

Elusive expanses, "air takes up space we feel it" my grade six student said. There is a transparency in the exemption of sense, like tender sentiments, breadth, desire, rest. There is sense, but it cannot be caught, we can only feel it.



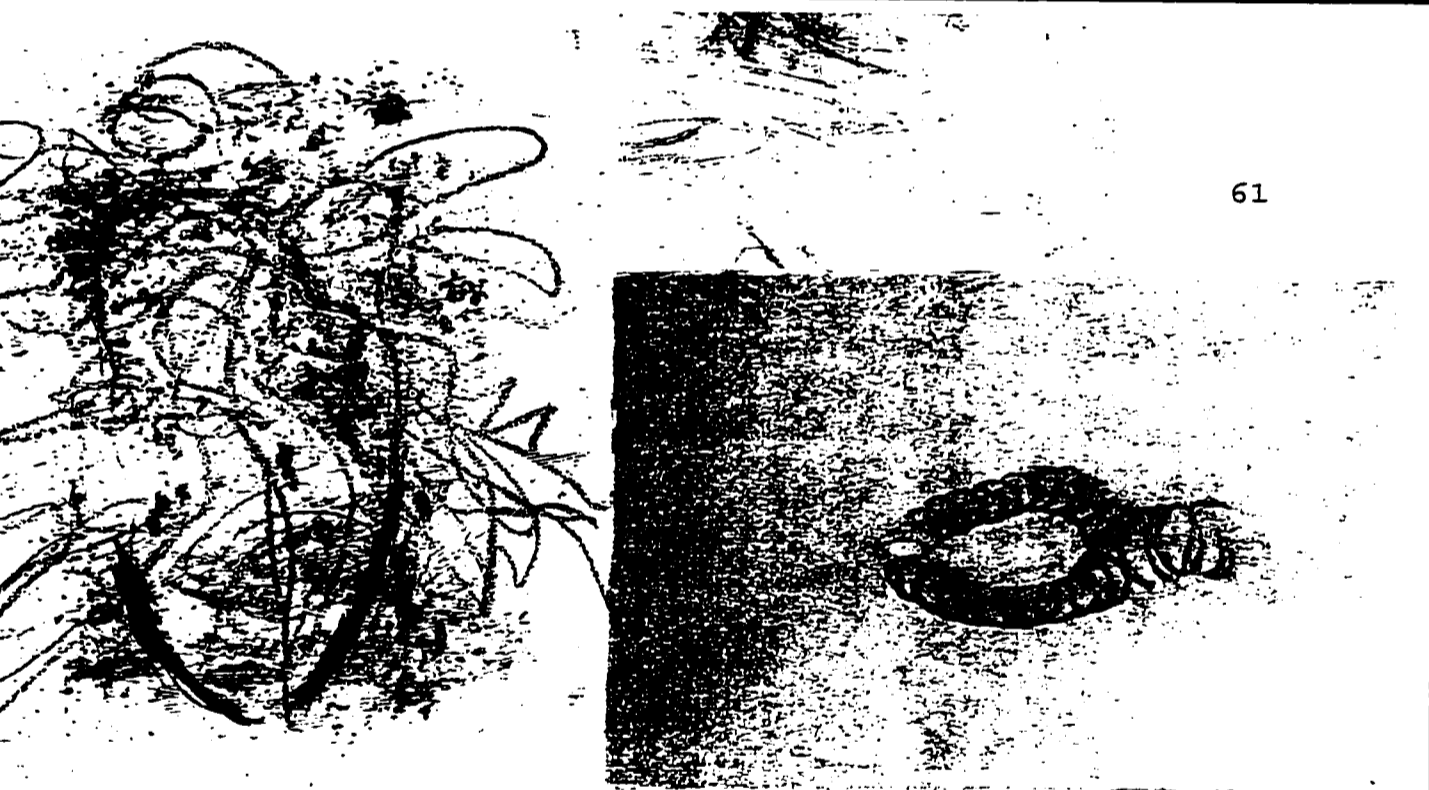
In between spaces intermittence





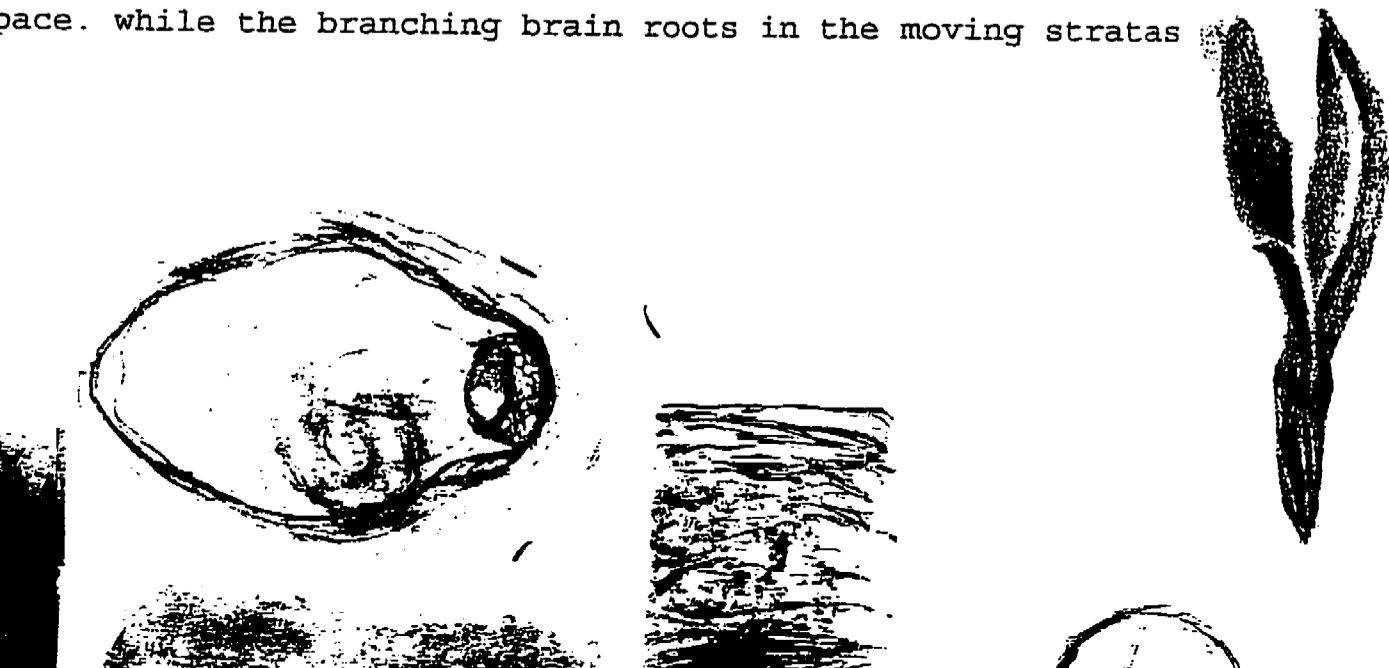
A response to Coleridge's explanation of the imagination as
" [...] a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of
creation in the infinite I am ²⁸." First snow in the infinite
space I am within the finite body working for the eternal space
of creation and observation reaching digging to enlarge prolong
dreams of wide spreading cooperation spanning like the extending
patterns of adenine thymine cytosine guanine and uracil

²⁸ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. George
Watson (New York: Dutton, Everyman's Library, 1956), 167.



ands trace networks running into the universe of eyes, eyes span
randomly light which ripples across texture, which ripples across

space. while the branching brain roots in the moving stratas

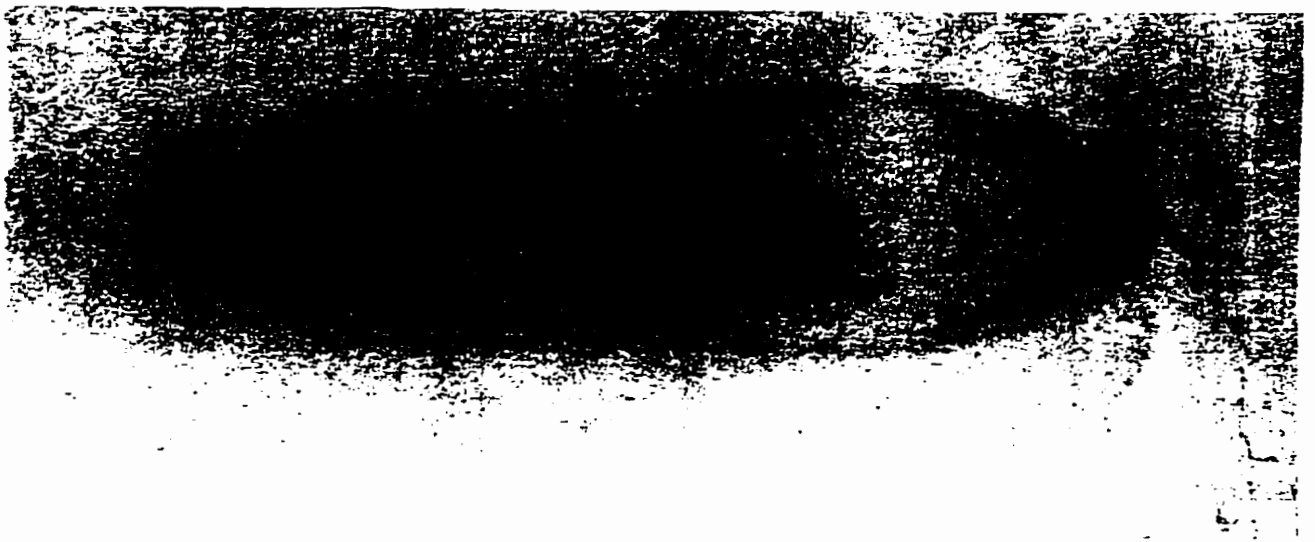
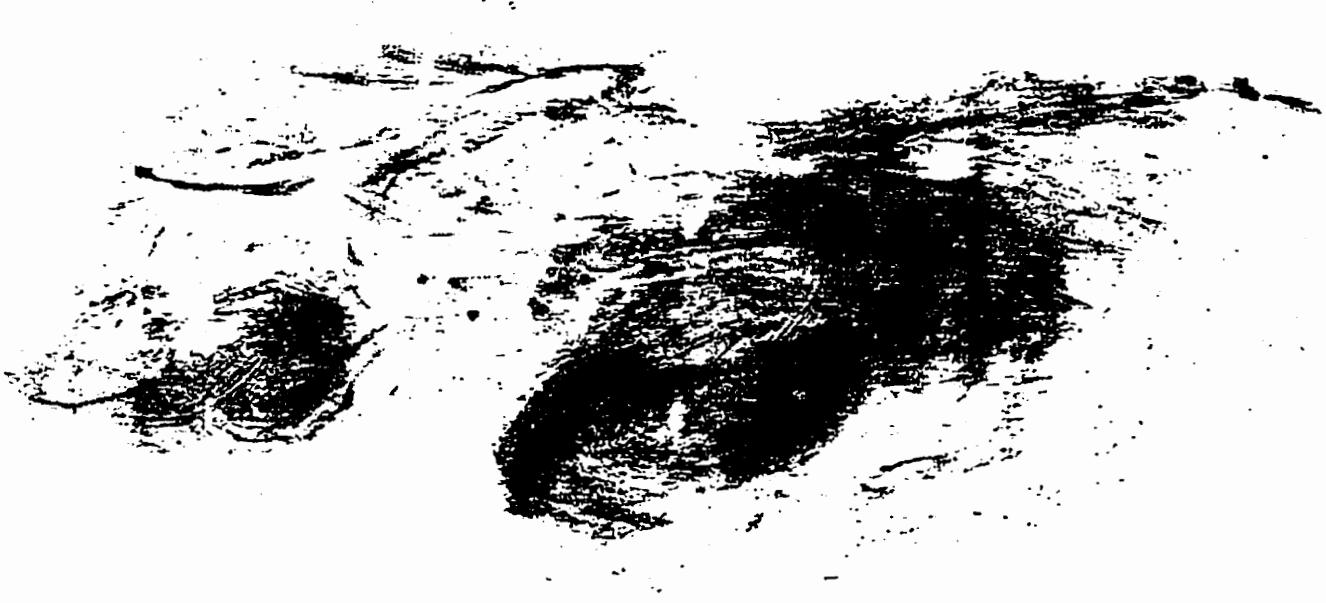


You have been gone for how many months? space which extends pain
 muted spring, shrinking panic, surrounding space plunged in
 darkness, Doorway, entrance or exit?

Sexson says: With love we come to see the multi-dimensionality
 of things. Potential!

dimensionless spaces

forest metaphor moving through time for us to return to, laying
 and feeding in its infinite moss, spaces to discover



CONCLUSION



Inspired by a lovely poem by Pablo Neruda which starts "Your hand flew from my eyes into the day ²⁹" the title of my exhibition *Your Hands Are On My Eyes* can imply a relationship of trust but also a relationship of violence. The assemblage of the words establishes an atmosphere of intimacy between the viewer, the work and me, but the nature of the touch turns on itself. Is it a loving touch or a blinding one?

To paint and to draw, the eyes and hands are essential. The eyes may be interpreted as internal vision and the hands the tool that makes that vision tangible. Paintings' direct link to the hand, turns the work into a material human record; an

²⁹ Pablo Neruda, *100 Love Sonnets*, trans. Stephen Tapscott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1959), 17.

attempt to reach out with an abstracted touch. The title *Your Hands Are On My Eyes* puts the viewer's hands in a position of control. In doing so it acknowledges that the circular passage from the I, the work, to the other is a critical part of the process.

The painted-panoramas lack a single vision. In contrast, they present different fragments of experience together. The word fragment usually suggests something incomplete. It may be associated to the negative feelings of void and angst. My use of fragment strays away from this idea. I see the unfinished or lack of unitary sense as an avenue towards possibility, not emptiness. Something which we can add to. Through the use of repetition the fragments expand into a connected-evoked continuation. Here, fragments of memory, skin, absolute space, landscape, water, clouds, relative truths, intensity, colour and intimacy come and go and sometimes come again. As Schmidt would have it this absence of totality links the past, present, and future; it is the hope that prods us into looking forward tending towards a 'not yet'.³⁰

Like the cut rock on the side of the road journeys can trigger streams of ideas, intriguing sensations, and imaginings rich in unforeseeable discoveries. Recognizing that the world is a web

³⁰ Dennis J. Schmidt, "The Future As Not Yet" in *Writing the Future*, ed. David Wood (New York: Routledge, 1990).

of possibility, the panoramas contain various interpretive directions; willed chance and exchange occurs in the presence of their innumerable elements. Consequently, the mere structure of the panoramas encourages acts of conscious freedom. The viewer can place herself/himself in the network of relationships and choose her/his own reference points.



If a piece only seems complete when the 'movement or change' becomes solidified am I not attempting to produce change unchanging, movement that is united, past present future that is timeless-infinite? When I investigate this relative permanence through repetition do I want to cease a continuous infinite present? Or am I just simply fascinated by the vital force of movement? Do I vary the symbolic and material content of each panel to understand phenomena, listing permutations and arrangements in attempt to problem solve?

There are still so many questions, all one can hope for is the existence of an open and generous space unlocked to change and possibility in the other's mind. After all, all I really want to say is that I take pleasure in painting because of its spontaneous register of trace, the kaleidoscope of colour, the healing of light and the sensuality of paint, and I hope that my work might touch someone.

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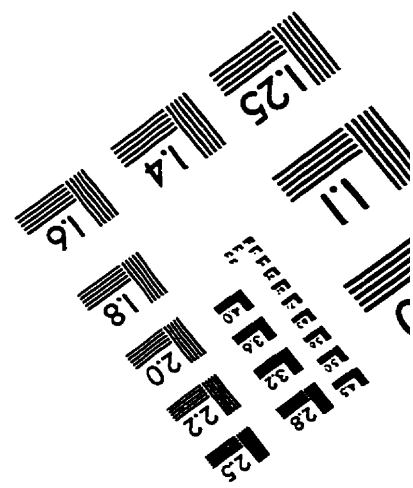
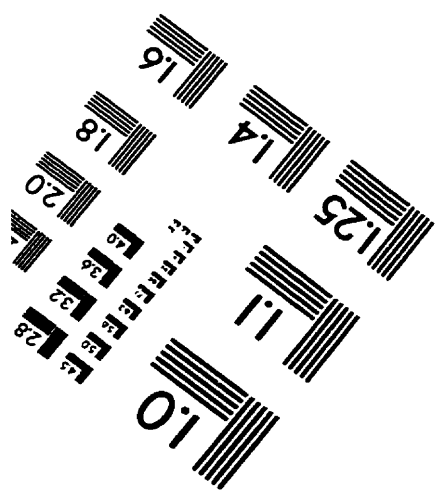
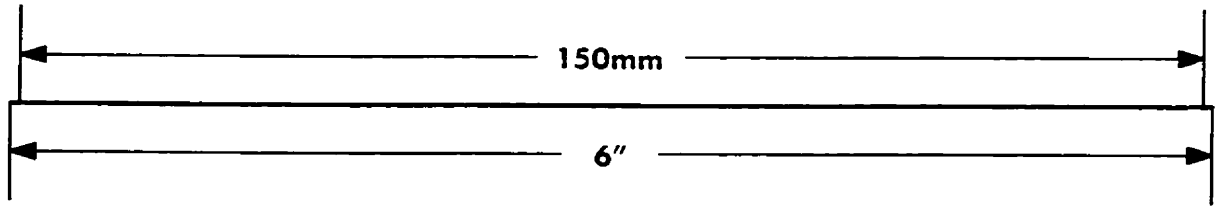
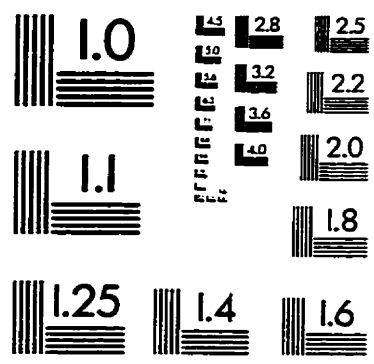
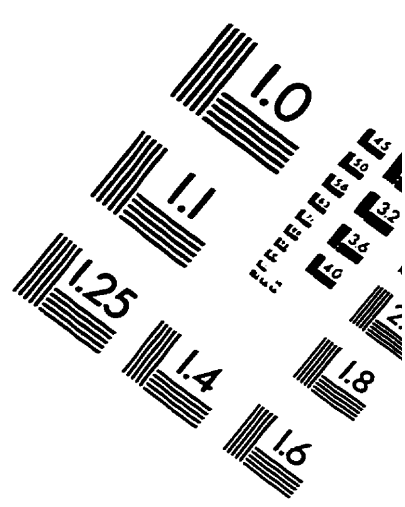
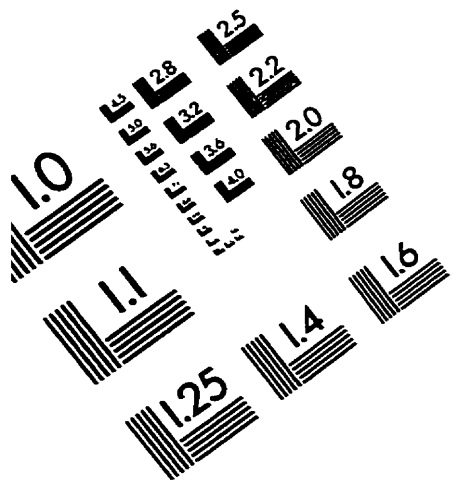
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RESOLUTION EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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