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More than the portrait: the intangible with the immediately visible as a painter interprets his subjects on a surface

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NOTE

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MORE THAN THE PORTRAIT:

THE INTANGIBLE WITH THE IMMEDIATELY VISIBLE AS A PAINTER INTERPRETS HIS SUBJECTS ON A SURFACE.

ABSTRACT.

This documentation gives support to the work displayed in the two exhibitions of paintings and drawings, which form the basis of the submission for the Degree.

Included in the document is a full photographic record of the exhibitions, with an analysis of each work.

The painting projects were begun in the second half of 1983, and though the two subject sources might appear at first glance to be some distance apart, it became clear, during the execution of the works, that substantial relationships existed between the thematic and formal elements of the two series.

It is certain that a period of research in Italy and Europe, in late 1983 and early 1984, had its part to play in the linkage between this work, and that of the Medieval and Renaissance artists, and particularly in the return to the human figure as subject, depicted in more explicit terms than in my earlier abstract works.
The written submission is a detailed account of the physical, technical, structural and symbolic elements in the works from the two exhibitions. It is an investigation of creative intentionality, and of process, by analysis of completed work. The result is a revelation of the mental, sensual, intuitive and reasoned activities of an artist, through an examination of his own created images on a surface.
MORE THAN THE PORTRAIT:
THE INTANGIBLE WITH THE IMMEDIATELY VISIBLE AS A
PAINTER INTERPRETS HIS SUBJECTS ON A SURFACE.

A written submission in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of
DOCTOR OF CREATIVE ARTS

from
THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by
PETER LEONARD SHEPHERD,
BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (ART),
GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATIONAL STUDIES (DRAMA).

SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS
1987.
NOTE: This document is not in itself a Thesis, but rather a written examination of the works from two major exhibitions of drawings and paintings, which form the Thesis.

Descriptive analysis is used to examine each work, both for its specific individuality, and for the common elements of technique, content and derivation, which give it a place in this particular art context of “More Than The Portrait”.
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MORE THAN THE PORTRAIT

INTRODUCTION.

This documentation gives support to the work displayed in the two exhibitions of paintings and drawings, which form the basis of the submission for the Degree.

Included in this document is a full photographic record of the exhibitions, with an analysis of each work.

The project was commenced in the second half of 1983, with initial research for the series of paintings for *Kate Kelly’s Road Show*, by Edward Cowie. These eight paintings were then worked to a state of near completion, before a world study-tour was undertaken, for research into sources for the second series of works, The Self-Portraits. The decision to resume working in a figurative mode, and to attempt to make an integration between this, and the former non-figurative mode of working, came at a period when artists world-wide, but particularly in Europe, were returning to the figure as the main source of inspiration and expression. There were no firm ideas for the basis of the work for the second exhibition, prior to the study-tour, rather a decision was made, to use the time, to allow a wide range of influences to impinge on the senses, and to later develop the series of works, which may or may not have been in some
way influenced by any number of these experiences. The analysis of
the works, therefore, is an attempt to see them in the context of the
wide range of visual and other experiences which preceded them.

The study-tour from October, 1983 to March, 1984, involved a three
month period in Italy, including studio work at Bussana Vecchia, near
San Remo, and at Bivigiano, near Florence. The analysis of the works
shows a clear and powerful influence from the past art forms of
Italy, and in particular from the Medieval and Early Renaissance
periods.

From late December, 1983, to March, 1984, visits were paid to
galleries in Switzerland, Germany, France, Britain, and the United
States of America. A full list of these exhibitions commences on
Page 148. A number of these were to be seminal influences on the
work that followed, notably:

1. MAX BECKMANN: Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings & Drawings.
   Städelisches Kunstinstitut, Stätische Gallerie, Frankfurt am Main.
   Permanent Collection of The Tate Gallery, London.
3. JÖRG IMMENDORF: Retrospective.
   Kunsthaus Zürich.
4. MODIGLIANI: Exhibition of Portraits.
   The National Gallery, Washington, D.C.
5. "EXPRESSION - NEW ART FROM GERMANY."
   Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.
In March, 1984 the Kelly Portraits were completed, and shown firstly as the stage-set for the Music-Theatre piece, *Kate Kelly's Road Show* by Edward Cowie, at the Adelaide Festival. Later, they were exhibited at the University of Wollongong Gallery.

The Self-Portraits, both paintings and drawings were commenced, and developed during the remainder of the year, and were exhibited in the University of Wollongong Gallery in April and May, 1985.

Both exhibitions deal with the portrayal of aspects of the human figure and personality. The analysis of each work reveals the wide range of influences, and the recurring themes and symbols, which have appeared as the works developed. It is an analysis of process through product, and gives some insight to the processes, mental, intuitive, reasoned, and sensual, which come together as the artist creates images on a surface.
AN ABSTRACT ARTIST'S APPROACH TO WORK.

The processes which have engaged my artistic output, since the early 1970's, have been related to the abstract expressionist movement, the mainstream accepted mode during that period.

The causation, or motivation for any particular work, or series of works varied, however, often coming from initial marks on a surface, which related to perceptions from the study of the human figure. These initial responses were sometimes commenced on paper from actual life drawings, but very often commenced directly on canvas from "remembered" notations of the figure.

Initial marks were invariably rapid and intuitive, in an attempt to block direct conscious decision, and to gain access to the subconscious response. If working drawings had been made, they were not directly referred to, during the working period. When a grid of lines, spaces and shapes had filled the space being worked, the process of reorganisation and overlaying commenced.

Each work became a surface of skins, or layers, sometimes allowing parts of lower strata to remain, sometimes overlaying with transparent washes of colour, and often destroying one format to create a new. The whole action became one of creation, contemplation and retention, destruction and recreation. Thus a rich surface of colour and line developed, dependent on the artist's initial response to cause, and later responses to development.
NEW DIRECTIONS - THE RETURN OF THE FIGURE.

World-wide movements towards the re-incorporation of figure, or more obviously recognisable figurative elements into works of art, were of great interest at the time I received the commission to paint the series of works based on the life of Ned Kelly.

The project for "More Than The Portrait" developed into two distinct areas - the second being a natural sequel to the first. The total concept involved the interaction of the figure, in a recognisable form with symbol, and with purely intuitive surface treatment; - a synthesis of abstraction and figuration, in an attempt to give heightened power to the hidden forces relating to, or emanating from the subject (figure), as portrayed in any particular work. Achille Bonito Oliva, writing on the present Italian Trans-avantgarde says, "Naturally the image runs from the figurative to the abstract .... the provisionality lies in the making of a work, which neither gets stuck in an academic perfectionism, but is always in transit between the desire to make and the stability of the result." ¹

"In the 1980s there has been a return to narrative content through figuration. Its mechanisms for communication are either expressionistic, empathetical and emotionally based story telling, or emblematic, socially encoded narratives of archetypal images and symbols." ²
**THE NED KELLY PAINTINGS.**

The first area of work was the development of the paintings based on portraits of Ned Kelly, for the Music Theatre piece, *Kate Kelly's Road Show* (1983), by Edward Cowie. This part of the project was to involve eight scenes from the life of Kelly, which were to form the stage set for the opera. Each work, however, had to be perceived by the audience as a painting in its own right. This section of the project, therefore, had a number of external considerations to be resolved, as well as the usual artistic decisions, both intuitive and rationalised.

**THE SELF PORTRAITS.**

The second area of work involved the series of paintings and drawings based on self-image. These works have no external constraints, the only real constraint being the decision to create a whole series based on a single image system. Initially conceived as a series of portraits of various persons known to the artist, the concept changed after the Kelly series, with the observations made of the personal drama, and changing physical appearance of the protagonist, as reaction to emotional and external forces. The decision was taken to create a series of works based on the image of the artist, and in so doing, to use this image, as image of "**THE ARTIST**" in a general sense. This art of the 1980s is " - a Romantic movement in the sense that it is based on personal intuitive mythmaking which, when successful, has a wider universal applicability."
MORE THAN THE PORTRAIT

THE NED KELLY PAINTINGS
SERIES OF PAINTINGS FOR "KATE KELLY'S ROAD SHOW".

The series of eight paintings was to show the main scenes from the life of Ned Kelly. The opera is based on the fact that Kelly's sister, Kate, toured her own theatrical show after Kelly's death, purportedly to vindicate his cause and clear his name. "After her brother, Ned Kelly's hanging in 1880, Katherine Kelly (Kate) founded a travelling show, which in songs and music re-told her brother's story." Her act was a mixture of story, song and dance, and was illustrated by a set of primitive paintings, executed by Kate herself, showing the most important incidents in her brother's life. These paintings were hung on a stand, and each work was turned over, at the end of each song, to reveal the next part of the narrative.

After discussion with the composer, I was required to devise a series with the following titles, and relevant content:

1. The Young Kelly at Power's Lookout.
2. The Kelly Family at Greta.
3. The Fitzpatrick Incident.
4. Stringybark Creek.
5. The Killing of Aaron Sherritt.
7. The Trial.
8. The Death of Ned Kelly.
The paintings were to be large, to human scale (172cm x 120cm), and standing as an enveloping semi-circle around the stage area, to form the acting space for the sole performer, Kate. Each work was to be revealed individually, in sequence, at particular points in the score, and had to reflect the mood of the development to a powerful climax.

Initially the works were to be simple narrative settings for the eight scenes, but as research progressed into the original photographs, posters and etchings of Ned Kelly, it became apparent that the actual physical presence of Kelly needed to dominate the works. The aspect of Kelly that spoke most deeply to me was the terrible change in physical appearance that occurred over such a short period of time, from 1869 until 1880.

As the series was commenced, the decision was taken to overpaint each scene with a portrait of Ned from the relevant period in his life. The portraits were to be interwoven into the fabric of the narrative, and were to keep something of the poster image, the public presentation of Kelly at the time, the image of the wanted man, which adorned buildings, notice boards and the newspapers of the period.

Each portrait is larger than that which precedes it, giving the implication of the growing power of Kelly's personality, and the dominance over all that surrounds him. The final work with its four images of Kelly, is dominated by the death mask.
Each portrait was to be lit by a reduced pencil-spotlight on stage, so that when general lighting was reduced, the stage would contain only the images of Ned, floating in a sombre darkness. The painting referred to in any particular scene would be the only one to be totally lit, fading later, as an after image, as the story moved on. At the shattering climax to the opera, with Kate's symbolic drowning, the dim facial images were all to be seen, gradually fading to darkness.

Constraints on the works were:

a) the narrative quality had to be perceived by an audience, to support the words of Kate's songs.

b) this narrative image had to be legible from a distance, thus demanding a clarity and relative simplicity of form.

c) the need to include as much of the detail as possible from each scene, without destroying clarity, which usually meant representing a sequence of events as a simultaneous scene.

d) to use specific imagery required by the composer, particularly in relation to symbolic content, and to particular colour and mood passages within the opera.
e) to create a series of images which showed an approach to the
legend different to that developed by Sir Sidney Nolan, the great
visual exponent of Kelly. The images of Kelly in this series are very
much linked to the changes to “Kelly the Man”, rather than to the use
of “Kelly the Symbol”. “The armour has become Ned Kelly’s symbol,
but it has also become the bar between us and an understanding of the
man. Even though we have now seen several photographs of Ned Kelly,
he still remains a faceless, inhuman figure. He is almost anonymous
behind the plough-steel helmet. We must strip this away before we
can even see the man.”

As the series developed, the overlaid portraits became more
dominant, so that by the final death scene the whole canvas is
overpainted with the powerful death mask, whereas in the early
works the portrait is contained in a smaller overlapping poster.

The paintings were painted in chronological order, each giving the
inspiration for the mood of the next. When first approached I had the
same basic, and somewhat sketchy, knowledge of the legend, as do
many Australians of the late twentieth century. I found with
reading, and study of visual images of the period, that I came to
identify in a very strong way with the subject, i.e. Kelly.
This seems to be a common occurrence for many artists dealing with this complex man.

As Keith Dunstan writes in *Saint Ned*, "Sometimes I get the feeling that Ned Kelly seeps through the very pores of Australians. - I have counted seventeen full length books on Kelly and his gang." 6

In discussing the amount of time devoted to study and expressions, based on the story of the Kelly Gang, he writes, "Some believe artists and writers have impinged on him, because there are so few Australian heroes. But there is more to it than that.", and after an examination of the Australian distrust for authority, he concludes, " - so Ned Kelly, although a murderer, fulfilled something of the national dream. For two years, he and his three young comrades outwitted an entire police force, made it look ridiculous, then died with courage. Of such stuff legends are made." 7

A powerful identification happened with Nolan, so that the idea of Nolan/Kelly is evident in particular works. It also happened to Cowie, the composer of the opera, and I found that even though the physical differences are great, i.e. Kelly was taller and a much larger man than myself, there is a certain Irish similarity in the early photographs. This strange internalisation of the subject certainly had a strong effect on the actual composing and laying on of paint.
The scenes painted beneath the portrait images of Kelly fall into three main technical styles.

The first three are naive and simple records of the settings, and an introduction to the characters.

The next three are much more violent, and subjective in the use of paint, as expression of the wild emotions involved in those horrifying, and uncontrolled events.

The final two are austere, detached and impersonal, as the law takes control of the story.

The portraits always have a flat, poster-like appearance, for in fact, most of them come from those sources. The exception is in *The Glenrowan Seige*, when the face of Ned is only hinted at behind the metal mask. The mere human is swallowed in the legend, at this physical and spiritual conflagration.
RECURRING MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS.

In all the paintings there are common threads of symbolic imagery. All the faces of the characters involved in the scenes are never fully shown. Often part of the face is protected by a masked piece, as if to preserve anonymity in confrontations with the law.

The police, Kelly's most hated and despised enemies, "he was paranoid in his loathing of every man who wore a policeman's uniform." are always shown as strange, unfaced creatures, until in the court scene, where the law has taken command.

Prison bars are seen to cut across the features of the superimposed portraits of Kelly. Sometimes these are hinted at, as parts of the landscape, and sometimes are actual depictions of the inevitable conclusion of the story.
KELLY AT POWER’S LOOKOUT

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
Painting No.1 - "KELLY AT POWER'S LOOKOUT" (172cm. x 120cm.)

The scene is set at Eagle Rock in the Wombat Ranges. Young Ned Kelly is in training with Harry Power, the incompetent bushranger.

"Harry had bunyans as big as grapes!
So he wore old boots, with bird's-foot shapes...
His pet peacock spied the valley below,
Where the King River bends, so easy and slow." 9.

The descriptive elements, in the painting, include the impression of the rock itself, young Ned standing guard with his horse, and old Harry Power hiding in his hollow tree, as he used to do, with only his large boots showing. The old man was rather a figure of fun, and famed for these very large, turned out and curled up boots. He used a pet peacock as a warning device to raise the alarm at the approach of any strangers. The eyes of the peacock tail, in display, have been repeated as an element within the work. They also symbolise the waiting and watchful quality attached to this particular mode of living, and repeat the eyes of Harry peering from the tree. The tree itself is not quite opaque, and Harry is almost discernable within this gauzy area.

A colour system of sharp greens and yellows has been used to suggest youth and spring-time, and the promise of life ahead. This echoes the piquant trills, glissandi, and inter-twined lines of the clarinet and flute, in the orchestral score, as they flicker quietly above the simple, flowing vocal line of this section of the stage-work.
The paint has been applied roughly and rapidly, to achieve an unfinished, restless surface. This restlessness has been picked up and amplified by the use of linear movement patterns, which flick from the twigs and branches of the bush, up through the portrait, and around and down through the mane and head of the horse. There is an unresolved quality to these linear movements, which have been set up to create an unease, as a prelude to the tale to follow.

The portrait, which has been overlaid, is from a family photograph of Ned at fifteen years of age, which corresponds exactly with this period. His face is still fresh, and in this one example alone, a quiet softness and reflective innocence are shown. A transparent quality reveals not only the landscape behind but some of the complex character of the subject. There is already the idea of face as mask, the body area which reveals, and at the same time hides most of the person's inner self. The face-mask also presages the metal mask, which will later cover the face. It also hints at the final death mask, with the skin ripped away. Prison bars tear the face, and also seem to tear the surface of the portrait, to reveal and combine with the landscape. These bars are reflected on the face of Ned in the underpainting.

The portrait is seen on a floating, transparent surface, lifting from the scene beneath, and yet flowing into it. It already has the quality of a poster.
THE KELLY FAMILY AT GRETA

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
Scene two is set at the Kelly's home at Greta, in the period after Ned's release from his first prison term. Young Ned is shown as the returned hero, leaning on the fence of the family homestead, relaxed and swaggering, gun at hand. He is watched by his mother and her new husband, the American, George King, his sisters and brothers. The whole composition has a posed, formal quality, with a frontal aspect, as usually seen in the nineteenth century family photograph. The family, however, is not depicted closely together, a foreshadowing of the imminent breaking up of the group.

Revolutionary feelings, held dear by the Kelly family, and fanned by the sentiments of George King, are symbolised by the elements of flags shown on the clothing of both King and Ned. King had been involved in the events at Eureka, and had influenced Ned, before he had been imprisoned.

"Young Ned listened, as supper was made,
To our stepfather's version of the Eureka Stockade."

The ground of the painting is rough, and the original red has been only partially overpainted with blues and greens, to create an impression of scarcely contained fire wanting to burst out - the first hint of the conflagration to follow.
The painting, therefore, endeavours to show the quiet passage of time on the farm, with the ever-present spirit of rebellion, an integral part of the Kelly character, and overall, a sense of waiting. The whole family looks from the painting, as though seeing what lies ahead. Again Ned's face is shut in by prison bars.

The superimposed portrait is taken from the first police photograph of Ned. The face has already changed. There is a new bitterness, and an added sense of wariness. The image is enshrined in an oval frame, ready to be placed, in hero-worship, on the family mantlepiece, but a second drawn edge shows, that in reality, it is on the curled paper of a rectangular "wanted" poster. It floats before the family as a revered icon of the favourite son. Glimpses of the distant bush show through the face, as a symbol of Ned's identification with his environment, his happiness at being restored to his family, and his determination to stay free to fight the law for the remainder of his life. An echo of the rectangular poster enfolds the home and the family. Ned and his brothers are outside the frame. They will be away from home for long periods.
THE FITZPATRICK INCIDENT

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
The song for this scene is one of doom, and also a revelation of Kate's vulnerability. It is filled with rage against male clumsiness, and yet this is tempered by the paradox of a secret longing. There are two versions of the story. The police maintained that Ned was present and attacked Fitzpatrick, shooting him in the hand. The Kellys on the other hand claimed that Ned was away, and gathered evidence to show that he was in New South Wales at the time. They claim that in his struggle with Kate, who was joined by Dan and Mrs. Kelly, Fitzpatrick fell and injured his hand on a meathook. Whatever the real events may have been, Mrs. Kelly was at this time sentenced to three years prison, and this is seen as the incident that confirms Ned's absolute hatred and distrust for the police, sending him on his quest for revenge. He felt "forced to seek revenge for the treatment of the family". 11.

The room is sparsely furnished, drab and bare. Fitzpatrick has removed his helmet, but still wears a helmet, symbol that to the Kellys he can never be just a man, but always represents the law. Ned watches from the distance, his face a mask of fury and hatred, surrounded by the flames of a bush fire. This presence of Kelly, in the form of a repeated, and larger facial image, steals into the room to observe the attempted violation of his sister. Elements of the flame are brought into the room, sear across the two standing figures, and echo in the blood, dripping from Fitzpatrick's wounded hand.
There is a feeling of unease and unreality, as the view of the room distorts, and slides away to the left.

Kate stands in an attitude of acceptance and feigned innocence, which not only heightens her vulnerability, but contains the element of hope and longing. There is evidence to show that Kate was strongly attracted to the policeman, and if his approach had been less clumsy, her response may have been quite different. The transparency of her clothing, and the revelation of the sexual organs of both figures, make no secret of her longings.

"I had a soft place for him, That's true!
The flash of a badge on a man in blue." 12.

Again the portrait shows the relationship of the man, Kelly, with his environment. The landscape invades the image. The gums, which cut in a row across the window, are also the bars of a prison. The larger portrait is painted flat and pale, like a theatrical mask, to hide, and yet emphasize the emotions. When lit by the correct theatre lights, the high tone of this mask allows it to lift from the surface and float forward.

The presence of Kelly is beginning to dominate each scene.
STRINGYBARK CREEK

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
Painting No.4 - "STRINGYBARK CREEK" (172cm. x 120cm.)

The opening words of Kate’s song set the mood of doom and destruction. As she sings,

"O, O, My fancy Boys!
You did a terrible deed!" 13.

in a treatment reminiscent of Irish shanty, there is a deliberate attempt to take the terror into a folk idiom.

The haunted face of Kelly dominates the composition, and becomes one with the ground. The gaping wounds of the police also form the wounds, both actual and mental, which are inflicted upon him. Kelly was wounded in the head during this massacre, but the mental anguish he suffered was more telling. This is the strange duality within the Kelly character, the hardness, and also the sorrow and sense of remorse; the determined, cold-blooded ability to kill, and the quirky humour, which allowed him to spare lives, and to treat people kindly in the most absurd situations. The painting depicts the full-blown heat of the Australian bush; all is reduced to rough broken lines of rising and enveloping heat. Trees, amongst which the shooting took place, have become the gibbets, upon which this latter-day Golgotha is set. Crouched figures shoot at the three policemen, who are stretched crucified, waiting, as for sacrificial death. The colours of the ground brush leap up to consume this funeral pyre, as the dark birds, the omens of doom, settle above.
The doom is not for the police alone, as this deed has sealed the fate of Kelly and his men. There is now no turning back, either for the gang, or for the forces of the law.

"Yet, who were the victims, they or you? Who played the game, come false or true! 0, 0, My fancy boys: You surely lost your reason! 0, 0, My pretty boys: Towards the hangman's rope! Now your case is lost, and there's very little hope! Very little hope! Throw down your gold spades... Spin and reel! And forge your armour from horse-plough iron. 14.

In this work, as in the following two works, the paint is applied roughly, liberally and with a sense of urgency. The sense of the deeds depicted had to be transferred through the application of the paint. The brooding face of Kelly, taken from a police poster of the period, shows the already drastically changed, and prematurely aged features of the young man. The trees again form the prison bars, which are echoed on the clothing of the crouched figures, and seem to be taken up by the urgent stripes of the ground.
THE KILLING OF AARON SHER RITT

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
"The killing of Aaron Sherritt was the lure, the police bait." 15.

"The role of Aaron Sherritt as police spy and traitor has a dramatic aptness in the Kelly story. It is the only area where oral and official accounts of the Outbreak agree." 16.

As the men go to kill the police informer, and one-time friend, Aaron Sherritt, Ned Kelly makes ready for the siege of Glenrowan. As he dons his helmet and armour, the bars close about him. There is no turning back. Aaron is shot in the doorway of his house, while his wife and the police cower in fear in the bedroom.

"Perhaps the critical factor in Sherritt's role was his devotion to Joe Byrne - wanting to destroy the gang, without destroying Joe Byrne. With no apparent way to do this, Sherritt simply procrastinated and drifted with events. By June even Joe had to believe he was a traitor: - the man selected to 'execute' him was Joe Byrne." 17.

The premeditated brutality of this act of vengeance is echoed in the coldly structured composition and the raw unmodulated blues and reds. Shafts of yellow light, which strike at Aaron, symbolise the revenge of fate, which Kelly felt was quite justified in the circumstances.
The blood, which flows at the bottom of the work, however, comes from Kelly and not from the intended victim. The law will have the final say.

The spareness of the composition is related to the musical score, where the instrumentation of piano accordion, viola and cello, provides the same cold, empty ground for this scene of violence. The increasing wildness in the accordion part is reflected in the savage passage of yellow, symbol of the frenzied destruction, which falls on the hapless Sherritt.
THE GLENROWAN SIEGE

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
Painting No.6 - "THE GLENROWAN SIEGE" (172cm. x 120cm.)

This scene starts as a nocturne, describing the calm of night before the terror and chaos begin. The painting then combines the series of events which occurred over the whole period of siege. The transfigured image of Kelly, in ghostly, moonlit armour, contemplates and controls the whole strange comedy of death and destruction. Torn-up railway lines, with their cold, steely quality, link the ghostly apparition to the unfolding scene - the wild dancing of the hostages in the hotel, the armoured figure of Kelly engaged in the violent shootout with the police, the burning hotel building, and the burnt stumps of bodies of Kelly's brother, Dan and friend, Steve Hart, dragged from the ruins and laid on sheets of bark for tourists and photographers to see.

It is in this painting only, that there is no direct reference to an actual portrait of Kelly. His eyes peer from the slit in the helmet, but he is clothed in invisibility; he has become more than human in this pivotal point to the action.

The colour system used contrasts the cold gleam of moonlight on metal with the reds of the conflagration, both symbolic and real, and the burnt, dead greys and browns of the ashes of the aftermath.
The circular, eddying composition sweeps around the bodies on the bark, which in some way appear to be floating and adrift, and links the flames and dancers on the left side of the painting with the attacking police on the right. The movement is carried upwards and out through the two bare, gallows-like trees. The lower section of the work is intended to give the impression of the whirlpool, the maelstrom of events which once begun, carries all with it to an inevitable doom.
THE TRIAL

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
Painting No. 7 - "THE TRIAL" (172cm. x 120cm.)

A mood of cold order and balance controls the composition of this painting. The elements fit together in the courtroom scene of the trial. Kelly stands in the dock, groomed and well-dressed. In fact, records show that he was concerned about his appearance, and insisted on having this final portrait taken for his mother, so that people would remember that he was a gentleman. "He possessed a degree of vanity, but not without some reason. He dressed well – he was proud of his personal appearance." 18.

For the first time a policeman is shown as an actual person. The likeness is taken from a gravure of Sergeant Steele, giving evidence in the witness box. This same study was used in The Trial Painting by Julian Ashton, which forms the basis for the imagery used here. The hated police now have control of the victim, who is already obliterated by the bars, his face literally torn apart in distorted displacement. The presiding judge, Sir Redmond Barry, has been purposefully distanced and elevated, an anonymous figure of distant justice. Below the bench is shown a fragment of the death sentence.

The palette is restricted to blues, greyed greens and whites to emphasize the bleak coldness of justice.
The formal portrait of Kelly views the whole proceedings with disdain. Although dominant in terms of size and placement, within the composition, it has a faded, receding quality that suggests the victim is already able to view the scene from a different level. An oval frame gives the portrait the formal quality desired by Kelly, and in keeping with the proceedings of the court. In a compositional way, it ties together the images of the accused, the accuser, and the judge.
THE DEATH OF KELLY

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
Painting No.8 – "THE DEATH OF KELLY" (172cm. x 120cm.)

The final painting is dominated by the "portrait" of the death mask of Kelly, an image strong and tragic, which is revealed in the opera as Kate Kelly is drowning - her own death scene. The events in the death of Kelly are now small details within the portrait. The hooded figure, floating towards the noose, the cell door, the cross carried by the imagined chaplain are linked by the small bursts of red. They are small parts of a pattern of life and death. The red is echoed in sombre tones, which glow behind the edges of the mask.

Images of Kelly as the young man, and as the hooded warrior, re-appear, enveloped by the bars. The bars do not intrude onto the surface of the mask. The composition is static and balanced, the two early images of Kelly rising on opposite sides of the picture plane. There is a sense of finality, of time frozen and preserved. Colour is minimal, the expression is through the violent shifts from high to low tone. This exaggerated dramatic quality of starkness is picked up in the final moments of the play, as Kate falls to the floor in front of this piece. The lights dim from all the portraits and finally from the white mask which floats alone in the stage darkness.
MORE THAN THE PORTRAIT

THE SELF-PORTRAITS
ARTIST AND IMAGE

Acrylic & oil on Canvas (172cm x 110cm).
1. ARTIST AND IMAGE. Acrylic and oil on canvas
172 cm x 110 cm.

The Imagery and Idea.

The composition shows a double representation of the artist, enclosed in individual frames, or arches. The work grew from the enquiry into what the artist is capturing, when endeavouring to represent his own image, or any human image on a surface. Embodied in this process are overtones of the ancient and pre-historic sense of actually capturing the spirit of the represented object, or person in the image.

The artist reaches forward, with grossly exaggerated arm, which penetrates, or passes right by the form of the white, painted image. The sense of elusiveness is joined to the sense of illusion; an image is no more than the surface arrangement of elements, which the viewer identifies as the real object. The elusiveness hinted at, brings to mind the question of the hidden meaning, the calling to being, which lies beyond the surface arrangements. The words of Max Beckmann in his, *On My Painting*, are aptly close to the intention of this work, "What I want to show in my work is the idea which hides itself behind so-called reality. I am seeking for the bridge which leads from the visible to the invisible." 19.

Neither figure nor image relate to the viewer, i.e. there is no
relationship between subject and spectator, and the viewing relationship is held within the confines of the canvas, between the two revelations of the one being. Body parts are defined in elementary ways only. There is no real sense of depth and solidity, through tonal variation, however, it is hinted at in the drawing, through the distorted perspectives and the contour lines, which shift about the edges of the limbs. The left hand version of the artist is clothed, although there is the concept of X-ray imagery and the allusion to interior, as well as exterior forms.

An almost transparent pink veil of paint over the chest area allows viewing of a full, frontal rib-cage, not in profile, as the body is drawn. The lower chest area is opened and intruded upon by a shape, which is echoed in a second similar shape, floating between the two figures. There is the suggestion here of the emotional tie, the gut-tearing involved in the re-creation of the self-image. The artist is clothed, the image is not. The artist is warmly cream and pink, the image is naked, painted in a white wash, almost like a primer, a beginning point, a first skin in the creation. The creator reaches to touch the created, but does not get a hand response; the fingers do not meet.

Facial features are only hinted at on the artist's profile; very tenuous lines indicate eye, ear and mouth, overpainted with the cream of the skin. The image on the left has no features and appears as a white
flat form awaiting the creation of real form with detailed senses and faculties. Each figure stands in a twisted rectangular area, again reflections of image from one side to the other of the canvas, and yet the area on the right side is a distorted reflection of the other – the image can never reflect the whole truth of the reality. These rectangles are almost totally isolated from each other by a slanting void of blue-green, which is bridged firmly by the outstretched arm, and lower in the painting, by a fine line from the floating intrusion shape. At the foot of the canvas, the interior, contained purple of the casements spills out and joins across with a final supporting bridge.

The rectangular spaces around the body images are separated once more from the continuing forms by further intrusions of the blue-green divisions. The world at the edges of the painting is even less formed than the created image. The focus of real existence then is on the figure of the artist himself, surrounded by a universe with little form – and almost void.
The Sources and Processes.

As a composition there are definite links with religious works of the Creation, and as in all the large painted works, influence from Pre-Renaissance and early Renaissance works from Italy. The dominant figures of Piero della Francesca's paintings have carried strong influence, not withstanding the fact that his figures are firmly modelled. A good comparison of flatness of figure and ground can be seen in his Portrait of Fedorigoda Montefeltro as studied in the Uffizi, Florence.

The divisions of ground in this work, as in the others, hark back to the architectural divisions used in the late Gothic and early Renaissance works. Such paintings as Duccio's Annunciation of the Death of Mary from the Maestà, viewed in Sienna, and the enthroned Madonnas of Cimabue and Giotto in the Uffizi, Florence had a profound effect on the sense of structure, enclosing of figure and divisions of space. The hand which moves across the dividing space is also reminiscent of the device used by Duccio, as the angel's arm is moved in front of the architectural detail, to join the right hand space inhabited by the second figure.
The calmly positioned, balanced architectural divisions of Renaissance works have been distorted in this work, and in others, to an appropriate uneasy imbalance, which echoes the uncertainty of the Twentieth Century world. "The principle of centrality is shattered to favour oblique and mobile relations." The divisions here, rather than representing solidity, represent the void, the eternal, the dislocation of man.

Viewing of an enormous retrospective exhibition, in Zürich, of the works of modern German painter Jörg Immendorf, and of an exhibition "New Art from Germany", in Chicago, has certainly had an effect on the formal quality of this series of works, and in particular on the unbalancing of the structures of the works.

The painting has been developed and reworked in a long series of changes, and building of layers of glazed colours. Many of the underlayers were thick and rough, and affect the final surface; the normally smooth surfaces of skin appearing to have a patina of old walls, and ancient worked materials. The coloured ground divisions are re-divided, and made complex, as layers of original organisation lie half hidden under the washes of rich oil colour.

There is an obvious link, also, with the stained-glass windows of the medieval period, intensified by the linear edge treatments around and over forms, and the deep, glowing reds and greens, which appear from darkness.
ARTIST VIEWS HIS PORTRAIT ON EXHIBITION

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (244cm x 174cm).
2. **ARTIST VIEWS HIS PORTRAIT ON EXHIBITION**

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas. 244 cm x 174 cm.

**The Imagery and Idea.**

Reflected in this composition, again are images of the artist, enclosed in divisions of space. These divisions once more have an awkward, off-balance feeling of instability, and incomplete drifting movement. The work makes comment on the idea of portraiture, and the further concept of display, and public viewing of works of art. There is immediate recognition of religious derivation in the work, notably in the apparently crucified image of the artist on display. This symbolic state is only seen to exist, as there is no cross, nor the wounds, which are usually represented in this artistic theme central to the European, Christian tradition.

A second religious connotation for the work, is of an "Annunciation" scene; a winged figure gives divine notice to an earthbound figure, most usually the figure of a woman, the virgin. Here, a complex pattern of roles is established, and the listener is the artist; the speaker is also the artist.

A third interpretive possibility is of a vision, as the artist looks ahead to the final interpretation of his own image on display.
The figure of the artist on exhibition is not only encased in a background form, but is further sub-divided into frames, which cut across the figure quite savagely. The head and shoulders are enclosed in a "real" frame, which denotes the traditional, allowable extent of portraiture - this head and shoulder section is the person. The lower portion of the body, the frowned upon male nude, out of fashion for two hundred years in Western Art, is however available to confront the viewer. It does, however, stand in a cage, with intimations of bars, which cross through and under the figure itself. The audience is confronted here, not by the face of the object, nor by the traditional female figure as object, which is allowable, and expected, but rather by frontal representation of the male genitalia.

Note: The viewer re-actions to this painting were interesting, as they were to a number of other works in the exhibition. The most uneasy and confronted viewers were male, and the most forthright statements of disapproval were from males. The display of vulnerability had the desired effect, but often unrecognized as such by the viewers.

The painting in total concept is basically about the vulnerability of the artist. Artistic desire to capture image, and to display this for the admiration and criticism of the world, is an interesting human process, which expresses some of the duality of human nature.
The desire to make statement is counterbalanced by the love of secrecy, the desire for recognition is placed against the fear of rejection, the ritual of display is in opposition to the craving for privacy. Once an artist places a work on display, all the first options come into play, and alternatives are no longer available. This applies, not only to a reading of the artist’s work, but in this post-Freudian twentieth century, by very implication the work is a reading of the artist.

Hanging above the figure of the viewing artist, on the right of the painting, is an empty cage-like construction with torn bars. The envisioned image has been removed, and transported, to be viewed opposite. The divisions of the work again open out to the symbolic eternal blue. There is, however, the concept of conflagration within the divided elements. On the right, a dark, transparent screen slips back to reveal a flame-like ground behind. This flame continues into the curved area, which encloses the lower ground of the displayed figure. The curving horizon continues around to hold the whole composition in an enigmatic demarcation of ground and sky, of earth and universe.
The Sources and Processes

Original inspiration for this work developed with the preparation of this series of works for a specific exhibition, and with a questioning of the whole process of exhibition past and present. The world study tour, undertaken just prior to the commencement of the work, had demanded consideration of the fact, that the world galleries are filled with displayed works, hold even greater archives of works never seen by the public, and still artists, and would-be artists, keep producing myriad more works each year. The religious art works of the world, and in relation to this series of works, particularly the religious art works of Europe, have very often been removed from their original display purposes. They are now seen as objects to be venerated as Art, not for their religious content.

The artist in this work makes himself the martyr to the crowd, and in the narrative sense, views his own image before it is released to the crowd: or has he returned to see what the crowd has done to the image? At the same time, the artist has created his own image as "god" by association, with both concepts mentioned above, i.e. firstly of the martyred deity, and secondly of the celestial annuncio. There is comment in the work, therefore, on the creative urge in man, and on man's history of relating this to the concept of the divine element within man. "The characteristic of medieval art lies in this, that it is a symbolic code. From the days of the catacombs Christian art has spoken in figures, showing men one thing and inviting them to see another. The artist .... must imitate God, who under the letter of scripture hid profound meaning." 21.
ARTIST WATCHING ACROSS THE GULF

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (244cm x 174cm).
3. **ARTIST WATCHING ACROSS THE GULF.**

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas 244 cm x 174cm

**The Imagery and Idea.**

Of all the larger works in the series, this is the most spare. The artist is seen in profile in the lower left of the painting, appearing to look across a vast yellow-orange plane, to a group of figures sliding out of the top right section of the composition. There is an instant awareness of separation, and with that the proposal of the loneliness of the artist. The solitary figure of the artist does not connect to the rest of the painting in any direct way. An enclosing ground shape lists sharply to the left, but the figure has moved forward into the dividing universal space, as if trying to be transported over to the central portion of the work. This desire is shown by a second, larger projection of the artist, as he wills himself to cross the barrier. The enlarged projection of self also gazes at the distant figures, in profile.

Although this work is about "watching", there are no indications of eyes on any of the figures represented. Indeed, the group of figures on the right of the work consists of masked, unknown creatures of the artist. With reflection, it is seen that these are in reality all versions of the same person - the artist. There are double images of the four views of the figure, not as first appears to be a group of eight figures.
The concept is based on ideas of illusion. The sense that painted images are all beings made by the artist, even though they may be representative of actual people. As projections of an artist's view, they are part of the artist, and hence, here, they are the artist. The artist is therefore conscious of his aloneness as a being, so that even when he creates representations of new beings, they are projections of himself.

The group portrayed, however, would seem to convey to the viewer different perceptions of itself, ranging from some obscene dance, or sexual rite, to some scene of disaster. The figure with back to the viewer seems to be the focal point of the group, and is being supported by others. The intention is a direct translation of ideas from some of the deposition scenes from Renaissance works, maybe a pieta, but where the mourners for the artist are the artist.

The curved section of the painting, which encloses the group of figures, seems to have broken adrift from the rest of the work, and floats into space. The artist no longer controls what happens to the images, or how they are interpreted, once they have been created. He is only able to watch across the gulf, himself a viewer, a by-stander.
The Processes.

Again, this work was commenced as abstract networks of colour, built up in layers of acrylic paint. As the paint was built and re-worked, some areas were retained, so that even in the finished work, the original base layers of colour still cut through the added surfaces. This can be seen clearly in the bands of colour, which wind about and into the group of figures.

Gradually the composition began to take form, as figures were added and subtracted. At one stage of the work there were many figures moving over the surface. As the idea clarified, more detail was subtracted, and layers of colour cut over areas, which were no longer appropriate. The final layers of oil paint were feathered on, so that the surface of the large spaces has a moving, flickering quality. The central yellow-orange plane is surrounded, and pierced, by fields of deep blue-green, and thick lines of blue, black and white move through the work, enclosing areas and throwing colour into relief.
ARTIST IN CLASSICAL GUISE MANAGES TO BE MANNERIST

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (132cm x 96cm).
4. ARTIST IN CLASSICAL GUISE MANAGES TO BE MANNERIST.

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas. 132 cm x 96 cm.

The Imagery and Idea

A single image of the artist stands in a circular black ground, which is enclosed by white enveloping shapes. The figure, having the pallid white flesh of a marble sculpture from the classical period, or of a Bronzino painting, stands in a distorted exaggeration of the classical contraposto developed in Greek sculpture, and taken up again by the artists of the Renaissance period. The concept of classical pose developed to mannered pose, is central to the painting, and a comment on current painting styles, which hark back to former images, while distorting the context.

Mannerism has always been a style for the connoisseur; it assumes a knowledge of style and content, and makes comment on this by variation on the tenets of already accepted style.

In his sculpture, Praxiteles famed use of the "S - curve", e.g. *Hermes and Dionysus*, is a mannered form of the more severe classical contraposto of the works of Polykleitos. This pose is used countless times by the Renaissance artists, sometimes with unintentional comic effect, as in Signorelli's *Last Judgement* in the cathedral at Orvieto.
The figure of the artist, in the present work, could be a mannered version of many Renaissance nudes, e.g. the relaxed Mercury seen in Mantegna’s *Parnassus*, [Louvre]. The pose is highly mannered; the shoulder line is incorrect for the classical pose, i.e. the left shoulder is raised, rather than lowered; the right arm is strangely foreshortened, and the hand turned upward rather than down; the left arm is stretched out of proportion, and descends the length of the left leg. The gentle turn of the classical head has been extended to give a severe profile, in fact a double profile. Within the head is a desired classical profile, with straight nose and forehead line, and hinted at beyond this profile is the actual profile of the artist, described by a fine line in the dark ground. This profile, with upturned celtic nose is far removed from the classic ideal.

A circular composition around the figure makes reference to the Renaissance ideal of 'man, the centre and measure of all things', however in this work, *man* has been moved off-centre, and is decidedly unbalanced. The circular distortion also invites reference to Classical Greek vase painting, and the almost total deletion of colour also links with this concept. The white areas are described by blue-black lines, and the dark areas are traced with white.
The Sources and Processes

As the first painting of the series, this work, more than any other, underwent great change and development. The concept was only beginning to form as the work progressed, and consequently there was much over-drawing and painting. This re-working of the surface has given the work a depth of colour, and richness of paint beyond that of the other works in the series. Although commenced at the beginning of the series, it wasn't complete until almost the end of the working period.

The original composition had multiple images of the artist, somewhat like Drawing No 27 Portrait of Artist II, which had preceded this work. As the concept of classicism developed, the images were gradually removed, until eventually there remained only one complete figure with double profile.

The following passage from Flavio Caroli's writing on developments in Italian art in the 1980's, relates closely to the processes and concepts involved in this work, as with the whole series. "'Art' - which came into favour at the beginning of the Eighties, has a more thought-out nature, and is inclined to psycho-analytical themes, looking back through the history of art for the origins of the myths of the subconscious 'inspiration' rather than 'quotation' from the past. There is no longer any question of an open and infantile plundering,
and assemblage being carried out on art of the present century, but rather a regression to the forms of the past in order to uncover the intriguing origins of the present." 22.

The concept of the display of the male figure, as *object*, now refers back to the ancient classical tradition; the artist is a representation of Apollo, the Greek epitome of youth and beauty. The imagery surrounding the figure also gives reference to the Apollonian myth. The overt sexual imagery of the intrusive phallic shape, on the right of the painting, is also a reference to the serpent Apollo had to overcome, before he became the chief cult-figure of classical Greek society. The drawn out strings of colour, which pass behind the figure, make reference to the music of the lyre, the artistic province of the god. Hence, the male figure represents the artist, and the "Artist", the god-like being in his ability to create. It also contains the re-presentation of male as object, from the classic ideal, but because of the assumed knowledge of the audience, and the exaggerated presentation, the artist is mannered rather than classical.
ARTIST AS MARTYR

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
5. ARTIST AS MARTYR.

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas. 172cm x 120cm

The Imagery and Idea.

Crucifixion scenes, martyrdoms of saints such as Sebastian and James, and the mocking scenes depicted by artists, such as Bosch and Grunewald, are immediately called to mind on viewing this work. The concept behind the painting is related to the idea of the artist at the mercy of society, e.g. for his success, for his ability to live, for his fame, which at any moment may be reversed, so that he finds himself no longer hero, but victim. The romantic notion of artist slaving in poverty relates to this view, and is a notion romantically cultivated and often preserved by artists themselves.

The self-portrait of the artist once again represents artist as a general term, and also makes comment on the traditional idea of artist as male, by placing the male figure as an obvious object, both sex object, and sexual object in so vulnerable, but confronting position. The male genitals form the focal point at a confronting eye-level for the viewer. The object, as centre of attention for the group of figures surrounding it, is ambiguous in the emotional expression implied.
This is a direct link with many of the martyrdom paintings of Saint Sebastian, where the saint is clearly in a state of ecstatic rapture as the arrows pierce the flesh. Not for nothing has this figure become a symbol for sado-masochistic rite, and pleasure in pain. It has been the excuse for depiction of eroticism in the guise of deep religious expression. "For Christians the corruptibility of the body dressed or undressed, lies in its fragile susceptibility to decay and sin, but the special corruptibility of nakedness among naturally clothed humans lies in its readiness to seem not only erotic, but weak, ugly or ridiculous." 23.

Is the figure in this painting being threatened, savaged, or merely fondled by an adoring crowd? The implications are ambiguous, and the answer is left in doubt. The whole concept of martyrdom is being called into question, i.e. was there ever a martyr who did not choose to follow the particular path of pain?

The figure stands as though crucified, however, there is no cross, simply a void between the two panels of flame and sky. The panels appear to be pushed open by the figure. White lines, which define the parting of the ground, form a grid system, which combines with a circle at the feet of the figure, to form a cage-like structure for the figure. This is echoed by the larger circle, which encloses the group of tormentors. The total composition slides very slightly to the left, creating an uneasy sense of instability. None of the faces shows any features. All are flat, mask-like representations serving to keep the concept of anonymous persecution.
ARTIST AS PROPHET

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (172cm x 120cm).
6. ARTIST AS PROPHET.

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas 172 cm x 120 cm.

The Imagery and Idea.

The work is a direct comment on several held notions of the place of the artist in society, and it makes deliberate reference to religious imagery and concepts. The ideas explored are:

1. The nature of inspiration, and sources of artistic revelation.
2. The concept of some sense of divine intervention in this process.
3. The concept of the artist as the repository for this inspiration, thus placing him in a special position in society, "the prophet".
4. The concept of the passing on of this revealed truth to the world at large.

A large standing figure of the artist fills the central panel of the painting, extending its arms beyond the limits of the frame. The figure is monumental, heroic in proportion and pose, statue-like, white, and has obvious links with Renaissance paintings of baptismal scenes. Again the reference, even with differences in technique, is to Piero della Francesca, and in particular to his Baptism of Christ. The same sense of frozen time and space is attempted; there is no movement to destroy the prophet's gesture to the world.
The figure stands in a pool of dark water, which is encircled by the arms of a larger version of the artist. The other images in this work were by now becoming recurring themes in the drawings commenced in the same period. The large "god-like" watching figure becomes linked with the concept of artistic inspiration, and comment on the notion of the spark of the divine in art. The romantic notion of the artist having vision beyond that of the ordinary human experience, is commented on in this painting. The artist passes on this inspired understanding to the bystanders. These figures reside in the far ground of the work, and in this case there are three observers, although one is almost entirely hidden by the overlaid image of the large portrait. This device is an echo of that used by Piero della Francesca, where he places one of his three observing figures behind the dividing tree. These images, both the large deified image, and the watchers, recur in later works in varying form, and have undergone development, particularly in Drawing 17 Artist and Inspiration.

Again this work is rent by dark divisions, which give the impression that the image is torn, or is on one painted surface torn aside to reveal the eternal surface beyond. The landscape is barren and desert-like, the natural habitat for the prophetic figure, and the arms of the divine form of the artist are part of this landscape. The white linear definitions of the divided surface once again form the cage-like frame for the figure of the artist. The feet of the figure disappear into the dark water, in which are seen glimpses of marine life.
ARTIST AS FOOL

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (170cm x 121cm).
7. ARTIST AS FOOL.

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas. 170 cm x 121 cm.

The Imagery and Idea.

In this most confronting painting of the artist, the figure is seated off-centre on a flat, white, throne-like chair facing the viewer. The face, however, has been obliterated, and the figure holds a profile portrait, as a mask, on a stick. The image of the court fool is immediately brought to mind. To support this image, the figure is not naked as in most of the works, but wears the striped tights of the jester. This semi-clothing of the figure has a number of implications in the work. The seated figure is less vulnerable than the figures in the other works, it has an air of eroticism, heightened, rather than diminished by the clothing, and the combination of clothing and nakedness places the figure in an uneasy state, between the naturally clothed figure, and the classic nude. This figure has its nakedness hidden, not by the accepted conventions of classical drapery, but rather by the deliberately emphatic tights of the Medieval period. "The body shown either partially nude or closely accompanied by cloth and clothing can carry a more complex message about itself and its dress. The partial dress and the partial body refer to each other, and each to the style of the other." 24.
This painting is concerned with the role of the artist as perceived by artists themselves, and by others. It is concerned with illusion, and perhaps, more particularly, with comment on delusion. Questions about the idea of "fool" in both context of jester, and in the more general meaning of the word, are implied in the work. Is the artist the entertainer, the one who distracts mankind from the ordinariness of life? Seating the artist on the throne leads to further questions on delusion. Is this the fool's throne, or has he aspired to something more? Has he usurped the ruler's throne? Is he thus deluding himself?

The frontal face has been denied, in fact masked across with paint, which slashes as though to disfigure. The fool's-head observes the seated figure, and the question is posed, as to whether the unmasked face is the reality, or whether the mask must be in place to cause reality to exist. The viewer is thus confronted with questions about human identity in general, and the identity of this particular person.

There is an enigmatic quality in the structure of the work, which supports the ideas of the shifting roles presented. The figure is boldly seated on the throne, leaning back, in control, and with just an indication of provocation, maybe of sexual invitation, in the attitude. When analysed, because of the distortions in proportion, it is difficult to see if the figure is seated, lying, or even standing, crouched and moving forward. These changes in body proportions are complex, the
receding head being smaller in scale than the exaggerated feet and legs, the length of the body being hard to determine, as the dark clothing merges with the seat, the whole working together, but individual elements belonging to a different scale.

When analysed, the throne is neither solid nor flat, and adds to the unease of the composition, as it floats on the ground, which has the appearance of a swirling pool of water. The throne is connected to the top of the composition by two vertical lines, which help to create the effect of suspension. In fact the seat is reminiscent of the dunking-stools, used for trial by ordeal for witches, heretics and non-conformists, during Medieval times.

Colour is spare, and relates to the dark, rich courtly colours of the Medieval and Early Renaissance times. Tones are sharply contrasted, with flat areas of white, and pale flesh standing away from the sombre darkness behind. The lightness and translucent quality of the curved 'pool' is reflected in the upper ground, as the head and mask are haloed in green-blue light.
The Sources and Processes.

The work springs from a number of sources, but is closely related to the illusionist works of the early Renaissance painters, following in the style explored by Masaccio. The large figure in relation to the space it occupies is the same device used by these artists to achieve a sense of monumentality. Devices, such as the protruding foot used by Castagno in his *Pippo Spano* fresco in Sant' Appolonia in Florence, are referred to in this work. Francis Bacon's work has also had a decided influence on this particular painting, notably in the spatial divisions and the lines used to both divide and connect these areas in the work. There is also a relationship to his works in the tonal contrasts between the areas of flat white and flesh, with the shifting luminous quality of the ground.

The painting became more spare as it developed, the colours gradually deepening and settling to a very restricted scheme. Balance of tones, and linear connections and delineation of form, became the over-riding qualities in the search for the combination of monumental balance and questioning unease.
ARTIST RE-INCARNATED

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (242cm x 172cm).
ARTIST RE-INCARNATED.

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas 242 cm x 172 cm.

The Imagery and Idea.

Two large portrait figures of the artist dominate this work. One is naked, lying at the base of the composition, and the second stands at the feet of the prone figure, wearing clothing of a particular era. This one work makes specific reference, with this costume, to the twentieth century, apparently to a time early in the century, and more possibly to the 1920's. The work traces links with earlier periods of art, through the concept of re-birth. Whether the idea is taken literally, as a belief in the re-birth of the individual, or as a general concept, that art and artists are continuing institutions in human existence, is immaterial. Both are implied, and with the concept of a continuing art heritage, there is the strong implication, that all art draws on forms which have developed previously, whether recently or from other eras, or even other cultures. This work is a direct comment on the appropriation of imagery and ideas, which is currently taking place in western art, and which is one of the pivotal themes of this group of works. "...artists use different and differentiated languages recalling cultures both remote from and near to the present day." 25. It is therefore not only making comment on this idea, but is an exposition of the idea within the painting itself. The dead artist lies naked, with cold, marble-like flesh, as often depicted in entombment scenes in the Christian tradition. The body seems to be half enveloped in a stream of water, which also sprays up and flows around the standing figure.
Three small figures look on, apparently from behind a barrier, as though looking into a different realm, or maybe in the literal sense, looking into the opening of a tomb. These observers have become an element in many of the works, and the thread may be significant for a number of reasons. They are all further versions of the artist in this painting, although in the drawing of the same subject, it is obvious that the three images are of different personalities. Here they may be seen to represent the idea of the perfect *three* as in the Trinity, or the Three Graces as a classical ideal, or they may be seen as previous incarnations of the artist. They are haloed, giving direct reference back to the religious works of past times.

The standing figure, although very obviously clothed in blazer and flannels of this century, is more indefinitely indicated than the rest of the painting, as though just being formed. In fact the figure is hazy and partly obliterated by the watery film, which fills this passage and moves upward through the painting. There is immediate reference to resurrection, or ascension scenes from the Christian tradition, although the implied re-birth has not been part of that tradition since the school of Valentinian Gnosticism of the second century. It does, however, have strong links with other religious faiths. This modern-day figure has the most definitely drawn religious symbol of the halo of any of the works developed to this point, a symbol which makes the strongest links with past forms.
The Sources and Processes.

This work comes directly from the drawing with the same title, which had been completed some time earlier. There have been some changes and refinements brought to bear on this much larger scale work. One dimension which needed to be enhanced in a work as large as this, was the feeling for the monumental and the permanent, to support the seemingly contradictory notion of continuity in change. This refers not only to the religious implication, but also to the idea that all new art draws on the old at the same time.

To help support these concepts, certain compositional devices have been used, such as a sharpening of the work from its drawn form. The divisions have become sharply defined, and cut the work into strongly delineated areas. It is an element, which links the work to the decorated marble panels used in many Italian churches. The black and white areas, which surround the composition, and form the resting place for the corpse, are influenced by marble inlays, such as the powerful works which form the floors of the cathedral in Siena. These black areas were painted with layers of lean, fat, and lean oil paint to cause cracking. The work, because of this, has a strange duality of the old and new, not only in the subject matter, but also in the presentation of the idea. The narrative is surrounded by a border of apparently ancient material.
REQUIEM - LARGE ARTIST CRADLES SMALL ARTIST

Acrylic & Oil on Canvas (173cm x 121cm).
9. REQUIEM - LARGE ARTIST CRADLES SMALL ARTIST.

Acrylic and Oil on Canvas 173 cm x 121 cm.

The Imagery and Idea.

Chronologically last in this group of large works on canvas, this painting is more closely related to the series of drawings, which was being worked at the same time, than any of the other larger works. It relates to the drawings, both in developed style, and in ideas formulated as the drawings progressed. It is also closely linked with the previous painting Artist Reincarnated.

The work shows three images of the artist. A large, monumental figure of the artist holds a small, doll-like figure of the dead artist in his arms. At the left of the work, a smaller spirit image of the artist floats upward in a prescribed arc. These three images, which had now developed in many drawings, have a number of implied meanings. Firstly they embody the concept of continuity of life, so that in death the spirit is released for further life. With this, is the concept of artistic continuity, - out of one form springs another, both in the larger historical context, and in the personal context of the individual artist's inspiration for one work coming from previous work, both his own and other observed works, which are appropriated to form new ideas and expression.
Secondly the work refers to the concept of the trinity as a universal theme. It could be translated as Father, Son and Spirit, and there is certainly an impression of paternal sheltering and mourning, as the large figure cradles a smaller image of himself.

The paint is more controlled than in the earlier works, is more uniform in its texture and surface, and less broken in colour in each area of the work. The pale, cold flesh of the three figures stands out from the richly glazed ground of red and blue. A circular mandala-like composition of sea and sky continues out along a full horizon line, and is rent in two by a dark destructive passage, which intrudes down to the central axis, and the recumbent form. The figures are part of the central circular rhythm of the work.
The Sources and Processes.

The painting is closely related in style to some of the later drawings, particularly No 22 *Artist Levitated*, and No 24 *Contemplative Artist*. Several compositional elements have been translated to the work, including the three images of the individual, and the circular depiction of the world, of air, land and water. The main theme and composition of the figures is derived from the tradition of the Pieta, only in this case, the artist is the mourner and the mourned. A strong similarity can be found between the large image, and the image used in *Artist in Classical Guise Manages to be Mannerist*, particularly in the distortions to pose and proportions. The intrusive wound to the side of the figure is similar to that which occurs in *Artist and Image*. The moon, an image which has not been used in any other of the large works, had now become an important element in many of the drawings. This symbol which entered the works quite unconsciously, has obvious connections with its use in the works of Munch, and appears in only this last of the larger works.
THE DRAWINGS.

Most of these works were commenced as the large paintings were nearing completion, so that contrary to usual artistic practice, where the smaller works might be seen as preparation for more major presentation, the concepts developed in the larger works were expanded as this series of drawings progressed. The final three drawings, as exhibited (Nos. 26, 27, 28), however, were worked before the paintings, and display some quite different characteristics to the remainder of the series.

Portrait 1 (No 26) and Portrait 2 (No 27) were the first intuitive explorations of character study, and have a broader approach technically, and contain less apparent narrative content than later works. It was not until the third work, Madness of the Artist (No 28) began to emerge, that the concept of using the self-image to portray the "Artist" in various histo-sociological and metaphysical contexts developed.

Artist Observes the Cycle (No 10) and Artist Re-incarnated (No 11) were then commenced before the series of paintings. These display some of the looseness of the first three drawings, (Nos. 26, 27 & 28), and refer very directly to belief systems of re-birth and systems of cyclic phases.

The remaining fourteen works were commenced towards the end of the series of paintings, and were concluded after the paintings. The narrative and symbolic content became increasingly important elements at this period of the work process.
RECURRING SYMBOLS AND ELEMENTS IN THE SERIES OF DRAWINGS.

1. The strong divisions in the painted works are now repeated in these works, and in all but two of the drawings there are strong diagonal divisions, which slash across the image, tearing even the most integrated of the compositions apart. At the same time, these de-constructions re-construct a new compositional sense; a sense of unease and imbalance, as this contrast is delivered across carefully enclosed or encapsulated scenes and mandala-like worlds.

2. Developed from the first drawing, and very firmly delineated in the later works, is the compositional device of an enclosing circular form dominating the central area of the drawing. Very often this space is distorted or unevenly cut by the edges of the work. It is an important piece of symbolism, to support the concepts developed in the series - of universal cycles of action, of artistic movements and of physical and spiritual existence. The apparently perfect circle is only used occasionally, and even then is divided, or has its edges revised in some way. This imperfection reflects the chaos, which co-exists with universal order, and from which the artist historically has made his own sense of order. There is particularly contemporary relevance as the artist tries to define his role in a disordered world, where once stable reference points and systems change, and where the only certainty is the uncertainty of tomorrow.
3. The image of the artist is often repeated, to appear in different scale in many of the works. The protagonist in each work becomes closely tied to prophetic and religious concepts, and is often seen addressing, or being revealed to other figures. These secondary characters are usually further images of the artist. This is not simply a re-iteration of this artist's own image, but makes reference to the common practice, historically, for artists to insert their own images as players on their own stage, very often as observer within a group, peripheral to the main action of the work.

4. As the above concepts became integral to the works, so the symbol of other-worldliness, the halo, emerged to denote the protagonist. In the compositional sense, it is used to echo the larger circle of the unfolding scene.
ARTIST OBSERVES THE CYCLE

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
10 ARTIST OBSERVES THE CYCLE.

Pastel on Paper 76cm x 57cm.

"Art is continuous landslide of languages toppling over the artist. It's no wonder that he permanently resides in his own reserve, where physical and mental layers of experience accumulate." 26.

The artist stands in a circle of moving, half-formed images of himself, which become a representation of the concept of life, death and re-birth. If read in a clockwise rotation for Western eyes, a top embryonic figure struggles into existence, and merges with a second youthful struggling figure. The next figure stands upright and calm, with a sense of confident maturity, to be connected to a slightly bent, less sure representation. This is followed by a more shrivelled, falling figure, and finally a corpse-like figure, which is seen to be moving into a circular tomb, or new womb. This opening is surrounded by flowers, symbol for life, remembrance, and death.

The final figure, as it enters the tomb, also enters the main representation of the present-day artist. The inference is that the artist reviews the general processes of life's cycles, and more specifically views his past cycles, which have led to the present state.

Symbols, which appear in the work, include water, the sea of spiritual life; the sun, centre of the continual cycle of life; sunrise, the new
beginning, or birth; fire, the refining force for emergence in new form.

This work, as with most of the drawings, commenced with no pre-conceived idea, but grew from the initial marks on paper. There is therefore, on close observation, a sense of building, re-defining and over-drawing, so that the techniques used parallel the content of the work. The symbols and imagery were developed from initial effort at non-conscious mark-making, and an increasingly conscious decision making became relevant as the work progressed. "Then shapes become beings and seem comprehensible to me in the great void and uncertainty of the space which I call God." 27. The overall surface of the work has a hazy, light quality, as colour pushes over colour, imparting a moving, restless and unresolved atmosphere, in keeping with the content of the work.
ARTIST RE-INCARNATED

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
This, the first version of this subject, (as mentioned in the notes on Painting No 8.) is chronologically next to Drawing 10, and is close to it in both style and content. Again the surface is hazy and flickering in the central section of the work, although here the edges of the work have become darker in tone, and more clearly formed in a compositional sense, leading to the dark, enclosing shapes used in almost all the drawings which follow. The closure is not complete in this work, and the central light section opens out through the top of the composition.

The narrative content of the drawing is directly related to that of the previous work. A large representation of the dead artist lies entombed across the lower space, enclosed under water which descends from a flower-strewn place. From the feet of the prone figure rises a second image of the artist, very decidedly clothed in twentieth-century costume, as noted before, an element which puts this work and the corresponding painting into a set time-frame. The standing, new incarnation of the artist is very definitely saintly, with representation of this quality defined by the halo. This particular figure, which emerged as part of the drawing process, seems to be close to some of the imagery created by David Hockney, and would appear to be unconsciously influenced by that artist's work.
The three observers, graces, past incarnations, which not only seem to watch the proceedings, but to discuss this with each other, are not particularly defined as images of the artist, one being a definite female form, and yet these can still be interpreted as past forms of the one life.

A rich, entwined colour surface imparts a glow of light and harmony to this work, which is closely related to the richness of illuminated works from the medieval period of European art. The colours of red, blue and gold enclosed in deep greens and blue-blacks re-inforce this particular quality.
ARTIST ON A PEDESTAL

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
This is the work that takes the series of drawings into the realm of a universe enclosed in riven darkness. The artist stands exposed on a plinth, or pedestal, in the position assigned him by society, or in the position artists have assigned themselves within society. He is naked, vulnerable, and shown in a position of almost helpless questioning. Behind the figure of the artist looms a larger projected image, symbol of the deification, the separation given the artist in our society. The larger image wears the halo, symbol of the otherness, the divinity ascribed to the creative mind. There is a sense of theatricality in the presentation on a stage, or pedestal. The nakedness of the figure is in keeping with this idea of removal from the normal. Anne Hollander writes in *Seeing Through Clothes*, "Nakedness is not a customary, but rather an assumed state, common to all, but natural to none, except on significantly marked occasions. These may be ritual, theatrical, or domestic, but they are always special, no matter how frequent." 28.

A group of watchers, or disciples stands at the foot of the plinth engaged in easy conversation about the figure above. This group is yet an echo of the artistic image. They stand enclosed with the artist in
a universe surrounded and surmounted by elements of earth and sky. The earth appears as fields, ready for harvest, and the sky above is deep blue-black, pierced by small patches of light, and torn apart by two diagonal light passages, which enclose a corridor to the standing artist.

The platform, on which the artist is raised, gives the impression of a wheel, which may turn, a feeling echoed by the sweeping passage of white, which moves around the column, and forms the circular universe surrounding the figures.
ARTIST CONFRONTED IN MOONLIGHT

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
13 ARTIST CONFRONTED IN MOONLIGHT.

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

This, most manic of the drawings, is one of the most difficult to interpret. Again the composition involves a globe, or universe, enclosed in a field of darkness. The world is defined as earth, sea and sky, elements which occur in a number of other works. There is direct reference to past styles, and to particular artists. The ocean, the moon, its rays, and the reflections on the water recall the works of Munch, and contain the same symbolic reference to sexuality and desire. There are similarities to the drawings of Blake, both in narrative intent, and in the style of the work. These similarities are seen again more strongly in No 15. Artist as Mediator.

The naked figure again stands exposed and vulnerable, this time on the shore of an ocean or lake. There is the suggestion that the figure is wounded, and blood flows from the left foot and across the sands, symbol of sacrifice, and of the ebbing life-force. Confrontation takes place as two dishevelled figures stand facing the artist. They engage the artist in conversation, and the artist shrinks, trying to stand apart. Even though the nearest figure gestures toward the naked figure, there is a huge void between.
These creatures have a loose, unfinished quality, as though they have not yet been completely formed. There is a resemblance to the half-man, half-animal figures of ancient Greek mythology. These satyrs lure the hero to some forbidden realm of the senses. The two hair-clad figures are projections of the artist; creations with which he is unable to come to terms; an exposed side of personality, with which he is unable, or unwilling to grapple.

The circular composition echoes this reference back to Greek art, in its association with the ground for vase painting. This is supported by the approach to form, through linear definition, and through the narrative content, of the naked hero, confronted by beings from the nether world.

Behind the figures floats a spirit version of the artist, a translated figure, which recurs in later works, q.v. No 16. Artist Translated and No 20. Artist Rises from Illusion. This projection of the artist ascends from the earth-bound scene of confrontation. The inference may be that the artist is able to escape this temporal scene to other realms, or he may find release from the forces, which try to distract and subdue, by immersing self in the creative act. The floating figure is shown to be ignoring, or rejecting the scene below. It faces outward, and begins to break out of the circle, and yet there is a line of white, which curves over the moon, and connects it to the protagonist.
The whole sky rains down glassy showers of moonlight, which echo the circular, captured universe. All areas of colour are delineated by attenuated black lines, giving the impression of stained-glass, and glowing light. The work is imbued with a lost sadness, and a feeling of desolate isolation. The meanings are implicit, and this veiled ambiguity is the core of the work. It is this private significance, more than any other element, which links it to the works of Blake.
LARGE ARTIST WITH SMALLER ARTISTS

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
14 LARGE ARTIST WITH SMALLER ARTISTS.

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

A circular universe is once more enclosed by darkness. This work, however is embued with a feeling of warmth and optimism, in contrast to the previous work, and the one which follows. The large representation of the artist, in profile, is the closest of all the drawings to visual reality. The large sainted figure, halo enclosed, looks out to a scene of rebirth, and to the emergence of a group of smaller self-representations. These figures emerge, as from water, and ascend in a moving column heavenward, gaining haloes of divinity as they move upward.

The work could be interpreted as a straight-forward representation of a series of lives of the particular artist, or as the concept of generations of artists, ready to replace those who disappear. It may also be seen as the artist reflecting on the constant re-emergence of artistic inspiration and endeavour, as one cycle of his work finishes, and as new directions emerge.

The cycle of life is referred to, once more, not only in subject matter, but also in the compositional elements of the halo, of the larger circle, and of the echoing movement of the ascending figures.
The colours of the work, on first distant reading, have much in common with Medieval works. The flat areas of gold, red and blue relate closely to the schemata of that period, both in actual use and arrangement of colour, and also in the interpretation of the colours as an externally realised representation of an internal world. On close observation, the apparently flat and unrelieved areas of colour are seen to be made of many strokes of varying colours, which blend together to create the whole. The dark surrounding areas are filled with flashes of pink, blue and purple.
ARTIST AS MEDIATOR

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
15. ARTIST AS MEDIATOR.

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

This work, more than any other, shows the influence of Blake, both in the compositional elements, distribution and size of figures, formation of the drawn shapes and lines, and also in the mystery of the subject matter involved. There is a definite relationship to the revelatory quality of dreams in this work.

The figures, who inhabit this lonely setting, are expressions of the isolation of all humanity. The protagonist is seen touching, and trying to gain the attention of one of two seated figures. Two very isolated figures frame the extremities of the universe, one rigidly attached to a dark red passage on the left, while the other, holding onto a bare, stick-like tree, grieves alone.

It is difficult to reach the explicit meaning of the work, other than to relate it to an overall feeling of desolation, and a consciousness that conflict has occurred between the figures portrayed. The only attempt to break this deadlocked, frozen condition is in the extended arm of the central figure. As Bonito Oliva states, "Artists have rediscovered the possibility of making the work clear through the presentation of an image which is simultaneously enigma and solution." 29.
A solid black outer section frames the universe, which is cut by flowing streams of white and red. A single golden passage flows diagonally to the centre of the composition, and falls as a stream past the central group. This gives the only note of optimism in this cold, moonlit scene. The overall impression is of a post-holocaust situation.
ARTIST TRANSLATED

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
This work again unfolds the theme of cyclic changes in life. To achieve this, there has been a re-composition of elements and symbols, which have become common to a number of the works thus far.

The portrait of the artist is seen on the left, with a smaller child-form of the self floating in front of the figure. These two figures look out, across a swirling universe, to a floating spirit-figure of the artist, stretching up into the heavens on a long cord, which curves back to the watchers.

Dividing the composition in two, is the phallic shaft of moonlight, topped by the haloed circle of the moon. A second shaft of yellow light curves around, and encloses the floating spirit figure. This is echoed by a circle of light, curving behind the main figure of the artist. A rich, blood-red ground, shot with gold and black, envelops the whole scene, imparting a sense of restless energy and movement. The scene is watched by the recurring, small and distant observers, here obviously three smaller versions of the protagonist. The hopeless, pessimistic quality of the previous work is replaced here with a vibrant sense of life, and with this, hope.
ARTIST AND INSPIRATION

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
17. ARTIST AND INSPIRATION.

Pastel on Paper 76cm x 57cm.

The work reveals several images of the artist. A full-figure version stands to the right of a central, circular composition, which is enclosed by the arms of a large image of the artist. On the left, are three standing figures, which again can be seen as further versions of the artist. Finally, small images are shown in the gold book in the centre of the work.

The protagonist stands above the figures he addresses. He is the symbol of the artist as the inspired, the revealer of mysteries, the one, who is able to construct in new ways, who is able to see, and let others see also. He stands as the prophet, the interpreter of dreams, the traditional exponent of visions from some other source, perhaps divine. The God-Artist, holder of all universal artistic inspiration, cradles his world, and the artist translates to the world, passing the inspiration to human level. He opens the tablets of a golden book, in which are held small images of the artist, unborn ideas, which will form his work. A passage of gold light falls from the outer universe onto this book.

The listeners, grouped before the artist, are once again reflections of the artist. They are divided from the artist by a strong diagonal break in the composition.
This is symbolic of the view of the artist as "different", the romantic notion, that the artist is held separate from society, because of his creative drive.

The world of the artist, held in the arms of the god, consists of earth and brittle, gold sky, divided by a horizon line, which cuts out across the surface of the whole composition. There is an open lightness in the outside universe of this particular composition, in that the world is enclosed in a transparent blue, which proceeds out to the deep black edges of the work.
ARTIST DRAWING SELF-PORTRAIT

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
18. ARTIST DRAWING SELF-PORTrait.

Pastel on Paper 76cm x 57cm.

This work follows immediately from No 17 Artist and Inspiration, and deals with similar concepts. The artist is again shown with his own work. The artist, who is drawing the portrait, is a small figure on the right-hand side of the composition, held by a large envisioned figure of the inspirer, the driving force behind the artist and his inspiration, or, as it could be interpreted, the divine source for the work. This large figure holds a golden disc, or universe, which encloses the drawing artist, and the portrait, on which he is working.

Again a system of three representations of the same figure comes into effect. Each representation has different facets of meaning in the construct of the artistic process. The divine Artist is again represented by the use of the strongly indicated halo, the artist working on the portrait is interpreted as human, but the vision he interprets in his work is of a haloed figure on a restrained grey ground.

The work is one of the simplest of the whole series, consisting of uncomplicated divisions of the ground, an intense red ground, cut by two strong, diagonal passages, which pass to the dark universal enclosure.
The surface is again worked to be flame-like, rich and textured, and although reading as red, is in reality full of many minute patches of various colours.

The almost whimsical concept of this subject is heightened by the flat treatment of the figures, and of the whole composition. This imparts a naive, or simple "cut-out" quality to the work. The single element of change is created by the shadow under the "portrait", giving a sense of depth and three-dimensionality. This portrait then becomes a real object in a world of unreality.
ELUSIVE ARTIST

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
19 ELUSIVE ARTIST.

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

This is a difficult work to interpret, the title having been chosen to fit, not only the subject, but the elusive quality of the meaning of the work. It relates strongly to Drawing No 17 Artist and Inspiration, and also to Painting No 6 Artist as Prophet. Here again, the artist is shown speaking with, or confronting a group of people, in this case rising away from the group, in an ascension mode. The body of the artist is more defined, than in most of the drawn works, although it appears distorted, as it floats above the people. There appears to be a sense of non-comprehension in the crowd, as though there has been no recognition of what the artist has been trying to communicate. No attempt is made to stop the artist, or to question the departure; the group sits passively by. This relates to the problem of the artist and his image in society, and the difficulties of communication. The idea of the elusiveness of the artist also relates to the need of the artist to withdraw, when society presses too close.

The figures sit in a quite real world, reminiscent of the settings created by Van Gogh, and the Post-Impressionist painters, with their use of textured surfaces, and broken, bright colour. Structured rocks sit before ploughed earth, hills and sky.
As the artist rises, he is caught in a coloured passage, flowing from above to the earth beneath, similar to the floating cloth depicted in Renaissance works, as the body of the dead Christ is lowered.

The title describes, not only the floating, fugitive nature of the figure, but the obscure meaning of the work. Although a number of meanings may be sensed, and interpreted from the work, it is difficult to make strong definition of meaning, and it is this very indefinable quality, which is the strength of the work. The looseness in the drawing of the figures, and in the surface treatment, relates back to No 13 *Artist Confronted in Moonlight*. There is a similar enigmatic, and mysterious quality to these two worlds encased in darkness.
ARTIST RISES FROM ILLUSION

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
20. ARTIST RISES FROM ILLUSION

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

This work deals with a number of concepts of duality and illusion. There is direct structural reference to illusion, both in the symbols used, and in the actual compositional detail. The moon, as a symbol, is shown in a dual role, both as a full, rounded orb, and simultaneously as a crescent, reference to the ever changing, but constant nature of the universe, and to the repetition of processes in a cyclic system.

The encapsulated world of the drawing also reveals itself as a double image. There is a larger setting, with grass, sand, water and sky, with the moon floating high overhead. Yet within this universe, there is caught another, with a flaming red sky, across which cut the rays of the moon, before reflecting in the water below. The horizon line, with hills, and distant, low mountains in this central globe, extends beyond this, and forms the horizon for the second, outside world.

Passages of darkness, similar to those used in a number of previous works, e.g. No1 Artist and Image, and No 2 Artist Views His Portrait on Exhibition, again tear the surface of the work. In this work, however, they also give the impression of being structured, monolithic, architectural frames. These serve the purpose of duality, allowing the eye to read them as both dark, receding passages, which
fall deep into the picture surface, and also as solid columns, which lift in front of the world portrayed behind. There is the sense of looking through framed spaces to an open landscape beyond. In these ways, the work as a whole is dealing with concepts of illusion, and the duality of reality.

When we approach the figures within the composition, the same enigmatic quality is observed in the actions and relationships of these. Two figures, both representations of the artist, seem involved in an excited argument, with the figure on the right questioning the central figure. One arm of each figure has been stretched in an extraordinary manner, as in Painting No 1 *Artist and Image*. The central figure has a defensive manner, and refers to a strange spirit-figure, which stands against the left-hand column. This figure is slightly larger than the two, involved in discussion, and appears to float away, having the same form as the spirit-figures used in works such as No 9 *Requiem - Large Artist Cradles Small Artist*, and No 16 *Artist Translated*. This almost floating figure, perhaps the reason for the dispute, as indicated by the central figure, is then translated through to the large figure, which rises through the central column of the composition. The two representations of the artist in conflict with himself, as it were, can gain no resolution. The central figure of the artist, therefore, when questioned, indicates that the answers are found within self-knowledge, by pointing to the other representation of self.
ARTIST STANDS BEFORE THE SEATED ARTIST

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
21. ARTIST STANDS BEFORE THE SEATED ARTIST.

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

The subject is an ancient one, and deals with aspects of the artist, the law and judgement, both literal and implied. Artistic depiction of one human standing before a seated authority figure, either human or divine, dates back to early art periods. Examples are found on the steles of Mesopotamia, e.g. the depiction of Hammurabi receiving the law from the seated god, Shamash. *Stele of Hammurabi*, Susa, C18 B.C., Louvre, Paris, in Egyptian wall paintings, in Greek and Roman works, and in Christian art, in such subjects as the Annunciation, and in works such as *St Francis Renounces His Earthly Father*, Sassetta, National Gallery, London. In this work, the artist makes enquiry of himself, is judged by himself. "In my opinion all important things in art since Ur of the Chaldees, since Tel Halaf and Crete, have always originated from the deepest feeling about the mystery of Being. Self-realization is the urge of all objective spirits. It is this Self for which I am searching in my life and in my art." 30.

The work shows a figure of the artist, seated on a stepped platform. He is haloed, symbolically setting him above mortality, and is set high in the picture plane, thus having a position of authority.
Behind the seated figure is a faintly discernable, large portrait head of the artist, which serves as a backdrop to the seat, a resonator to the aura of authority. Before the seated figure stands the second version of the naked artist, although the position is hardly one of "standing", as the feet and legs do not support the weight of the body, and the figure appears to float backwards, supported by a large spirit-figure, which looms overhead. This figure seems to represent a form of spiritual expansion for the supplicant, who stands before the dispenser of wisdom and favours.

A circular arena holds the standing figures, and the composition is enclosed in book-like, red and purple leaves, or pages, which are again enclosed by the dark outer frame. This red ground is once again cut by dark diagonal breaks, and a light passage descends onto the two standing figures. The surface is relatively simple, involving the use of a restricted colour scheme. The colours used, however, are rich, and the central area glows with red on red.
ARTIST LEVITATED

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
22. ARTIST LEVITATED.

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

An enclosed world is depicted in a dark universe, therefore, the work has a similar compositional structure to No15 *Artist as Mediator*, No19 *Elusive Artist*, and the same globe is employed later in No 25 *Contemplative Artist*.

This work would seem to celebrate the extreme of narcissism, the exhibitionist side of the artist, as artist. As the naked figure of the artist rises above the group of watching figures, there is a discernable quality of pride and liberation about the depiction of the figure. A second figure floats free, and exultant, at the top of the enclosed universe. This human representation is reflected again in a spirit-figure behind it; an edge-lit silhouette, which becomes one with the universe.

The world within the universe floats in the centre of the composition, divided again by an extended horizon-line, and riding above the observing figures, which are at the extreme base of the composition. The world again incorporates land, sea and sky, with the symbolic moon, and its phallic shaft of light reflecting down into the water.
Outside this world, is another circular system, indicated by a fine line of light. This is divided by a strong angular rift, which incorporates the image of the sun, and of its rays, beaming through the centre of the composition, and lighting the figures standing below.

The meanings behind the work are, once again, complex. There is a relationship to religious art, which deals with the portrayal of altered states in general, and ascension and levitation in particular. It also relates to the liberation of the artist through his work, and is connected with concepts of personal liberation for this artist, at the time of making these works. The altered state of levitation, also equates to the sense of artistic freedom found in the moment of creation; the concept that with the creative impulse, the artist is free for that instant, and in a state of enlarged consciousness.

The colours are restrained, in fact restricted to mainly blues and yellows, with small edges of red gleaming around some of the areas, and hidden by the dark ground. Although the colours are not complex, the surface contains contrast between smooth, and roughly drawn areas. Contrasts are gained through sharp changes of tone, so that the gleaming light passages stand out from the apparently solid, dark ground. On closer inspection, this darkness is seen to be a complex mesh of many layers of colour.
ARTIST TRANSFIGURED

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
23. ARTIST TRANSFIGURED.

Pastel on Paper.  76cm x 57cm.

This work relates to the previous work, both in the approach to the drawing method, and in content. There is, however, a development, where the enclosed world of the previous work has now become a cave-like hole of light in a solid ground of darkness.

The work relies heavily on religious imagery, borrowing from the religious theme of the transfiguration of various biblical figures, including Christ. These characters have been described in a state of light, possessing heightened powers, and usually in conversation with some divine being. This is alluded to by the depiction of the large portrait head, which intrudes into the top left of the composition, so that a deified version of the artist regards his creation. This creation, the figure of the transfigured artist, is shown in classical format, similar to that of Greek sculpture, viewed in the Art tradition as one of the pinnacles of artistic endeavour. The artist is thus portrayed as one of the ideals of the Art heritage.

The rays of light, beaming from the area of transfiguration, are strongly reminiscent of similar devices used by William Blake, in his drawings and prints of similar religious subjects. e.g. *God judging Adam*, 1795, Tate Gallery, London.
The transfigured artist appears before a crowd of ordinary mortals, who are allowed to wonder at this mystical creation. The artist stands, as though in an archway, which is an unconscious borrowing from the resurrection theme. He is held in a brilliant ray of light, which descends from the heavens, floods the area in which he stands, and falls, as though in a stream, along the ground.

The quality of narcissism, referred to in the previous work, could again be imputed to this work. The work deals with this, and other concepts embodied in the tradition of the self-portrait, e.g. the concept of the artist as heroic figure.

The work contains contrasts of tightly controlled and loose surface areas. The colours are once again simplified to an extreme economy. The ground is now black, giving heightened contrast to the gleams of yellow light, the white figures, and the small patch of blue sky and red-black earth.
DANCING ARTIST

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
24. **DANCING ARTIST.**

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

This work is a deliberate attempt to show the joyous, or celebratory aspect of the artist's work and expression. The world of the artist has become brilliant orange-red, and the figure is framed in a cave-like structure of brightness.

Use has been made of an ancient artistic convention to indicate the movement of the dance, namely simultaneous views of the figure. Although the initial reading of the drawing may give the impression of two figures dancing, in fact the one figure is shown from front and back views of one pose. Multiple legs and arms have been indicated to heighten the effect of movement.

Behind the figure on the left is once again projected the shadow of the spirit version of the artist. The crowd of watchers, normally passive by-standers, is seen merging with the orange ground, but in this case also dancing and moving, so that the work becomes a whole song of dance. This is echoed in the flame-like treatment of the orange and red leaves of the central area. Moving up to the right of the work, is a miniature version of the artistic spirit, floating in a passage of white. This figure also has a raised hand, and is more animated than in any other composition.
The work is simple. The orange-red central form is cut by a dark shaft, which intrudes from the outer darkness, and frames the main figure of the artist, as he dances. This was the most difficult work in terms of exhibition decision, and personally disliked, until lengthy reflection. It has since become important, as it has an air of fragility, of precarious balance, and speaks of the ephemeral nature of life, and of its short times of celebration. The orange globe turns, the obverse will not be the same, and a delicate moment is held, never to be repeated. There is a great sadness implied in this happiest of the works.
CONTEMPLATIVE ARTIST

Pastel on Paper (76cm x 57cm).
25. CONTEMPLATIVE ARTIST.

Pastel on Paper. 76cm x 57cm.

The title and concept of this work are fitting and logical, as this is the final work, chronologically. It brings together a number of concepts, and uses elements which have become common throughout the series.

Almost centrally placed, the artist sits in a pose of contemplation, which again relates to religious iconography, in this case readily identified with Buddhism, and the eastern religions. The artist is seated on a circular platform, a device already referred to in other works, e.g. No 12 Artist on a Pedestal. It has been used also as the focal standing point for the artist in No 23 Artist Tranfigured, and in No 6 Artist as Prophet, where the artist is seen standing in a sacred circle. The seated artist is held, and viewed by the large god-figure of the artist, the creator, who looks in from the outside universe. To the left of the work, once again floats the spirit version of the artist, so that the concept of trinity, and threefold expression is again brought into focus.

The natural world has been more clearly defined, than in any of the previous works. The artist sits on a grassy island, surrounded by sea,
with the distant horizon again cutting through the whole composition. In this case, the sea is allowed to flow out of the globe, and into the outer left area of the ground. Above the sea in a broken, cold blue sky, floats the moon, symbol of the cycles, the changing of life, and yet embodying the never-changing aspects of a cyclical pattern. The artist is framed in the familiar passage of light, which now flows in a more directly vertical movement, so that there is a greater feeling of rest and of completion, in this work, than in any of the others. The usual feeling of unease is here overcome by a sense of balance, gentle cyclical movement, which revolves around the figure of the seated artist.

Surface treatment is complex, the material having been applied in a loose, gestural style. The darkness, surrounding the globe, overlays areas of red, which are able to flicker through, and relieve the darkness.
PORTRAIT OF ARTIST 1

Pastel on Paper (57cm x 38cm).
26. PORTRAIT OF ARTIST 1.

Pastel on Paper. 57cm x 38cm.

This is the first work, chronologically, of all the self-portraits, both drawings and paintings. It was the work that decided the direction for the whole exhibition series. The previous intention had been to create a number of works based on portraits of various people. The multiple images displayed in this work, and the idea of different aspects of self, and of the "artist self", motivated the exploration, which became this series.

This work, and the following two works, differ obviously from the later paintings and drawings, in that they are looser, more open in structure, and are more involved with straight physical interpretation of self-image. Compositionally, the work is simply a series of overlapped images, from different viewpoints. These views are not drawn from the mirror, or from photographs, but rather from memory of aspects of physiognomy and personality.

To the right of the composition is a dominating, frontal face view, with one clearly defined eye, and the other blinded. The nose-line of this face may be read, either as frontal, or profile view. The nose, which is a distinctive personal feature, becomes the signature.
identification for all the later works. Immediately attached to the side of this face, is a full, and accurately drawn profile image, another angle, which catches the light, in the dark, central passage of the painting. Above this profile is an opposite view of the profile, which intrudes back into the main image. In front of this image is a more complete, but expressionist image of the head, shoulders and arm - a conveyor of mood.

Surface treatment is broad, the pastel having been applied in an open, gestural style, and the surface having been rubbed, erased, smudged and over-drawn. An important element of the work is the use of small passages of red, in an otherwise mono-chromatic system of dark blue-greens. One of these descends through the centre of the drawing, enclosing the faces on the right, and slashing through the top profile. The other section of red, echoing this, is a group of lines, which descends into the face of the lower portrait image.

The distortion of shoulder and hand, and the apparent x-ray version of the ribs, add a disturbing, and darkening element to this work. It is not unlike some of the drawings and paintings of Max Beckmann, and would have been influenced by a large retrospective exhibition of his work, viewed in Frankfurt, some three months before the commencement of this series. In fact the motivation for the whole
series is closely related to the same sources. "Beckmann created his own myths - personal, complex, and ambiguous. (He) seems to have felt that he had to know himself in order to penetrate ever more deeply into man's inner life. He painted more self-portraits than any other twentieth-century artist." 31. The work is introspective and disturbed, and may definitely be viewed as an exploration, which leads to the mass of works to follow.
PORTRAIT OF ARTIST 2

Pastel on Paper (57cm x 38cm).
27. PORTRAIT OF ARTIST 2.

Pastel on Paper. 57cm x 38cm.

This work immediately follows No 26 Portrait of Artist 1, and is carried out in the same gestural, expressionistic style. There is less closure of area in this particular work, and some surface areas have been left in a less-worked state. Again there is a full image of the artist's face, a compound image that relates to Cubist work, having both profile and frontal images bound together. The work is probably more immediately read as profile and a second image, by the viewer, when in fact, on more considered observation, the centre of the work is seen to be occupied by a whole frontal view of the face. This can be dissolved into a profile view on the left, with a second image floating out towards the right, an effect, which is reinforced by the eyebrow, and the shape of the eye, carrying even further to the right of the image.

There is the quality of "the mask" about this work. Not only does it relate to primitive works in its colour, and particularly in its lack of clear primary colour, but also across the left cheek are two striations, which recall tribal markings. The work appears to be associated with primitive materials, such as ochre, clay and wood. Mask images, and the concept of the human hiding behind the mask, reappear in works which follow, in particular, No 3 Artist Watching Across The Gulf, and No 7 Artist As Fool.
Because of the expressionistic mode, the work has a restless, lively quality to it, a quality, setting it apart from many of the works which follow. These have more considered surface, and finish. The restless, broken quality is the strength of this work. Heavy, dominating black line is an important element, whereas in later works, linear treatment, although always an important element, has been used in a more delicately defining sense.
MADNESS OF THE ARTIST

Pastel on Paper (3 pieces, each 57cm x 38cm).
28. MADNESS OF THE ARTIST.

Pastel on Paper. 3 pieces, each 57cm x 38cm.

This work follows immediately after No 26 and No 27, and is an obvious sequel to these. It also forms the bridge from the two introspective, descriptive works to the complex, narrative works which follow. Originally commenced as three separate works, using elements common to the earlier portraits, i.e. areas of the artist's face, the work became a more complex and unified whole, with the combination of elements from the whole body. The broken, schizophrenic nature of the work provides the motivation for the title. The artist may be seen as mad or possessed, when the power of inspiration is "upon him". The work has been pushed, therefore, in a fast and furious manner, the surface is rough and open, the pastel has been applied roughly, rubbed and smudged, and other areas of the surface have been left untreated.

The "madness" of the artist is depicted in the sombre, introspective facial studies, particularly in the focus on the eyes, the darkness of the eyes, and the shadows that surround them. The mouth is never shown in detail. The distorted arm, which appeared in the first work, is again used here, and distorted further, in actions which could be interpreted as unbalanced.
Mixed with the facial images, and the dark ground areas, are sections of the artist's body. This particular work is possibly the most explicit, in the sexual sense, the erect penis being depicted in the left section of the work. The body, which appears in all areas of the work, merges, with an increased sense of mania, into the right-hand darkness. The colour is restricted to fleshy oranges and pinks, which are modulated with soft greys, and thrown against the dramatic areas of black. Black is used, not only to achieve this contrast, but as the main drawing element to describe the facial features. The work is disturbing, and some would claim, disturbed. It was a self-release, a catharsis for the artist, and a work of discovery and self-revelation, - a painful work to expose to public view. "The artist has once again become maniac and mannerist of his own mania. .... art has come back to being direct expression, leaving behind the business of feeling guilty for being a permanent and direct symptom of contact with the world." 32.

The concept of the broken work, in this case a triptych, is followed in later paintings as double sectioned works, e.g. No 2 Artist Views His Portrait On Exhibition, and No 3 Artist Watching Across The Gulf. The same sense of the individual areas being able to exist in their own right, which occurs in the later works, also applies to this work. Each of the three sections could exist alone, and yet each adds power to, and gains power from the whole. This work also has strong affinities with the work of Max Beckmann, and would appear to be motivated from the same inner searching by the artist, to add power to an external expression.
NOTES


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            Fondation Maeght, St Paul de Vence, France.
            Fiesole, Italy.
13. 12. 83. ROSAI: Retrospective.
            Florence.
15. 12. 83. JOSEPH BEUYS: Retrospective.
            Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland.
16. 12. 83. JÖRG IMMENDORF: Retrospective.
            Kunsthaus Zürich.
21. 12. 83. "FORUM JUNGER KUNST": Travelling Exhibition of Drawing,
            Painting & Sculpture by young German Artists.
            Stadt Galerie Stuttgart.
23. 12. 83. MAX BECKMANN: Paintings & Drawings.
            Städelisches Kunstinstitut, Städtische Galerie,
            Frankfurt am Main.
27. 12. 83. ALEX COLVILLE: Paintings.
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31. 12. 83. FRANCOIS ROUAN: Paintings.
            Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou,
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5. 1. 84.  J.M.W. TURNER.
            Grand Palais, Paris.
9. 1. 84. DUFY: Retrospective.
Hayward Gallery, London.

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11. 1. 84. WILLIAM BLAKE: Watercolours.
Tate Gallery, London.

7. 2. 84. "KANDINSKY - THE BAUHAUS YEARS"
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The National Gallery, Washington, D.C.

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