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"When men are rightly occupied, their amusement grows out of their work, as the colour - petals out of a fruitful flower."

JOHN RUSKIN

INTRODUCTION

Aesthetic Development

This report presents the various developments of growth and forces within my self and those manifest in my work. The result being, a series of works that have become a visual representation of the emotional, psychological self, yet pertain to the human collectivity.

As the personal process of recognition unfolded, the progression became reflected in the works. The visual analysis of my psychological vulnerability produced a series of sculptures, each denouncing its predecessor as obsolete. All elements grew inprogressive stages, as significant elements that followed in a sequence, occasionally growing together in expression eg. Totem Figures, where nails, woods, and interior/exterior space came together here, painted in flecked pinks and reds. Thus from my sculptural experience I began to make positives in wax or clay and then to make plaster molds direct from which the final molds could be taken. I used a mold recipe existing in the workshop, previously used for slumping. However although this was an excellent holding mold it did not allow fine detail and proved to be unsuitable for my work.

From basic cubes with low relief, I developed this technique to enable fine relief attached to the cubes eg. the Flower/Cube

which meant adapting the mold mixture and experimentation with different glass. The more complex shapes dictate an easier flowing glass (lower temperature).

After these experiments in Second Year 1986 I continued with the cubes but found it necessary to "push" the casting further to execute the future complex forms. At first they were small (12 cms in diameter) yet after many attempts I finally understood the process of interior mold heat loss/gain and the problems with crucible heating of glass, grain glass type and size, which affected the glass flow. Yet I finally had three bowls with the addition of metal inserts fused with the glass, an added complication in the overall process but one which I felt capable of executing.

At the end of Third Year I had given thought to the forms of bowls and the need to take the scale larger, opening up this form.

The larger size disadvantaged my progress again, and I began to research the various problems of - glass, molds, heat loss, surface tension, temperature and everything again had to be changed.

It was at this time that I was able to observe Anne Robinson in person working during the Masters Symposium. Her unique uncomplicated way of handling the mold, was simple yet not unsophisticated. It allowed a greater "hands on" feel to the work. It gave a greater freedom to percieve it's creativity while in practice, it produced a stronger result with less effort overall.

So although I adopted Anne's technical philosophy, I kept my own mold recipes and with confidence that it could be done I battled on, changing glasses and filling techniques, temperatures etc until finally using the "Bulleseye glass" I had three bowls complete, having used the hollow mold application in lost wax.

The problem I now realised, meant that the form did not transfer well from the wax to glass, and in a radical need to produce to form I decided I would have to change from casting to form. So after three and half years of progressively experiencing the limitations and boundries of casting, I knew that the "expression" of the Bowl forms meant adapting my skills to a new "freedom" and for me, this was the Pate De Verre technique.

I shall always be grateful for my time in assisting Dianna Hobson as her aproach to Pate De Verre technique was one of patience, care and above all meticulous attention to detail. My somewhat flamboyant, bravado approach led me through successful yet dangerous avenues, that made it difficult to resolve the problems associated with Pate De Verre. To begin they were complex and intricate yet I was determined and indeed felt an affinity to this process which I had accepted as suitable. So it was that I began pasting up the same form in hollow molds with a glass paste - Pate De Verre

This meant aproaching the job from the inside out visually, yet pasting up from the exterior surface first, working towards the interior surface/face of the final form.

The direct "hands -on" application although tedious and painstaking delighted my senses and I have since developed my process to produce full standup bowls 35cm in diameter - large forms for Pate De Verre with 3mm thick walls.

These expressive executions in Pate De Verre have a dense texture that asks to be touched and although a sense of fragility is suffuse throughout the form they remain tactile to the viewer.

My introduction to glass came in First Year when I began a laminating exercise. I had never handled glass before and found the laborious cutting and breaking of the glass alien to my previous experience. The splintering and fragmentation of the glass caused me concern at first, and the minute calculations necessary for the precision that was needed to align all the triangle shapes I had cut became a nightmare.

The exercise was one of a series of frustration that almost brought me to tears, but at the end of the two weeks I had thirty pieces or triangles all of approximately the same size. I began to glue these together into a continuous whole. Further development of the form led me to carve into the sides and contour the glass further, texturing with the sand blaster.

Finally after polishing the base, I finished the piece with a sense of having gained a familiarity with the medium which future endeavours would consolidate. Machinery and determination gave me the physical presentation of an idea. They were shown for assessment and Klaus Moje finished his praise of them by asking if these "were the little triangles" with which I had first begun.

I had developed through the form, transforming it on the machinery, realising a new expression I went on sculpting the glass. Underlying his comment of course, was that one starts from a beginning and a metamophosis takes place. This reminder gave me humour and the ability to develop future concepts.

Objectivity coupled with creative technique led to the process or format for a teaching philosophy that would dictate a need for my own creative investigation over the next four years.(One that I appreciated immensely.)

My first laminated forms captured my sympathy with the sea landscape. The laminated piece itself became the contained force of the sea, and it's relationship to, and interaction with landforms eg. the coastline.

The energy and rythmic force of the sea were extracted into the contours of the glass. The momentary interaction of land and sea encapsulated. The combination of landscape and seascape, remained an influential element throughout my later works, both as a form reference and as metaphor.

Graham Sutherland has commented that "practically all elements are contained in landscapes. In a sense the landscape painter must look at the landscape as it it were himself - himself as human being...... to find that the forms and qualities which start him off, excite his ideas and stimulate his emotions. "I'm interested in looking at landscapes in this way so that the impact of the hidden form develops in the mind." 1.

I believe this also for the sculptor or for any artist looking at form.

The containment, almost "frozen" movement of my first attempts where I endeavoured to capture this intangible force of movement led to the sculpture forms being somehow static.

The fixed formation worked in opposition to the illusory movement that I endeavoured to portray. As a form the waves remained strong yet lacked the vitality in expression that my final Pate De Verre produced. The reference too, became a heavy mass rather than a light subtle suggestion of the ethereal quality of the sea's movement, its tidal tones.

Sutherland further suggests "that if the artist fails to nourish these conceptual ideas by familiarising him/herself with the ways of nature he will dry-up and fail to produce.....I feel that it is always the idea of nature, transcending nature and forming reconstructed images, via the heart and mind of the artist which is the thing that is worth while." 2.

Above all I remained attuned to the great power of nature, the sea in particular and tried to encapsulate its essence through the cube series that followed. The cube being a symbol for stability, truth and the containment of the self - (in this case the female self.) - Jung

I spent many hours exploring the beaches along the coasts of N.S.W., observing formations of rocks against the backdrop of sea, the landlines rolling down to the sea and their uncanny resemblance to the human form. I realised Henry Moore's "reclining figures", were everywhere, contoured in green follige - larger than pyramids in their dominance.

The characteristics of sea-life - spiked anemones, their protective tenticles and their flecked bright colour became my need for self protection. Body armour figured in this influence.

The psyche was impenetrable by the exterior world while flamboyant and appealing with their colour and tactile quality. My cubes became solid tentacled sea creatures fixed in glass and strangely alien in colour and character. Exotic creatures of my imagination aethetically cyptic and pharenic with reference to aesthetic colouration.

With the use of colour, I was displaying the inner, usually concealed parts of the sea (cyptic) and later outwardly displayed the pharenic, colourations (as in the cubes) as protective tentacles surrounding the heart/essence. eg. as sea anenomes and tropical fish exhibit.

At this stage the metal (copper nails) were fused into the glass-as one. They became an internal element as well as an external structure. They referred to the interior of the form enmeshed in the depths of the glass. Some referred to this as the "penetration" element, yet this only happened during the physical making of the piece. The ultimate imagery reflected the need to explore the interior and view the spikes merged as it were, to the "glass flesh" of the piece. The nails themselves became tantalising with dabbled acrylic paint applied with finger tip dashes of bright tropical colour.

The casting of these forms gave greater priority to the volume/mass rather than the form. Although at this stage I developed the sculptural scale of the glass and usually worked to those dimensions later on. A paradox of this cube stage enabled me to view the interior (at wax stage), in the open relief mold, but as the molten glass was added this "internal structure" became encased or enclosed. The novelty of the various characteristics as portritures eg. Katchina Dolls etc. appeal to my sense of theatre. My identification with the "primitive" arts, and my own Australian heritage, led to a final combination of woods, dried grasses, the painterly texture that was both decorative but more importantly, characteristic of my interpretation of the land - while still in cube form.

This combination resulted in the complexity of working in mixed media and while I had previously combined metals with glass, the grasses gave added expressiveness. Painting the surface envolved a further depth of colour and textural dimension. It also gave an uncharacteristic quality to the glass and the glass surface became canvas for the expressive colour. Both colour and texture began to combine with form in the process, leading to a greater understanding of the spiritual nature of the Australian lansdscape and with it,symbolic connections with my own spiritual growth.

The experience led me to investigate the decorative element of glass and jewellery gave me added sense of capturing a "new" scale. Line, colour and form took on a smaller scale and from this essence they became little "sketches" of colour and vitality. With the larger necklaces representing a combination of past/present decorative extravagance in overall floral design. eg. Bronze - Nubian Necklace.

I realise the enrichment of my own personal experiences, which gave greater colour to my personal pallete of self - expression.

Throughout the series of cubes the surface and colours presented the multi-faceted avenues of my intents and thoughts, while at core I remained, as the cube, contained, stable,[yet shedding] a different skin, as it were.

The first glass cubes were covered in glass powder, sand and contained the qualities of the sea. The second cube, a highly colourful dappled creature, became an embracing of things "Australian", and for me, focused on the colour and textures of the bush and the traditional ochres as apposed to a European colouring. When one thinks of this relationship of the self to the Australian landscape I'd refer to Gertrude Stein who spoke of the "European Scale". Stein examined the relationship of the individual to the landscape and how this traditional perspective changed during the 1920's - 30s with the emergance of a new young culture and the mass imagination to America, with the development of the American modern painters. The vast relationship between the emotional and the panoramic scale of these new horizons extended the boundaries of the European self -image. Proportionately it put human reality on a different scale. I feel the Australian scale of landscape has the same effect in allowing one to relate to one's self differently. To absorb the vastness, rather than fear it.

I was at this time revelling in the joy of self expression, hence my very ornate and colourful totem figures, which, executed in wood metal, paint and plastic each 1.5 mtrs in hight were figures again expressionistically flamboyant.

Somewhat "fetish", they were done in a flourish of excitement and a thrill to the joy of kinship in life.(group of three). The scupltural (forms always in other medium) influencing the glass forms either in the extracted character of the detail of form. One always affected the other and each related for me through charateristic rather than form. While developing my ideas through drawings, often a quick sketch of an idea would contain the essential lines of the form for reference. Line, essentially the first basic need to express, would become my starting point for a sculpture. The stone heads that I carved at this stage allowed me again to cut into a mass and expose the form and line. Stylistically realistic, the heads were an attempt at purifying the form to line. And I was here obviously influenced by Jean Arp, Giocometti and Branchusi. The Mt. Gambier Limestone was easily carved away and allowed a simple form to be exposed.

In transferring the idea from drawing into the first three dimensional clay expression, the considerations of scale and dimensional size came into being. With the transference from clay mould to cast glass the evolved scale became established.

H. Moore suggests "there is a size to scale not to do with its actual physical size, its measurement in feet and inches - but connected with vision. The very small or the very big, takes on an added size of emotion". 3. For me the emotional size dictated the proper scale for the glass.

I also believe the drawing process is fundamental in capturing the fleeting impressions of a sculptural form, as it progresses in stages of construction through the thought process. But I also feel it is true that "carrying a drawing so far that it becomes a substitute for the sculpture, either weakens the desire to do the sculpture, or is likely to make the sculpture only a dead realisation of the drawing". (H.Moore) 4. and therefor do not like to "lose" too much of an idea through drawing - I'd rather develop it through my casting process of clay, plaster, wax, carving then glass.

While working on the cube I branched into a fascination with the traditional bowl as form, the outward protrusion (nails, metal etc) could also be brought into the more simplistic form.

I therefore, endeavoured to encapsulate the same characteristics of the cubes in a traditional Bowl form which exposed the previously contained interior.

They were a direct influence from the large sculptural egg forms I had been developing in sculpture. Thus, they were no longer a solid physical volume containing the spirit, but an offering bowl suggesting one's own spiritual past, held in the present.

The development of the bowls was primitive yet classical. This combination I believe relevant as "All good art had contained both abstract and surrealist elements just as it has contained both classical and romantic elements - order and surprise, intellect and imagination, conscious and unconscious. Both sides of the artist's personality must play their part. And I think the first inception of a painting or a sculture may begin from either end " 5 while keeping the reference for drawing from the "study and observation of natural forms from life".

The eggs and the bowls came together, dragging me away from the sharp cube lines. The rounded voluptuous bowls followed the line and contours of the female body. The sweeping bulbous shapes "x-rayed" the interior of the buttocks and hips, while hinting at an interior offering, yet they were a detail only, an extraction of the total female form. These open forms became a reappraisal of the self in physical form and my need to express this in a reversal of depiction from a whimsical cubed line approach, a structured composition to the more expressive use of the base material (glass).

The lightness, this surrender of the ego, this seeming aloofness from life, demanded a new structure, a new recognition, and hence my development from the heavier casting to the more expressive (fluid) Pate De Verre technique.

The final development of the form, (in this case the vessel bowl,) where the consequent emergence of various facets of bud, flower, egg was a subconscious growth in principle a symbolism to the germination of creativity beyond the cube's restrictions, yet the flower/life forms imagery, remained my primary influence. It fisrt began with my realistic glass flowers in a vase. eg. Flowers in Vase.

"Moore: I agree that everyone has a sort of individual form vision. In all the greatest artists the seeds of this form of vision has been present even in their early work, and to some extent their work has been a gradual unfolding of this rhythm throughout. In their later work it becomes more concentrated, that's all. It's something the artist can't control - it's his makeup. All the same I think that he ought not to go on repeating it, he ought to be fighting against it. He ought not to sell himself his own idea over and over again. Or it should become so instinctive in him that he's not worried about it. In Michelangelo it was so instinctive that he was free to think about the other things that interested him. The less conscious you are of your own individual form rhythm, the more likely it is, I think, to get richer and fuller and develop." 6.

This need triggered an exposure to many forms after a sudden need to "break-out" of the cube forms literally. My first attempts were a literal interpretation of the flower, in glass..attesting still to the fragility of the self and I placed them in a naturalistic setting - a "floral arrangement" - the traditional offering in a vase.

The flowers reflected my larger sculptural works - bud like forms developing smaller images of themselves in a process of reproduction. In a sense I was preoccupied with the concept of "Vitalism" that Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore found so fasinating in the 1930's.

I did not realise this at the time, but looking towards the writings of Goethe. "Life force" for Goethe meant "That one understands the plant only by starting with the whole. He was very interested in the forming and transforming processes of plants, and he looked at each plant or each leaf as a kind of totality. Starting with his mental picture or concept of totality of the living organism makes it possible to determine relationships within the parts of this totality, such as the chemical or atomic processes". 7. I believe this growth process to be similar to the spiritual growth philosophy of Rudolph Steiner and the Anthrophosophicals. Many saw my offering of the self merely as a cliched interpretation of a decorative element (flowers in a novel medium of glass). Their underlining importance was that the flowers', preempted the bowls to become a visual offering, a presentation for inspection, a statement of the glory and beauty of both nature and glass not only in realistic image but as realisticmetaphor of grace and abundance. It was an important keystone for me to begin with a totally realistic form of the flower and endeavour to create it in glass. The culmination of lucious fertile expression, (the flower), brought together the flower and cube. Perhaps the extension of this is to bring the flower into the bowls, as in the cube ?

The process allowed a careful study of the detail and store its form line, and proportion for future reference.

While I admit to the metamorphisis of the floral characteristics, this doesn't make the protective armour, characterised by nails, studs, wooden points and spikes, less important.....they merely materialised in a different form. A cube, rather than totem. The last final resolution came as a combination of Rose and Cube.

In my need to break away from the cube form, I had begun with the egg/bud, (subconsciously awaiting the change), the realisation of the flower a sudden exposure. The Egg Buds in sculpture became microscopic symbols of the essence of the main, the parent wholistic structure of nature - (Flower/Bud -Reproduction or the "Potentiality of life" Jung) that the Box and the Cube/Flower are the feminine symbols of immortality, plenty, of the womb, and the flower in particular depicts the "potentiality of the rebirth or inner essence of life" -Jung. The nails or thorns stablise the piece, and bring the viewer back from "immortality" and as the symbol of the "cosmic axis", are they bounded in "fate" and "necessity" - Jung. (Visual contradiction). There I recognised the dilemma of the artist working with the subconscious yet as H. Moore clarified "through the non - logical, instinctive, subconscious part of the mind must play its part in his/her work, the artist also has a conscious mind which is not inactive. The artist works with a concentration of his whole personality, and the conscious part of it resolves conflicts, organises memories, and prevents him from trying to walk in two different directions at once". 8. Yet the subconscious is still actively engaged in this process with a perhaps different outcome.

I think this is why one often seems to be working in opposites because I had to sort through these elements, while inwardly needing to express myself as a molecule in Mankind. While "recent art really has shown very clearly the lack of unity of purpose in recent society" - Clark 9. - I hope to bring a unity to my surrounds and spirituality through my work. "Man can only be creative in relation to problems which he seeks to solve. The idea of the artist as a divine being turning chaos into any kind of order in a free display of creativity is a Romantic Myth" 9

I believe to "seek and solve" these problems - one looks to the spiritual needs of the intellect, as in art one refers towards the usual forms and for me these are spiritually contained within nature, which includes the humaness of form, the spirituality of form. This analysis of form led me to reappraise my direction, and structure became less complex and form more "pure". The single petal became in essence the structure from which the female form was to be expressed. A single Bowl Form was the result.

On reading Grillo I once again found myself projected towards structure.

Grillo: "The work of the designer is only worth his ability to understand the laws of nature, the character of people and their needs plus his own ideas and imagination"....common sense and the abedience to strict natural laws gave us our rules for designing" Grillo. 10.

Designing is "man's own land" where "he will discover the permanent quality of the bonds that tie his own world to the universal harmony of creation" 11. - and thus I looked to nature, the human form and landscape for inspiration.

My expression continued with the single flower petal form combined with the open hollow bowl.

This "response to life" seemed to motivate a series of works which the key element seemed to be vitality, as in the cubed figures which were dappled in paint.

Form in the Bowls were at first heavy and dead, while the considerations of form "in it's spatical existence"12. had been met - they lacked the gay whimsical humour of my earlier sea creature and the colourful primitiveness which gave me an expressive freedom.

Hence the bowls became alive with crushed colours of glass that brought their forms to life in a fine decorative element of colours.

I read "The first hole through a piece of stone is a relevation "and" a hole can itself have as much shape - meaning, as a solid mass", and as much as I found these theories of form interesting, it was Moore's statements on art "The violent quarrel between the abstractionist and the surrealists seems to me quite unnecessary.

All good art has contained both abstract and surrealist elements just as it has contained both classical and romantic elements - order and surprise, intellect and imagination, conscious and unconscious. Both sides of the artist's personality must play their part. And I think the first inception of a painting or a sculpture may begin from either end." H. Moore. As far as my own experience is concerned, my own work was seemingly function, yet decorative. The earlier pieces quite surreal. Jean Arp had a process "according to the laws of chance", which enabled him to profess "that anyone who followed this law was creating pure life." 13.

Rodin's contours, or "the bump and hollow" of the female form,endeavoured to expose these philosophies. With a simple hollow bowl form - a classic beginning that spoke of the simplicity of female form, I endeavoured to capture the "pure life" form.

This return to "nature" and form demands a simple statement. Rather than work figuratively, although I had worked through figurative sketches, I feel the "sense of spirit" was the principle to be captured in the form not with it, and like the extracted Bud sculptures that had previously developed from the flowers I began to extract from the female form the contours of buttocks and hips combining them with the flow of the single petal.

My research for "pure" form led me to the "classic" form - Greek Bowls, Celtic Bowls, Japanese Bowls rather than the obvious figureative reference eg. cycladic. But these were a base point not a continuing reference

The Bowl suggested the offering state and I proceeded to restrict any interpretation into this literal image, as historically and sculpturally it represented the "containment" physically of the spirituality.

The Bowl also firmed the soft ovals lines of the eggs and buds, yet they became halved and opened in the female bowl form, a halving of the egg. It also seemed a priority to keep the form simple - that is not to make it simplistic but simple in structure. Purity in structure seemed essential. (Rosalind E. Krauss, "Passages in Modern Sculpture")

Indeed "true simplicity is done not for simplicity sake, but because you don't forget the essentials. It's done to keep the essentials and not because you like simplicity: it's only because there's something more important. Therefore it becomes simple because you're saying a big thing that has a big statement" Clarke.

My early attempts to embody in the works, a sense of "Pure Form" - began with a classical interpretation which exposed my subconscious archetypes. The Greek Bowl, the Celtic Bowl, Japanese Bowl all ceremonial bowls, which combined metals and imagery of the ancients that pertained to the past times of all life and the beginnings of this life, of this form. They became the metaphor of Past times They are contemporary offerings in traditional form yet contain the emotional state of that time through colour in tradional form - vessels to hold, they are contained of the person, a facet of my preoccupations and like human nature, they express both exposure and denial.

TECHNICAL PROCESS

Basic Form Process

- A. Modelled in clay OR cast from wax
- B. Plaster Positive is taken
- C. If wax or rubber then taken from plaster positive
- D. Wax encased in refractory mold mixture
- E. Wax then burnt out of mold either in pre-fire OR cast fire of mold, or steamed out prior to Pate De Verre Paste up.

Modelling - Clay or Wax

- A. I have a series of negatives forms from which I can take positive waxes. These were developed from the original clays forms and I use a basic form to allow for additional reliefs which can be in clay, wax or paper, although clay may not be used on undercut relief as removal becomes impossible - otherwise use wax, paper wood which will burn out.
- B. The wax is reversed (base up) then covered by hand, continuing in a thickness of 1" to the edge of the bowls when this has set I reverse it (base down) and then dewax (steam).
- C. After dewaxing the mold is allowed let to dry (in clothes dryer) top shelf (for 2 days if for casting) otherwise it is used next day for the Pate De Verre, as a damp unfired mold is needed for this process.
- D. When mold is dewaxed I then begin to paste up the Pate De Verre beginning in the centre of the Bowl and working outwards, in a climbing affect, one layer smooth into the previous band on pasted glass.
- E. In larger forms I use an atomiser to moisten the glass, as I work to prevent dehydration during the process.
- F. On colour molds I work with the piece on its side and paste up around the mold, my previous paste up to the ceiling as it were.
- G. One must at all times compensate for the water loss as this is crucial at this time to assure the grain paste adhering somewhat like plastering the wall an atomiser counteracts dehydration effects.
- H. On completion, the mold is left to dry at 100 150 for two days then either taken to 500 at 100 p/hr or I generally find a gradual incline of heat the best. eg. 20 150 held for 20-15 hrs the 50 p/hr to 500 soak 2hrs then straight up.

I. Once fired, the mold is reversed and sprayed with water and left for three hrs, so that the mold's outer casing will soften up and be easily removed - I support the piece inside with wodding and use no pressure on the concave form.

Mold Recipe

1 Luto (pre fired mold material)

1 Silca

2 Plaster

(Vermicutile optional) gives a lighter texture - reduces wetness

Glass Paste

1 cup 60 - 100 glass grain 1/2 cup water 1 teas. CMC paste

Firing Schedule

as per glass with reference to Devitrification annealling, melting fusing point etc.

as per mold mixture

Dewaxing temp.

as per wax degrees of mold (mixture content)

Mold firing

as per mold mix

plus drying time, amount of water to ratio of drying mix etc

Kiln

preferring front loader for larger pieces (over 12cm) position - central in kiln eg. in the middle of the shelf equal distance from all elements in front of, NOT touching elements fibrefrax sheeting to divert the heat evenly but not directly onto the piece - suspended fibrefrax on the top of piece. temp. time - as per glass, shape, size, thickness

Glasses

those compatible tested and coloured

Colour

oxides, body stains, enamels or glass

Types

soda, lead, bullseye, zimerman

If there are futher details of my techniques which you wish to know, I would be happy to elaborate on them.

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