

ART EDUCATION CONFERENCE

2021 *Talk and Workshops*

– Derek Olphert

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This file combines the content of three Conference Sessions: *Illustrated Talk*, and a double *Workshop*.

When viewing use 'Full Screen Mode'. The background image on this page is a focus of attention, a *node* – the central graphic represents the *phases* involved with ***Response to Vision***. Personal email: derekolphert@maxnet.co.nz

ART EDUCATION CONFERENCE

2021 *Illustrated Talk*

– Derek Olphert

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This symbol represents phase 1 of
Response to Vision:
'Seeing'



ART EDUCATION – Going, or Gone?
ART EDUCATION – Going, or Gone?
ART EDUCATION – Going, or Gone?

POST-CONFERENCE COMMENT

This Talk was prepared to span Art Education across all sectors to a tertiary level. However, three-quarters of those attending were Secondary school art teachers who have a depth of knowledge of learning appropriate to students from Level 9 to 13. This does not mean that they have a corresponding knowledge of the Primary school, the learning capacity of younger students, and their teachers' knowledge and approach. Each sector can learn from the other, and all will gain by recognising that **if the learning is visual, it's Art Education!**

Introduction

As we are considering an aspect of learning labelled *Art Education*, it is sensible to reconsider what this means for students from Preschool to Tertiary. Three quotations are a helpful beginning.

SEEKING definition from overseas we find **Elliot Eisner**, who is well represented by publications, in 2004 writing:
I am talking about a culture of schooling in which more importance is placed on *exploration* than on *discovery*, more value is assigned to *surprise* than to *control*, more attention is devoted to what is *distinctive* than to what is *standard*, more interest is devoted to what is *metaphorical* than what is *literal*. It is an education culture that has a greater focus on *becoming* than on *being*, places more value on the *imaginative* than on *factual*, assigns greater priority to *valuing* than to *measuring*, and regards the *quality of the journey* as more educationally significant than the *speed at which the destination is reached*.

I am talking about a new vision of what education might become and what schools are for.

About starting his career in Northland as a sole-charge teacher **Elwyn Richardson** said:

I had a wonderful life over those years and am most grateful for the gift of what took place in the minds of that small group of pupils, and too, in my mind and spirit. I'd love to do it again! Each firing of the kiln, each reading of our best current poetry/story, each remarkable print, painting, poem, was wonderfully exciting and that went on daily! How could we be so fortunate?

Richardson discarded the official syllabus and turned instead to the children's lives and immediate environment for the basis of his curriculum. Using children's natural curiosity and interest, Richardson taught them how to look closely at the world around them and to observe and record their new discoveries and their own personal felt responses to these. From there he developed a dynamic and vital programme that was anchored in the children's surroundings and real lives. Through environmental study the children learned the basis of scientific method, and brought these skills to bear on studies that spanned all subjects. (Extract from obituary, by Dr Margaret MacDonald.)

Elwyn is best known for his book, *In the Early World*, first published in 1964 [NZCER] with subsequent reprints.

In the preface to *Response to Vision 6*, 1994, **Derek Olphert** stated:

As human beings, and especially when young, we are intensely curious about ourselves, the world around us, and the relationship between these two. We use our senses to explore the world, and have at hand a variety of ways in which to clarify this experience into learning, and exchange our findings. We talk a lot, write a little, size things up with mathematics, sing, move and if lucky, make images of what we see, feel, or imagine.

More than half our learning will grow from visual response, which, within formal education, may be seen as *visual learning* which permeates most subjects, particularly Art Education.

It makes sense to reflect on these three statements. They are all about education and Art as part of it, but are by writers in totally different situations.

The first set out to be an artist resulting in a BA in Art and Education, which was then progressively extended to a doctorate. He was eventually appointed Professor of Art and Education at the Stanford Graduate School of Education and was a champion for the importance of Art in the overall learning of young students.

The second was a science graduate marooned in a remote Area School, where he largely intuitively developed a unique teaching approach. He subsequently returned to Auckland and at retirement was an Intermediate School Principal with a special interest in Gifted Children.

I was a Fine Arts graduate/trained Secondary teacher (with subsequent overseas study in Theatre design) teaching in the privileged position of a Teachers' College where there was time, 28 years, to observe teaching at a range of levels across all disciplines and so Art in a broad educational context. The resultant conclusion was *that Art Education should be seen more as Visual Education*.

What these authors share is the conviction that Art Education is an essential element in student Learning.

It also makes sense to consider the **New Zealand Syllabus for Art and Craft in the Primary School, 1961**, that set out some aims giving direction to teaching for many years:

To help people to give visual form to the expression of their ideas and feelings.

To help develop and sustain the skills and techniques of visual perception.

To help encourage versatile use of a wide range of art forms by developing confidence and skill in the handling of techniques and media.

To help sustain and encourage visual imagination and inventiveness by accepting personal responses as points of growth, rather than as measures of success or failure.

To help promote recognition and understanding of the diversity of visual forms employed by past and present cultures.

Although written several decades ago, this statement remains relevant today and the aims are all *student-centred*.

Study of the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education [now defunct] publication, **ART IN SCHOOLS The New Zealand Experience** 1978 (320 pages) reveals a mature provision of Art Education.

Its Introduction (abridged) states:

This book sets out to show that art is a useful part of education and that art can join with other subjects, or stand on its own ... If in reading this book teachers are encouraged to explore ways of helping people discover themselves and their world through the agency of art, it will have been successful. – Writers: Ray Thorburn, Education Officer for Art Curriculum Development, and Peter Smith, Inspector of Secondary Schools.

This publication shows the *Art Syllabus* of the day in action, mainly as it applied to Primary and Intermediate schools across the Country.

At an international level, it reveals New Zealand Art Education as a model of outstanding practice.

Sadly, this is no longer the case.

These were the days when *teachers had a reasonable understanding of Art Education as their Pre-service courses provided ample time working with classroom ideas and materials and trialling them with children at different levels.* (The same could be said for Music and the other Arts.) Further, teachers were supported by an Art Advisory Service which at its peak had over 90 staff based across New Zealand. This Service was terminated several years ago.

What the above book shows are examples of student outcomes and achievement using the long-standing objectives of Art Teaching in New Zealand.

It serves as a base for comparison with the current National Curriculum.

We start with students, The Clients ...

THE CLIENTS – Visual Learning

Educational planners are often over-absorbed in what they believe students should learn, *subject-focussed*; disregarding an understanding of the students themselves, their needs and how teachers might guide them to meet these needs, *student-focussed*. So, as Art Educators, from time to time we should reflect on our core responsibilities to *the clients*.

We are encouraging them to use their visualising ability to respond to their world – they learn through image-making, not necessarily Art.

This happens because our brains record aspects of what we see, input. Subsequently, we use this memory to think about something that needs a decision on which we may react. We may also share this reaction/outcome with the others, output. The form of communication can be visual. Less often, we make images of a created world of our imagination. **This gift of processing imagery in different ways is the outcome of brain function**, which is essential understanding for teachers, but beyond the purpose of this Talk.

People might argue that other animals can make images and this is true. Give an elephant or monkey some mark-making tool and they will make marks. The difference is that these marks are meaningless to them and don't represent anything that has meaning to other animals – they are gestural. Compare these with an infant's early scribble. At some point the child will comprehend that aspects of the scribble can represent something – *the marks have meaning!*

Fast track to around Intermediate school and the amount of visual information stored in a student's brain is enormous and the ability to use this information is advanced. If encouraged, the visual output can be significant *and range across subjects*.

Although educationists don't all agree, some children will find that their 'Preferred Learning mode' is visual. In other words, making sense of their world is more easily understood through pictorial means rather than verbal or mathematical or ... Again, the development of this statement is beyond the purpose of this Talk.

Visual Learning

This is described as – *the ability to perceive, think, organise, and produce visually*.

When considering this *Visual Learning*, there are initially *two interrelated pathways* of growth:

- 1. the development of cognitive ability** leading to Formal Operational at adolescence, and
- 2. student ability to communicate using imagery** that goes through stages of development reflecting this cognitive advance – all stages are global.

This is understood by Primary teachers, but other educators need to understand *that students are not adults in the way they see and respond to their world*. Just as motor control (seen in sporting activity) takes time to develop in young children, so too their oral language, numeracy skills, and ability to understand increasingly complex problems and concepts. The following few pages are a visual and verbal reminder of some of this learning progression.

DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE ABILITY AND ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE USING IMAGERY

EARLY CHILDHOOD

The world is a blur of exciting sensory impressions. Nothing much relates, *self* is all important. Sensory input is vast, motor control limited. Ability to order objects in series is undeveloped. With image-making, a major problem is controlling the means of making marks/images/forms; these tend to be poorly formed, rather geometric, linear and unrelated. The concept that the marks produced can represent something experienced or recalled gains ground. Exploration is paramount.

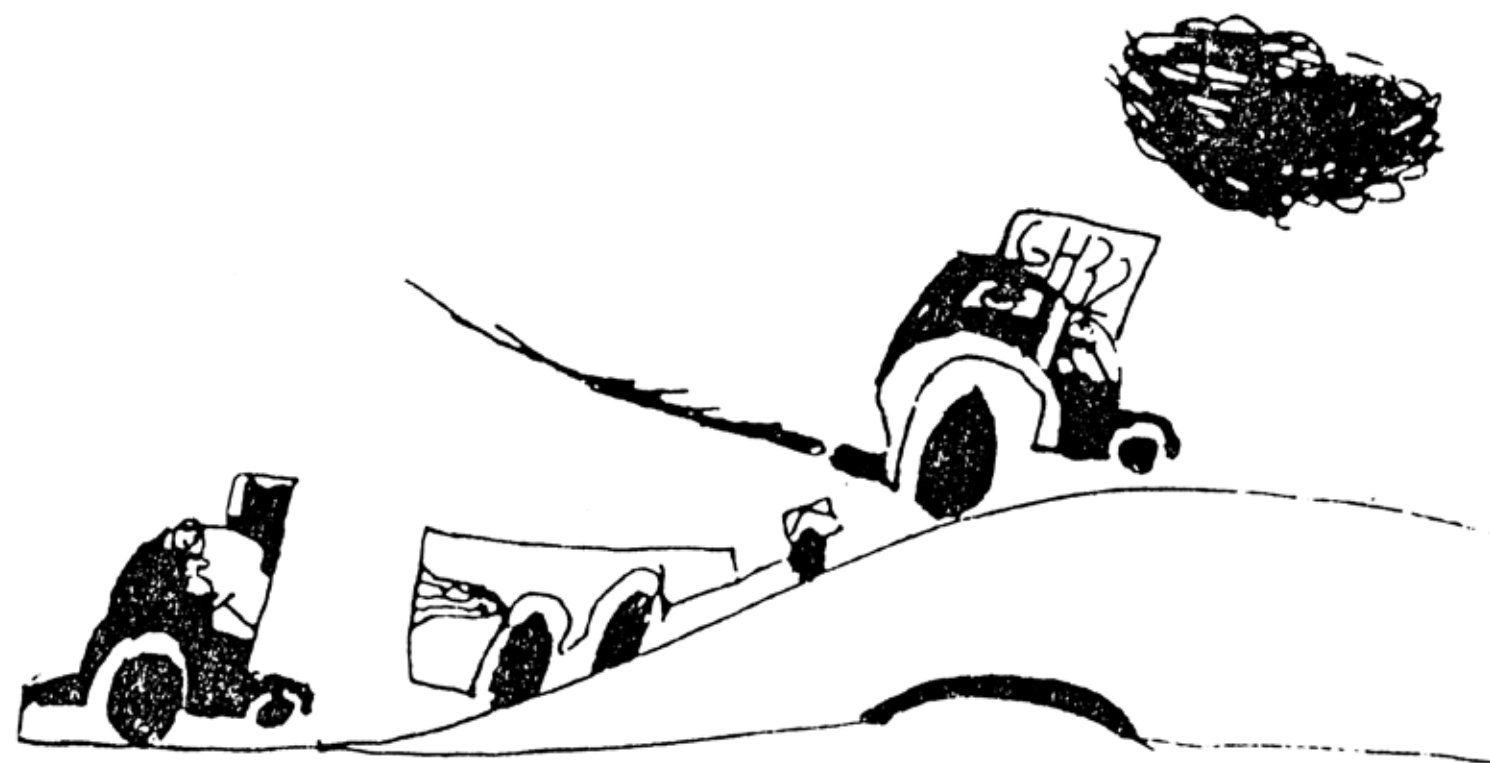
JUNIOR PRIMARY

The environment begins to resolve, with some aspects perceived as having relationships. Self-focus widens. Image-making proceeds to the point where shapes become sufficiently defined and consistently used to qualify for the term, symbol. Although these symbols invariably represent the individual and aspects of his/her immediate environment, they can also represent a separate reality of the individual's imagination. Human form is usually full frontal. This invented imagery is a way the young student interprets and begins to understand the world through experience. It should be noted that in order to represent such experience as a 2D image, the 3D experience comes first. (So, the use of spiral shapes by different cultures is not significant until first seen in plant form or shells.) The perceived 'Visual Ingredients' of tone, colour ... are not necessarily shown accurately in the students imagery. There can be a similar difference in showing relative size, where importance governs size. Experimentation may result in learning, such as by mixing yellow and blue paint, a third colour called green results. Globally, the younger student image-making is largely culture and gender free.

The drawings on this and the following two pages clearly show the stages of development from Junior Primary School to Senior Secondary, then tertiary.

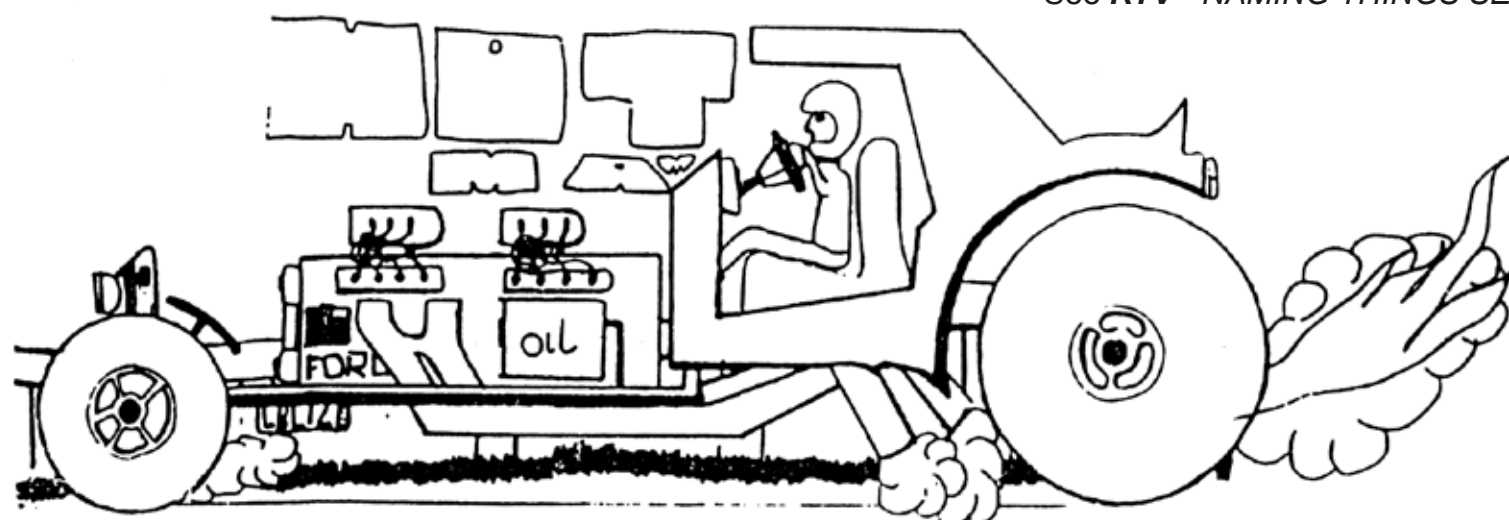
We see the evolution of symbolic style, then the shift to more representational style using three-quarter view, finally, addition of tone gradations and fine, accurate detail to a technically advanced level.

Student: *John Olphert*
(Tertiary study/employment: graphic design, subsequently advanced vinyl signage installation; personal interest, classic cars – no surprise).



MIDDLE PRIMARY

The relationship of self to others and aspects of the environment are largely resolved. Students begin to think from more than one point of view, and about more than one part of a problem concurrently. They still need direct experience of their environment as a basis for thinking and visual output. With art-related activities, we find the supreme symbol maker who revels in refining images and adding new symbols to their repertoire. While the input is what is seen, the visual output can be an interpretation involving imagination. Different 2D materials and processes are enthusiastically received and 3D activities still essential to develop form and space concepts. In use of colour, this is explored further, often used for emotional effect. While tonal variations are used, gradations of tone and colour, and cast shadows are excluded from this symbolic world. With 2D images, size becomes relative, smaller can mean further away, and a sky now fills an upper space. Several time contexts can appear in a composition. Side views of objects can be alternatives to frontal views. Eventually, the superimposition of images can be linked to rudimentary perspective/space illusion as cast shadow. A feeling for decorative pattern may appear. Design-related problem-solving may be relevant. Intuition is beginning to give way to logic. By the end of Primary, some students may be sensing that symbolic imagery is insufficient to communicate visually.



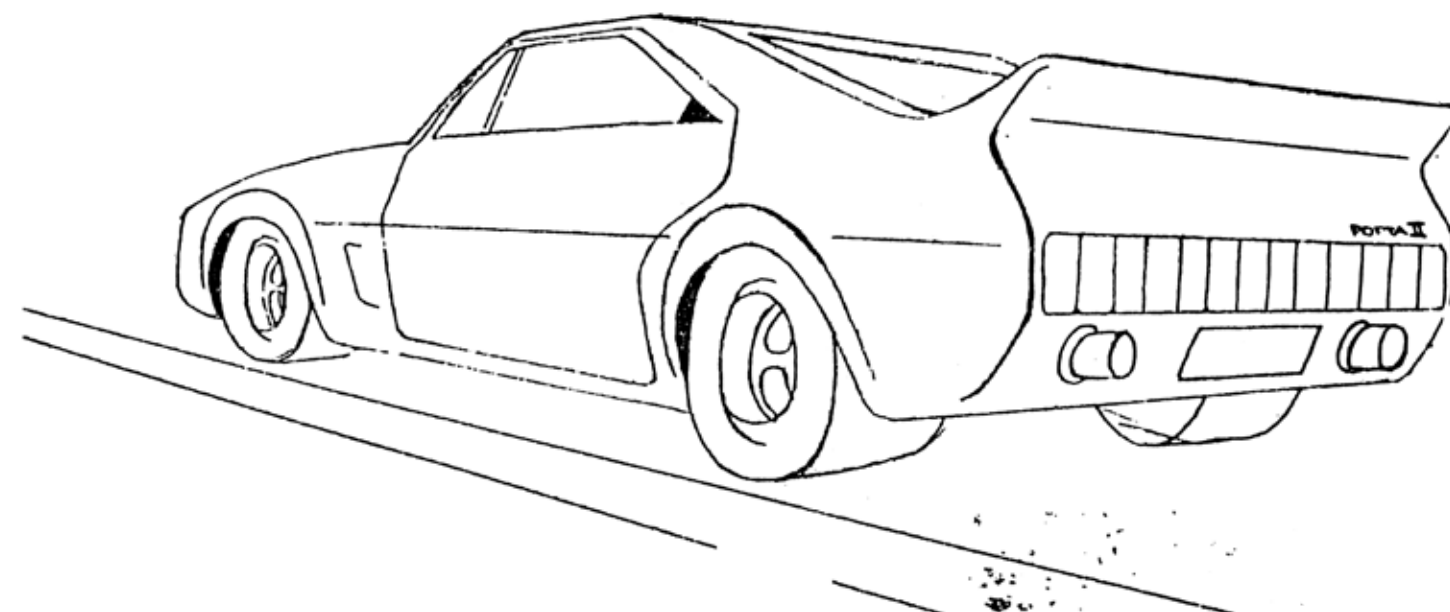
INTERMEDIATE

The student is no longer bound by direct experience as basis for response. A shift towards propositional thinking can emerge. May make statements contrary to apparent reality. However, there is a realisation of universal similarities and differences in the visual world. For the first time students can begin to isolate and understand the "Elements" of Art – in this Talk, **'Visual Ingredients': Effects, Organisation, and Influences***. These can be perceived and used in their own image-making, and begin to be recognised in the work of other people. This indicates that the study of these Elements/Visual Ingredients at an earlier age is pointless. Art work reflects less of the imaginative child world, and more of adult reality. The confidence of the 'symbol' stage gives way to the uncertainty of a desire for naturalism. The play of light is both perceived and shown in art work by using gradations and shadows. Design-related activities can now be appropriate. Many of the above factors can have cultural meaning and relevance to some students. Gender preference may be a factor influencing topics for art work.

* In **Response to Vision**, the traditional Art terms of 'Art Elements' and 'Principles' are replaced by **'Visual Ingredients'** that have the related terms: *Effects* (names that describe particular visual aspects of Seeing); *Organisation* (names that describe how parts of Seeing ... are arranged); and *Influences* (names of things that cause change in the way Visual Ingredients appear). These names apply to visual input, processing, and output. See **RTV • NAMING THINGS SEEN**.

HIGH SCHOOL

With Formal Operational thinking, students are no longer tied to their perceptions and direct sensory experience. They can manipulate ideas mentally and think creatively and imagine outcomes. A systematic approach replaces earlier trial and error. Separating the variables within a problem becomes less difficult. With advancing thinking ability, students can hypothesise that having mixed yellow and blue paint, resulting in green, that, without mixing, it would be reasonable to assume that the addition of red to blue might produce purple; and by adding more red and/or white, variations can be generated. In English, notable advances can be observed when working with *metaphoric* language – a ship *ploughs* the sea, snow *blankets* the ground ... this advance in mental processing also applies to image-making. While younger students *describe* an event possibly using imagery, the older student can not only describe but can also *explain* it: *describe* = relate parts to each other; *explain* = relate parts and whole to other phenomena. In describing what is and might be, the adolescent can systematically explore all possible combinations or relationships and assess these, can predict, can vary any single factor, can determine the impact of this on other factors, can perceive a problem and seek and find solutions – in other words can *begin* to fully engage in the process of **design**, which should be part of all senior Secondary school Art programmes.



The Older Student

In Art making, these adolescents have a degree of skill in pictorial perspective, three-quarter views, relative scale, tone variation and shadows.

They have a fascination with difference.

Specialisation may occur with students narrowing their focus in terms of subject matter/issue and material/process.

Design-related activity (visual problem-solving) becomes design proper.

Such fields as *graphic design, architecture, and fashion* ... should be explored – they may appeal as vocations at a tertiary level.

In contrast with earlier Art making, older students can become absorbed in particular cultural difference with which they identify.

The ability to evaluate their own work is inherent in all the visual production.

They also need to make critical commentary on the work of others, and learn from them.

Besides working individually, students should learn to operate cooperatively as a team.

The ability to set worthwhile personal goals should be encouraged so they become increasingly self-reliant in visual production.

By the end of their Secondary school experience students should have developed an ability to perceive, think, and where appropriate, respond visually by exploring a range of ideas through suitable media and ways of working across the whole Curriculum. This is more than (Fine) Art, it is Visual Learning enriching other subjects.

To be effective, Secondary teachers will need to experience and use the collaborative skills of Primary teachers. In this way, visual learning takes its place alongside verbal learning. This expanding role for Art should also embrace Technology, and require Secondary Art teachers to re-think their role in education – *if the learning mode is Visual, it's Art Education!*

Influences on Communicating Visually

There are overall factors concerned with how individual students respond to their world – *Influences*. These apply not only to how and what students see, but how they respond to what they see. These 'built-in' factors cause difference in how response is managed.

Examples of *Influences* are: Age, Mood/Emotion, and Cultural Difference. They are expanded in the ebook, *Response to Vision • NAMING THINGS SEEN*.

Cultural difference has particular influence on what students see as relevant subject matter, materials and processes, and stylistic visual representation in output. This is described in detail overpage.

Cultural Difference can affect *the development of cognition and ability to communicate using imagery* (first mentioned on page four). While having only slight relevance with younger students, it may become increasingly influential at adolescence.



For stages in *Human Development* look up, Piaget, and others.

Visual Communication is covered in detail in the ebook *Response to Vision • COMMUNICATING VISUALLY*.

For detail on the language used to describe visual things, see *Response to Vision • NAMING THINGS SEEN* – both may be found at:

www.responsetovision.com

Cultural Difference

When looking at their world students will see evidence of varying degrees of change. This includes human form. Globally, we not only look different, but our made environment displays considerable variation. These variations of form are most notable when people are grouped. For a variety of reasons people congregate together, one factor being a shared sense of community that is reflected as *culture*, which holds the group together.

Inevitably, these factors influence students' image-making, unconsciously reflecting culture. In adolescence this becomes conscious and more evident.

Further, researchers believe that over centuries, some cultures responded to food gathering in their particular environment (be it semi-arctic, temperate or tropical) and developed a more acute ability to observe fine detail within a broad mass of imagery, whereas other groups of people did not need this capacity. Suffice to say that today, some groups of people seem to perceive their world differently. Add to this that some ethnicities generally have problems with nearsightedness (and that this will increase generally with the huge rise in those viewing detail on the small screens of cellphones); then add the long-existing male problem of colour-blindness; and round these off with personality difference influencing attention duration, and *it can no longer be assumed that what the human brain receives as visual perception is the same for all.*

This raises fundamental issues of how we see and respond to our world that cannot be overlooked. *The view's the same, but we see and show it differently!*

So we now have a **third factor** to add to earlier, page four, considerations of stages of *Cognitive development*, and *Visual output – Cultural Difference*. This works as a 'perceptual filter'.

3. Cultural Difference

A definition of *Culture* (and *Society*) can be:

Culture is the totality of what an individual learns or could learn that is valued by society or a group (or race) within society. This includes behaviour, beliefs, rules ... and, of course, image-making.

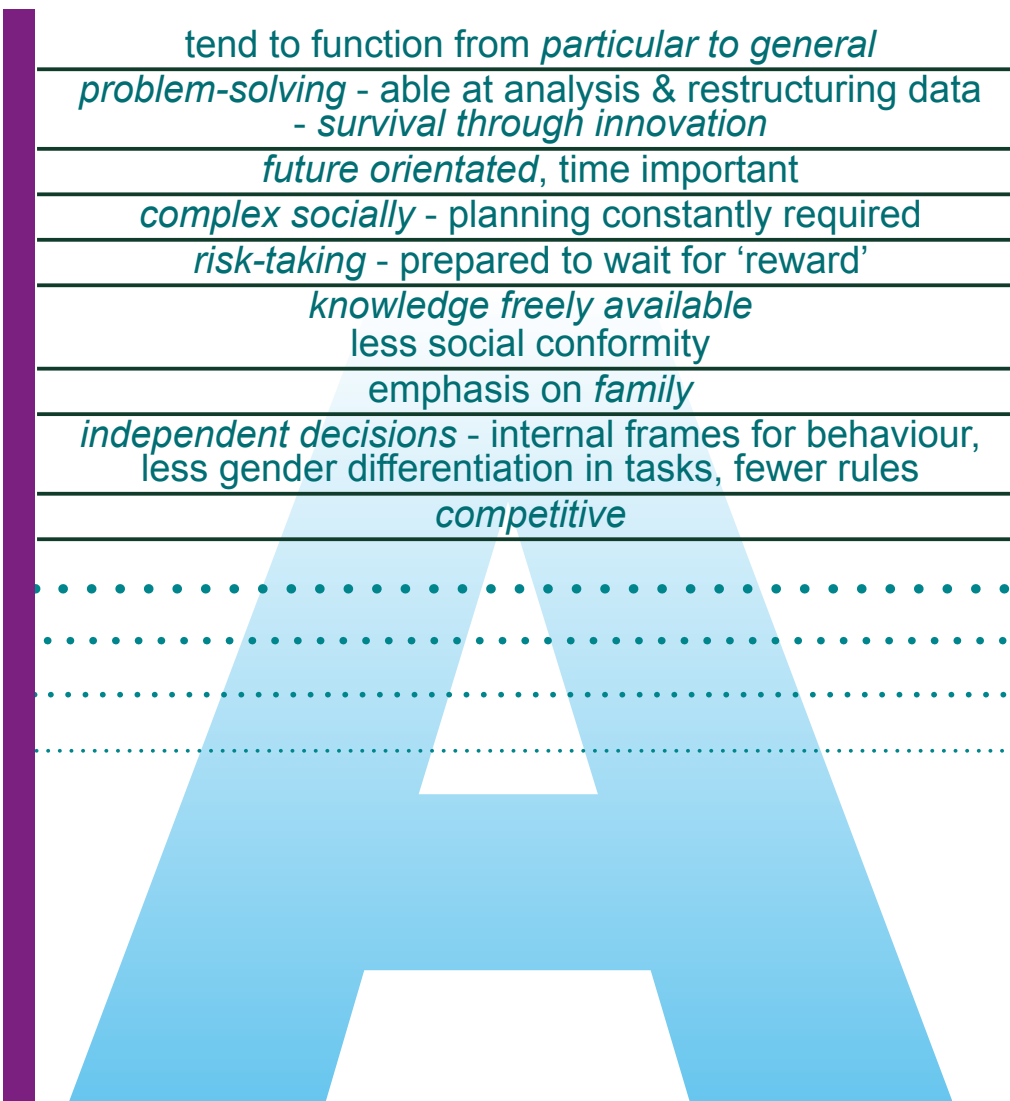
Society refers to the *people* involved, while *culture* is concerned with the *output/knowledge base, of the people* past and present. In visual output it can become meaningful from early adolescence.

For students entering a culturally mixed democratic *society*, there are common learning expectations that need to be recognised/acquired/taught *free of cultural influence*, so all members can function as part of a coherent, mutually supportive whole. (A note of restraint. In trying to address widely different cultural response, the cultural significance of all the outcomes may be dangerously diluted.)

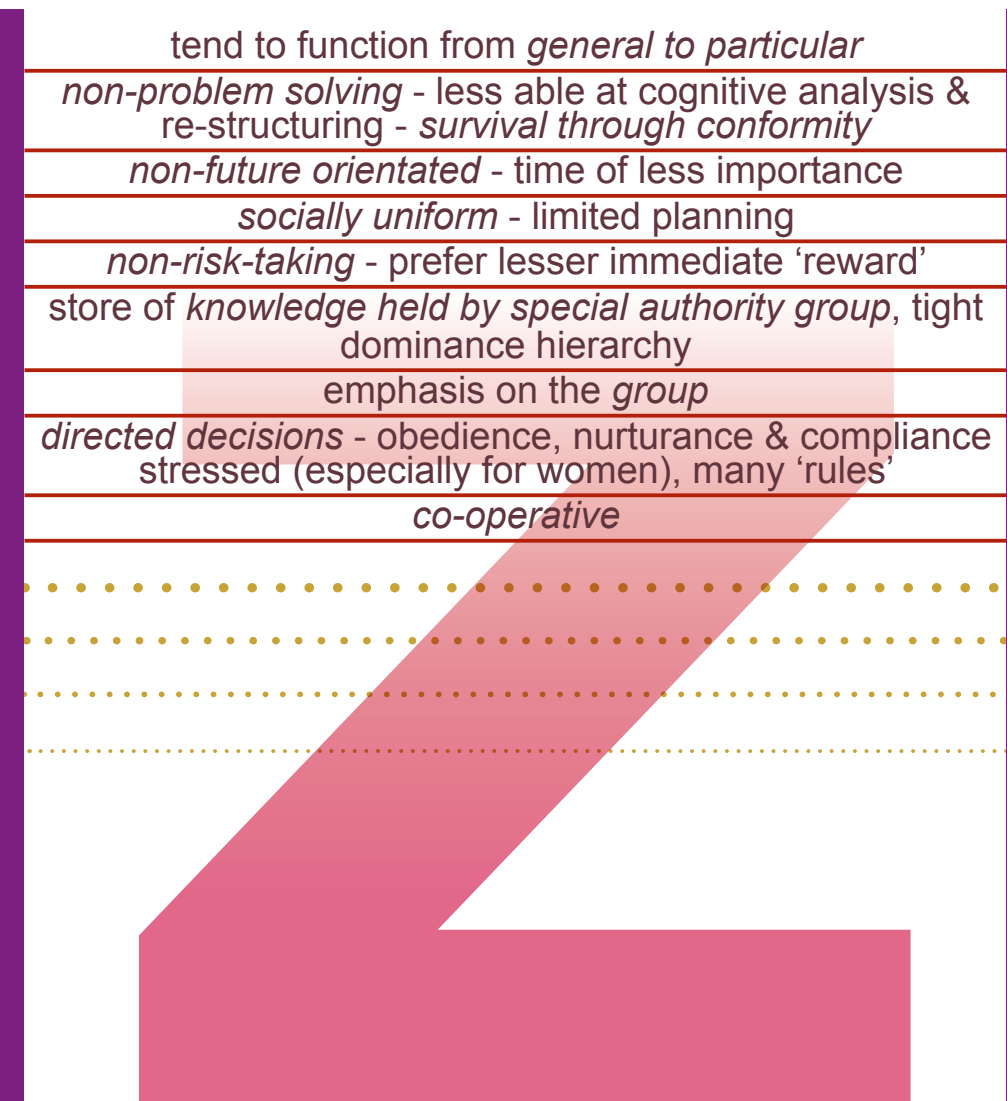
No matter what the influence of cultural factors might be, *all people need skills in visual language – need to be Visually Literate*, which, like mathematics, has to be taught. The significance of cultural difference, *globally*, is shown in the diagram below:

Consider the following cultural/social *tendencies* and decide with which 'Filter' you would usually identify:

FILTER 'A'



Art Education has clear learning objectives that can be supported by cultural difference – not the other way around. *Art Education is not Social Studies.*



FILTER 'Z'

For background reading on cultural variation in visual perception, see: Witkin H. – *Field Independence and Field Dependence*. Also, *Differentiation*.

Diagram source: **Response to Vision 6, Your Guide to Visual Learning** – Derek Olphert 1994 (self-published)

THE CURRENT NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT

It is interesting to compare the aims and objectives imbedded in the opening quotations of page 3, with an extract from the current **National Curriculum Statement** below, showing Level 4 (of 8), which follows an overarching statement.

With the exception of one line of text, Level 4 is the same as Level 3, which means it actually applies to students at Levels 3/4 (from around Years 5 to 9, or nine-year-olds to 13, or upper Primary to lower Secondary).

OVERVIEW (heavily abridged)

Values: Innovation/curiosity ...

Key Competencies: Symbols ...

Learning Areas: 8 including **The Arts**

Principles: Future focus ...

The Arts have their own distinct languages/... verbal and nonverbal conventions ...

In Visual Arts education ... development of visual literacy and aesthetic awareness ... range of practices across Drawing ... Design ... may include... theories of the arts, architecture and design ...

Below is a sample from the **Visual Arts Statement** – each Level has four sub-heading Strands shown in bold. These have to be consistently addressed across all The Arts and so are restrained by objectives that do not necessarily suit a particular *Art*.

Students will:

Level 4 [This relates to students around Y8- Y9 Intermediate/Secondary School; comments follow the bullets]

Understanding the Arts in Context

Investigate the purpose of objects and images from past and present cultures and identify the contexts in which they were made, viewed, and valued.

- This raises issues of comprehension, such as with the term ‘valued’ – for a start, this could filter out a significant range of ‘objects’; similarly, ‘cultures’, see preceding page, so restricts the selection for ‘investigation’. The same applies to ‘images’, begging the question – which ‘past and present cultures’ had ‘images’ that can be ‘investigated’ and then have ‘contexts’ in which they can be identified covering manufacture, viewing and valuing? Further, to cope with a range of cultures, where are the necessary teaching resources?

Developing Practical Knowledge

Explore and use art-making conventions, applying knowledge of elements and selected principles through the use of materials and processes.

- What is actually meant becomes more clear with ‘... applying knowledge of *elements* and selected *principles*’. These apply to line/shape/colour/form; contrast/balance ...) created by ‘artists’ in the 2D or 3D ‘objects and images’ they create.

We are back to conventional adult *artists* and the study of their output, ‘*art works*’ – a European concept of Art; and largely ignoring student cognitive development, see earlier. Attention is directed to art output, rather than input.

Developing Ideas

Develop and revisit visual ideas, in response to a variety of motivations, observation, and imagination, supported by the study of artists’ works.

- ‘... supported by the study of artists’ works’ presents problems. Some of the ‘cultures’ considered earlier do not have ‘artists’. Assuming they do exist elsewhere, then on what basis are they worthy of student study, and who decides?

The ‘study of artists’ works is highly suspect. Is it intended that students somehow relate their output to that of adult ‘artists’ (no mention of ‘designers’); are they encouraged to emulate the mature style of the ‘artist’? The whole concept of ‘meaning’ (‘... in *their* own and others work’) is debatable. At Intermediate school, what student can understand that their art work may have ‘meaning’? Is *their* written and musical expression similarly supposed to have ‘meaning’?

Indeed, *what is overlooked is that much adult art has no apparent meaning, it exudes a sense of mystery where the viewer is free to interpret the imagery in individual ways. In these circumstances, art, by its nature, cannot be codified!*

Communicating and Interpreting

Explore and describe ways in which meanings can be communicated and interpreted in their own and others’ work.

- The concept level of the above extract gives no credence to student mental maturity. In writing, many stories are metaphorical and have meaning apparent to the average adult, but meaningless to younger students. Visual imagery is similar. The problem word remains ‘meanings’. There are two separate embedded tasks, one, the exploration of ways that ‘meanings ... can be *communicated*’, and the other, ... ‘*interpreted*’ – what of student concept development with age?

Structurally, the Curriculum Statement is not helped by the overlay of Levels on Years both using numerals, for example **Intermediate Schools** – Years 7 & 8, overlaid by Levels 3 & 4 (Levels C & D would be better).

Sadly, however these Years and Levels are interpreted by teachers, *for many students Year 8 (Intermediate school) Levels 3 and 4, will be their last experience of any sort of art education.*

At **Secondary school** the Strands and Levels are extended. In Years 9 and 10, students may select any *two* from the four Arts. The content is Level 4 to 5.

In Year 11, *one* Art may be chosen, with content covering Level 6.

One Art may be taken through in Years 12 and 13. However, at this point there is an emphasis on *verbal* commentary on what is essentially a *visual* action. *This emphasis is inappropriate for students at a Secondary School level, most of whom will not pursue Art further.*

This demonstrates unreasonable pressure from the Tertiary sector.

- **Both Levels 7 and 8 should be withdrawn, and Levels 3 and 4 combined.**

Although conceived as a well-intended attempt to interrelate all types of learning for all types of student in all types of school, the *Curriculum Statement* has become a rigid structure where change will become increasingly difficult. By its nature, it is *subject-focussed* rather than *student-focussed* which should be of particular concern across Primary and Intermediate schools.

Further, the *Curriculum* over-emphasises end-of-course assessment at the expense of other types of learning where experience of the *learning process* is the objective, not the end product, such as aspects of the Visual Arts – see Eisner, page 3.

Still further, in Art Levels, there is an *increased use of verbal activity as assessment, rather than visual* which is what Art is about!

Within the Art prescription there is a significant flaw. Across the Levels the *focus is increasingly on 'artists' and their production of 'art works'*. This fails to recognise that with a population of around five million, *we need very few artists*. Indeed, it is not difficult to argue that the need for Art Therapists is far greater.

Having said that, there is a *major need to widen the concept of Art Education to include the preparation for vocations where visual learning is an integral part*. For example, try Design. For self-centred adolescents, why not teach Fashion?

CURRICULUM RELATED MATTERS

Relevance and 'Future focus'?

At senior Secondary school, Years 11, 12, and 13 – Levels 7-8 there are course overlays that are independent of the Curriculum Statement for these Years. In commenting so far, these overlays: University Entrance, Cambridge, and NCEA, have been ignored.

The higher Levels of Secondary Art need careful consideration in terms of student numbers – those wanting no more than practical learning in a visual field, compared with those wanting to advance at a Tertiary level where their intention can be varied. If they wish to use Art as a *vocation*, then very careful consideration must be given by both providers and students to the reality of paid work. For example, in Photography (which is one of the 'range of practices' within the Visual Arts), ten years ago, the estimated *annual* requirement in *professional* photography was ten – add four more across the decade then subtract two (recognising many people now do their own photography, digitally), the resulting number is just twelve nationally. On the other hand, *the number of students at both Secondary and Tertiary levels needing a broad experience in visual perception, how to think visually, and possibly produce a visual or visually influenced outcome involving problem-solving, is huge.*

This suggests including Design or Design-related content in the *Curriculum*, but that is not seen as worthy of sharing the status of 'Fine Art'. Similarly ignored is anything visual within Architecture, Engineering, Product Design, Graphic Design, Web Design, Digital Media, Fashion, Interior Design, and Landscape Design ...; although 'theories of the arts, architecture and design ...', whatever that means, may be considered. Also ignored is any worthwhile recognition of the possibilities of *computer-generated imagery* and its use across these fields. For that matter, so is the design and *use of visual symbols, diagrams, maps and models for general visual communication* across

subjects such as Science, English, Social Studies, or Technology ...

All these under-valued aspects of image-making involve active visual perception, the ability to think visually, and a capacity to translate such thought into a variety of forms that are or should be 'valued' and shared as part of understanding our constructed human environment – visually rich communication. This deficiency is a reprehensible failure of Curriculum planning with intended 'future focus'.

More positively, the overview of The Arts makes worthwhile statements such as, 'In visual arts education, students develop *visual literacy* and *aesthetic awareness* ...' In subsequent detail it would be expected that these terms would be expanded – surprisingly, they aren't!

- *The Curriculum's current narrow focus supports a minority involved with Fine Art. A shift of emphasis could offer the wider possibilities of Visual Learning to the majority of students across a range of subjects. Understandably, with a long tradition separating and elevating Fine Art from the rest, the inclination is to maintain the known – the validity of this tradition needs close interrogation.*

Historically, West European countries developed stratified systems where Kings/Queens were, as God's representatives on Earth, at the top of the heap. They were supported by a relatively small, wealthy group of citizens – under these was another group who had aspirations of wealth and entry to the upper group. These held power. That left another group who were reasonably well off but had no upward aspirations. That left the majority, who had no wealth and so any aspirations were fantasies – their only succour was the belief that if they were good, the after-life would be better!

On this basis it is not difficult to trace the beginnings of display going beyond the realm of necessity – buildings were decorated, interior walls similarly ... culminating in Victorian times where the more cluttered, the greater the ostentation and appeal. This was amplified by traders returning with exotic 'stuff' to be admired. About the same time, the people who produced what was previously artisan crafted work, became elevated to a new breed, the 'artist'.

As a solution to the oversupply of desired product, two new types of 'housing' were devised, one where the walls served as support for paintings, the other was more spatial – these were 'art galleries' and 'museums'. Now the upper layer of society could admire visual statements that were too big or too expensive to house domestically. This stuff sprouted appendages, we had institutions to train artists under the exclusive name of Schools of Fine Arts. As these produced more practitioners than required, they assumed the role of art teachers, the perpetuators of Fine Arts. Currently, in New Zealand they further institutionalised their beliefs with a National Curriculum which, across its Levels, clearly maintains the notion of Fine Art. It even uses the special Art language of 'Elements' and 'Principles', completely ignoring the fact that natural objects display these in abundance and can certainly be enjoyed by everybody without having to pay to ponder at an Art Gallery.

- **The above pages question the current National Curriculum Statement. Overall, there is excessive emphasis on "knowing about Art" at the expense of "Making Art" – an unwarranted shift from visual to verbal learning.**

Further, "Fine Art" has become the exclusive focus within a range of possible visual outcomes. This statement is developed overpage.

NEED FOR CHANGE – LEARNING, VISUALLY

... we're all in the Communication business

To meet the learning needs of the majority of students, especially at a Secondary school level, calls for an appreciation of the significant amount of learning that is *visual*. This leads to *Visual Literacy* which applies across many subjects and of course to the Visual Arts.

Students do not naturally learn through the study of *subjects*. Such bites of desired learning along with timetables are little more than structures for the convenience of teachers. A good deal of learning could be handled by students informally in a self-directed way. The reality is that by the time students leave school, they will need to be self-directed so the sooner they learn to cope the better.

Again, focussing on the student rather than subject, educators should pay particular attention to how we all respond to external stimulation in its various forms, notably what is *seen* (refer page 3 *Introduction*). This provides clues to how we can begin to plan appropriate learning. Also, refer back to 'Clients' (page 4).

Planning actions that result in Visual Literacy can only proceed on a knowledge of how learning takes place. In turn, this has to fall back on an *understanding of how the human brain works*. Like any other animal, we are set up for survival, but an important factor in this is that we can store information, especially what we see and from this memory share aspects with other people – we *communicate*. Whether the right or left or both brain hemispheres are involved is immaterial. What is important is understanding the way this is done using distinct '*modes*'. We use speech and its symbol systems, writing; we use the related mode of sound, which results in music which has its own set of symbols, notation; we have the number systems of mathematics; we have body movement as a kinesthetic mode, dance; and we have imagery in all its visual complexities; ... or we can mix them all up as drama. *This Talk is an example of communication* growing from personal experience, enriched by other people's learning; thinking about its overall value; and then shaping an outcome using a mixture of *words*, (good for describing), along with associated *images*, photographs, paintings, diagrams, plans, maps ... (good for showing) – it is an evolving skill.

Herein lies the problem for teachers, how to guide students in developing an on-going understanding of their world and the communication processes involved. What is clear is that all the above *modes* of seeing/thinking/responding are needed if everybody is to effectively communicate. *So as 'Art Educators', we are all in the communication business ... however, our role could be much wider than currently demonstrated.*

Ideally, Visual Literacy embraces communication both within and across subjects!

The diagram at right is Visual Communication. The sequence begins with *visual Input* (perception); aspects can then be selected and manipulated, *Processing*; and move to *Output*, which can be in a range of *modes* including visual. There is usually reverberation between the three phases. This is a description of Communication at its most basic! What was a bowl of squash, leads to a creative visual interpretation. *Whether this communication is also Art is a separate, contentious matter.*

VISUAL COMMUNICATION – AN INPUT TO OUTPUT PROCESS

Learning takes place at all phases of Input to Output. With young students the three phases are merged, but about Intermediate school onwards become increasingly distinct.

11



INPUT – Seeing

Raw and Processed Raw data



PROCESSING – Shaping

Ideas are developed and combinations trialled



OUTPUT – Making

Processed ideas are formed and compared



NAMING VISUAL COMMUNICATION: RESPONSE TO VISION

This name can apply to all Communication where the visual mode dominates. What follows applies to Primary, Intermediate and Secondary Schools. It is relevant when planning for Science, English, Social Sciences ... and the Visual Arts.

Response to Vision evolves from VISUAL COMMUNICATION'S three main phases:

SEEING* – Input (requires emphasis)

With *sight* as input we are confronted with a mass of data, some is Raw Unprocessed (plants, landform, insects, animals ...), the rest is Raw Processed (buildings, vehicles ... and all manufactured objects). When involved with direct observation, wherever possible, other sensory input should be included.

It follows that there are many ways to Record and Name our findings; and that Reflection on what has been seen is important (an *Idea* might emerge).

SHAPING – Process/develop

What we do with this visual 'stuff' varies. It ranges from nothing, to complex output – further Reflection is involved. During this process we might discover something of interest – as with Seeing, *Ideas* may arise. This leads to activity that can broadly be called *Processing* where the idea is developed and trialled.

MAKING – Output

After processing, some *Form* has to be chosen as a vehicle for the processed idea. Much is on offer – "talk about it, write about it ... make images about it". When finished, this *output* can be shared and compared. As seen on the previous page, the overall process is *Communication!* Every student's output is simply that. *Any reference to gender, or culture ... or implied or real 'value' is largely irrelevant.* However, evidence of the producer's individuality (output style) can be relevant and may be affected by age.

As shown graphically at right, the name for the above actions is Response to Vision.

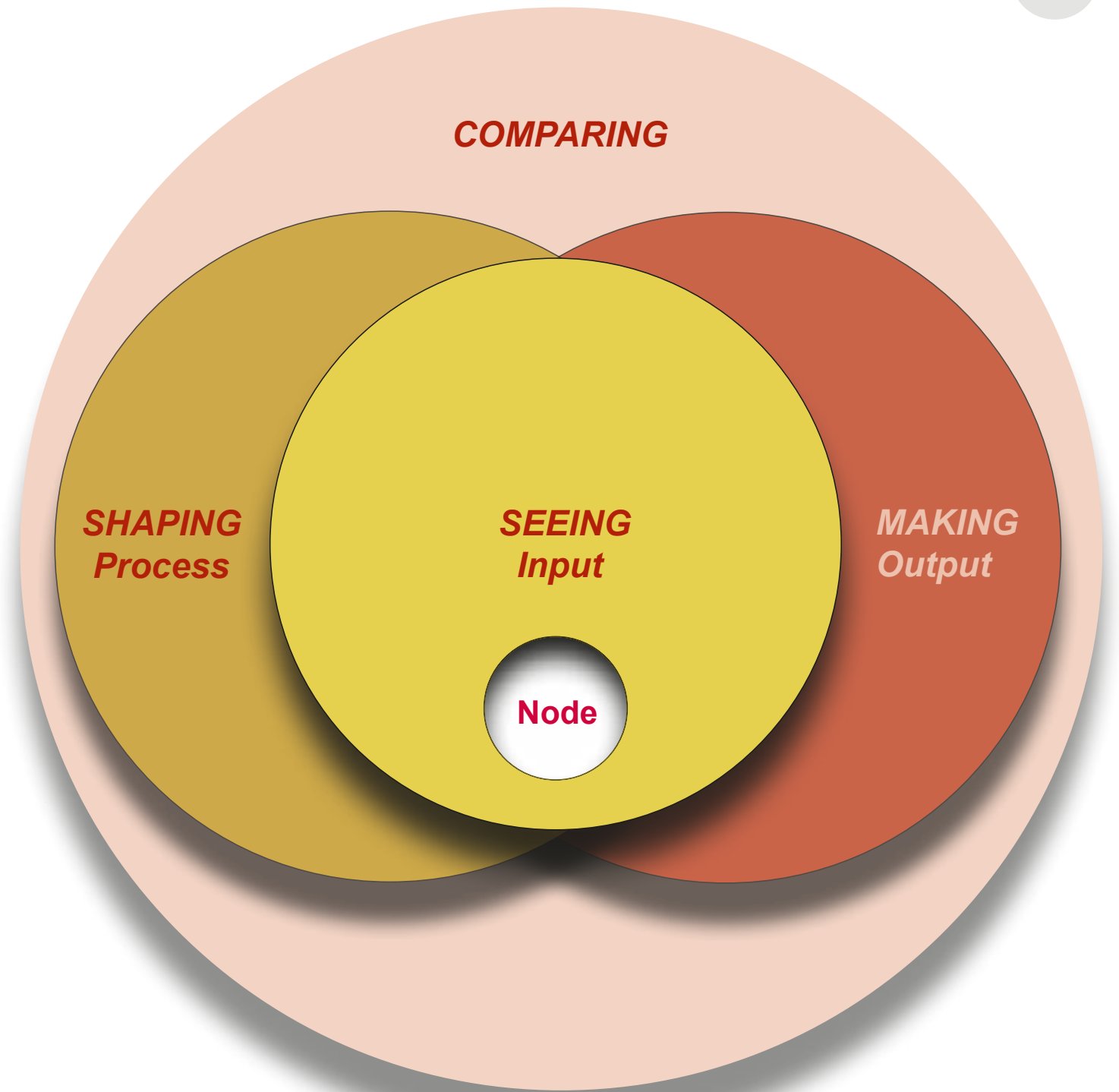
For students, the 'educational' naming gives way to the simple sub-titles: *Seeing, Shaping, and Making.* It is a process beginning with Input requiring mental Processing, before eventually resulting in Output. Each phase is shown at bottom right. *These divisions are less distinct in Primary school, but can become a more evident way of working at Intermediate level, and fully used at Secondary school.* Clearly the process relates to the Visual Arts, but, as stated in the heading, it also supports other areas of learning such as English and Science.

***Seeing** has its own divisions, the three most important being, *Looking, Recording,* and *Naming;* these can be greatly enhanced by the addition of a student's *Personal Recall (memory),* and *Other People's Recall.* This pile of data constitutes the base from which *ideas* can be generated – a *springboard for student communication using Shaping and Making,* each of which has its own divisions, resulting in imagery, sometimes mixed with other modes.

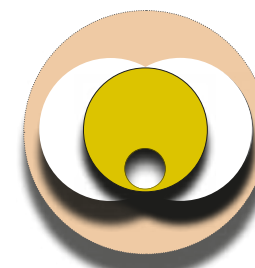
Once its parts are understood, the *diagram* at right is itself an example of visual communication using 'visual literacy'. For other *Definitions,* see page 29.

A good way to understand Response to Vision is to see it in action – pages 13-22.

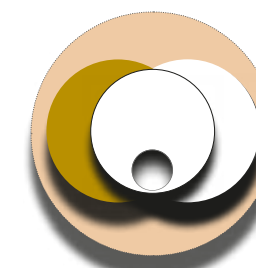
Response to Vision



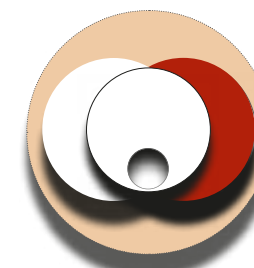
PHASES



SEEING



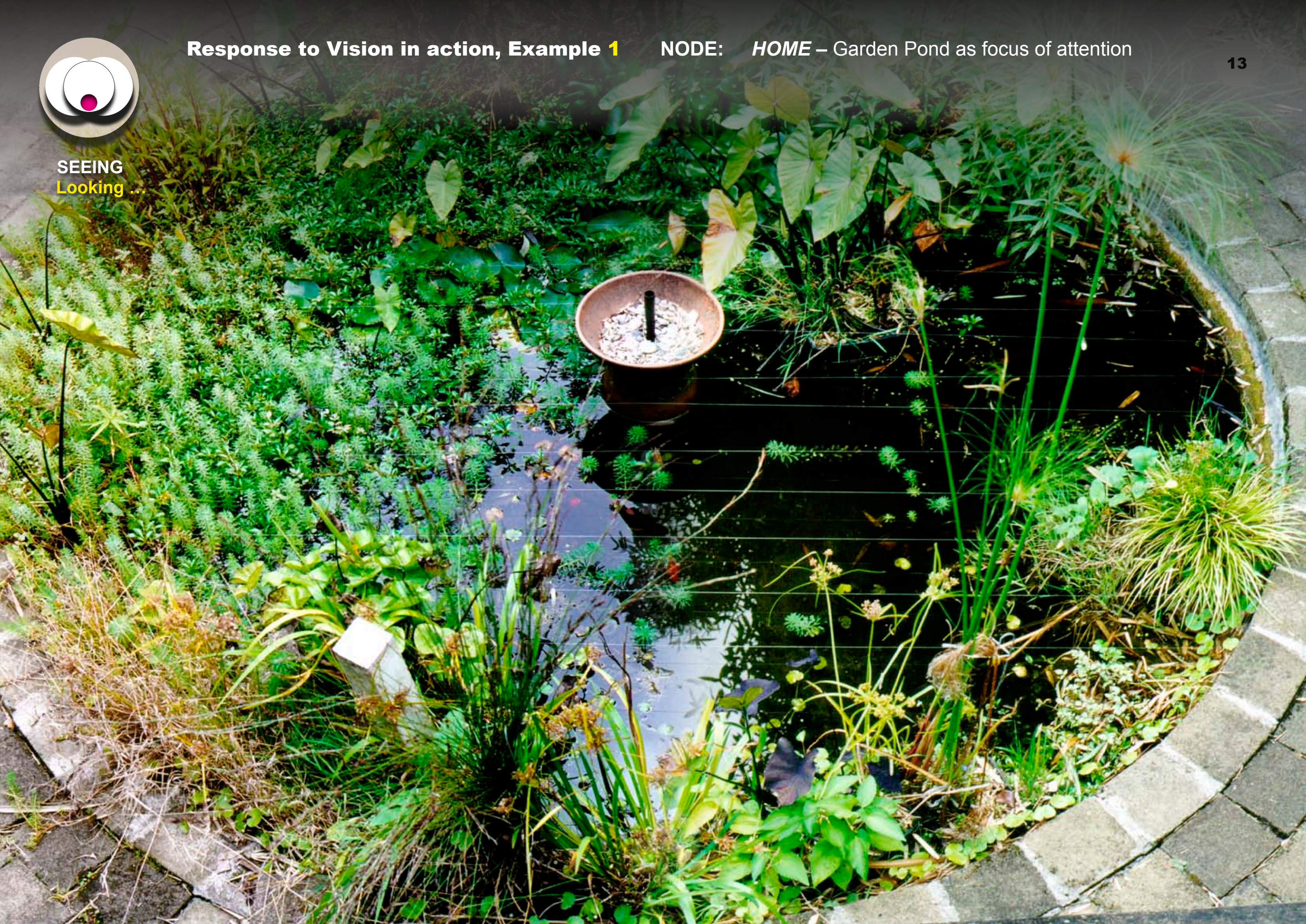
SHAPING

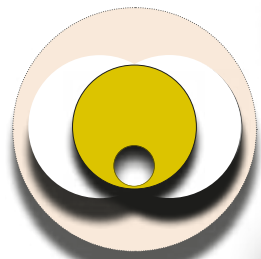


MAKING



SEEING
Looking ...





SEEING
Looking
Recording
Naming

Bracken Fern
Acanthus
Lichen
Grape ...



Scans
Photographs
Samples
Photocopy
Pressing ...





SHAPING

Selecting
Combining
Arranging
Planning ...

On *this page* an idea using an Iris flower is developed by trying different combinations of shape, colour and tone.

On the *next page*, 17, a different composition and style is explored.

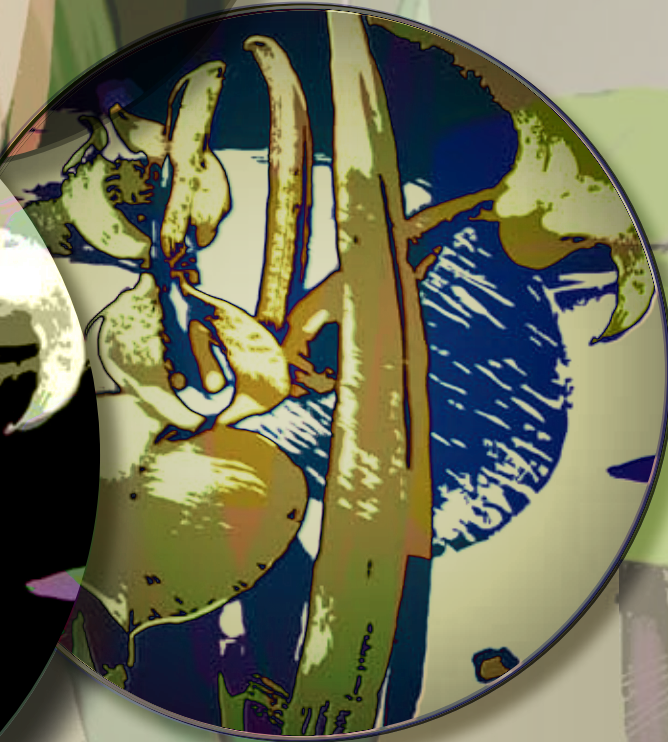
On the *following page*, 18, a final illustration results.

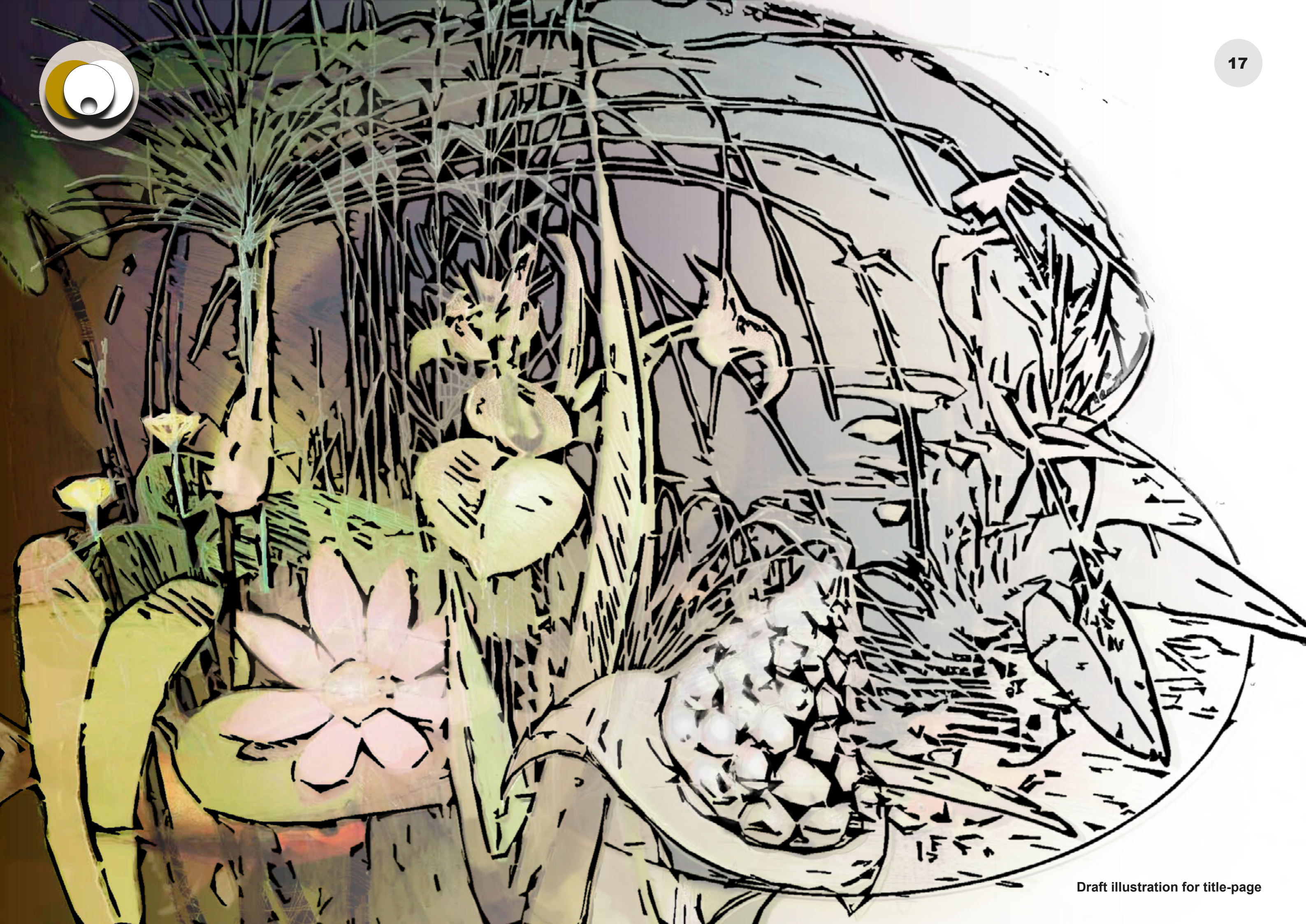
Page 19 shows another finished illustration with story *text* included.

(All the story art work for Shaping and Making was produced using *digital software*.)



Iris







MAKING



Finished illustration for title-page

Time went by and the water plants finished flowering, all except one of the water lilies that kept spreading its leaves and flowering every week or so.

The dragonflies no longer came to sun themselves.

There was a lot of change in the surrounding garden that was reflected in the Pond, but still, no sign of that last fish, *Vera*.

Then one day, a patch of bright orange could be seen between the water lily leaves. It was *Vera*. She hadn't been eaten, or frightened to death by the sea bird – just scared and very hungry!

Clearly, the bright light on the Pond surface was too much, so she dived back into the safe, murky depths.

From then on, in late afternoon, *Vera* showed up for food, then vanished.

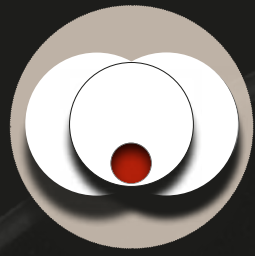
Both Aimee and Emma were delighted to hear that *Vera* was still alive.

“What we should do is get some more fish,” said Aimee.

“What we should do is wait to see if the water bird comes back,” said Emma.

There was no hurry, so they waited.





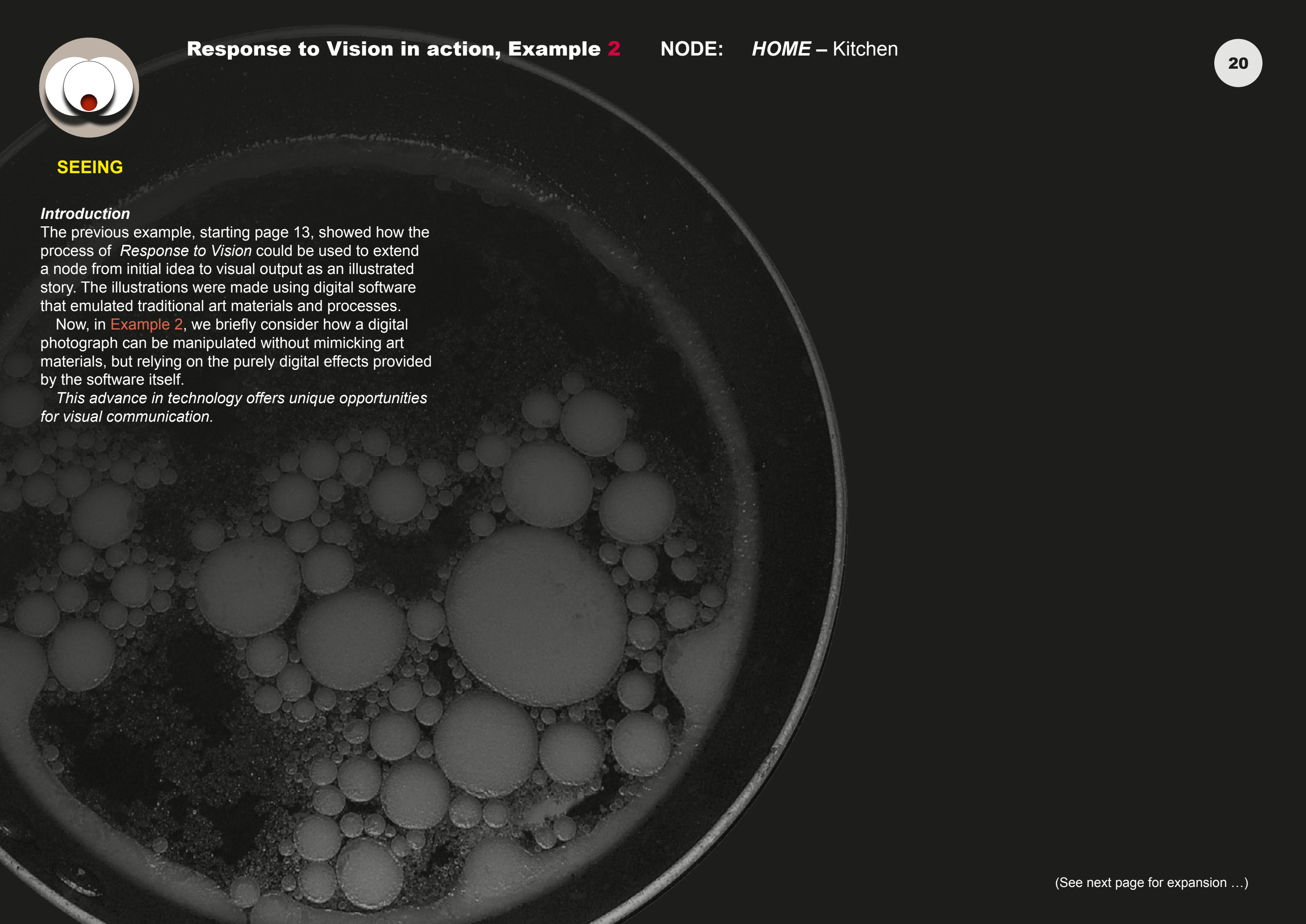
SEEING

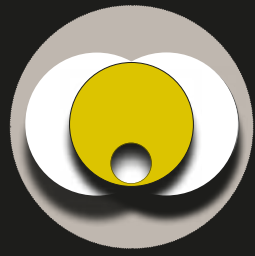
Introduction

The previous example, starting page 13, showed how the process of *Response to Vision* could be used to extend a node from initial idea to visual output as an illustrated story. The illustrations were made using digital software that emulated traditional art materials and processes.

Now, in **Example 2**, we briefly consider how a digital photograph can be manipulated without mimicking art materials, but relying on the purely digital effects provided by the software itself.

This advance in technology offers unique opportunities for visual communication.



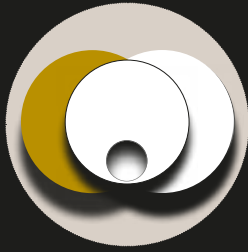


SEEING
Looking
Recording

WHEN searching the node of *HOME Kitchen*, there was an abundance of manufactured (previously called man-made) objects. One such observed object was a *frying pan*. It had been used to cook pork chops. Its unwashed state revealed an assortment of fat globules repeated in various sizes – an interesting *Effect of accidental pattern*.

This *Looking* was recorded using digital photography from a vertical view.



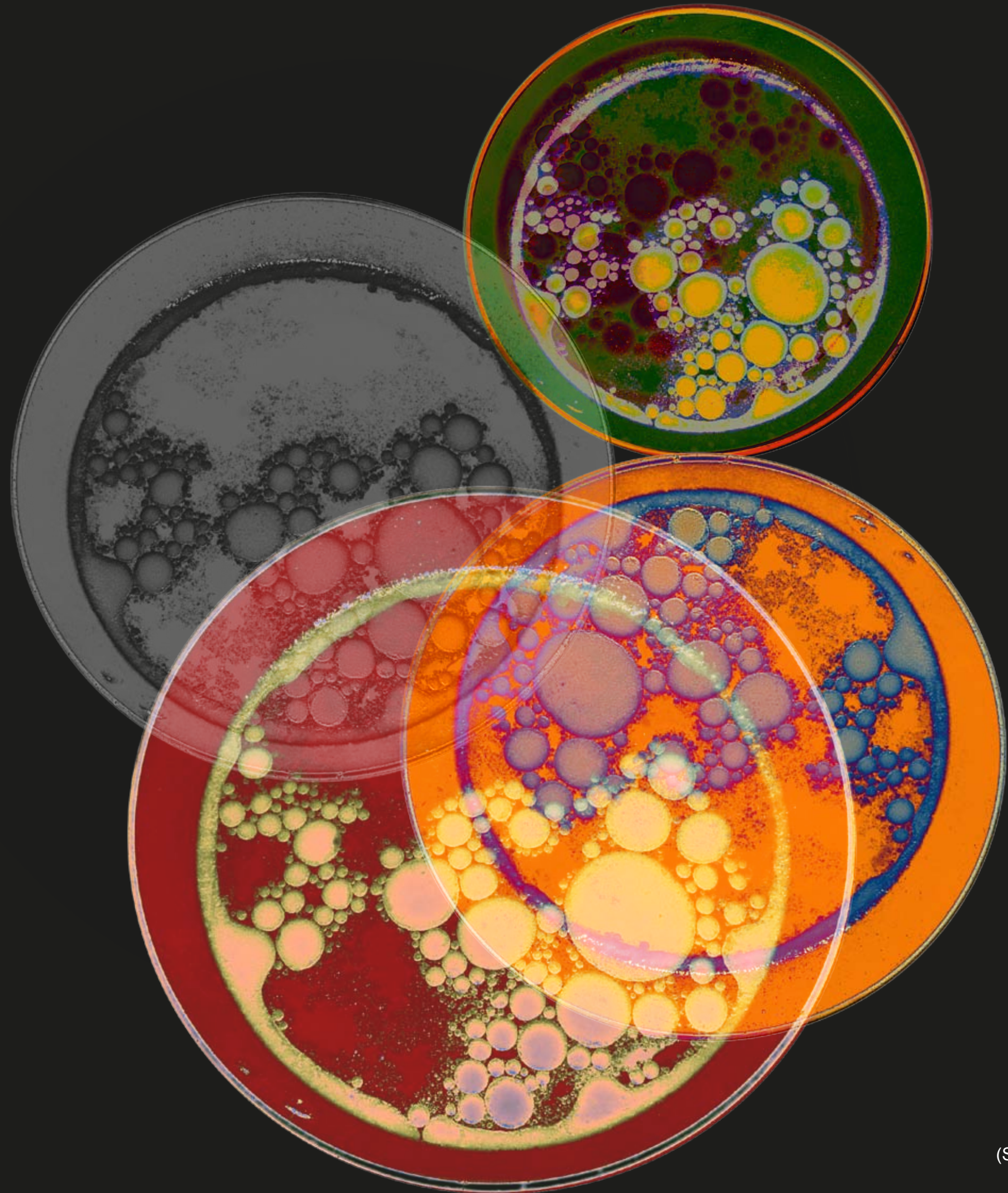


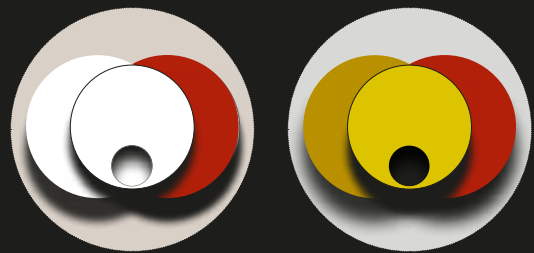
SHAPING
Organising
Planning

Next, duplicates of the digital photographs were altered using software Filters, and variations of colour explored, the more interesting being saved.

This processing was further manipulated, then image Layers superimposed, followed by alterations using software Blending and Opacity controls.

Although no artistic painterly skills were applied, many variations of composition were trialled involving aesthetic judgement. Some of this sequence is shown here – **Organisation**, involving *Selecting, Manipulating, Combining, Arranging ...*





MAKING Output

Then, on this page, a final single composition was produced – **Output/Production**.

Being digital, this image could be used on anything from a business card, to a large, digitally printed mural.

‘Artists’ sometimes take themselves very seriously, but not here. The whole ‘exploration’ process was *sophisticated play** particularly discovering / learning combinations of shape and colour impossible with traditional materials.

*See Eisner and Richardson quotations, page 3.

The *Curriculum Statement* for the ‘Visual Arts’ Level 4 can be summarised as follows:

“... investigate purpose of objects ... from ... cultures, and identify contexts ...

... use art-making conventions and apply a knowledge of elements ...

... respond to a variety of motivations, supported by the study of artists’ works

... explore, describe ways in which *meanings* can be communicated ... and interpreted ...”

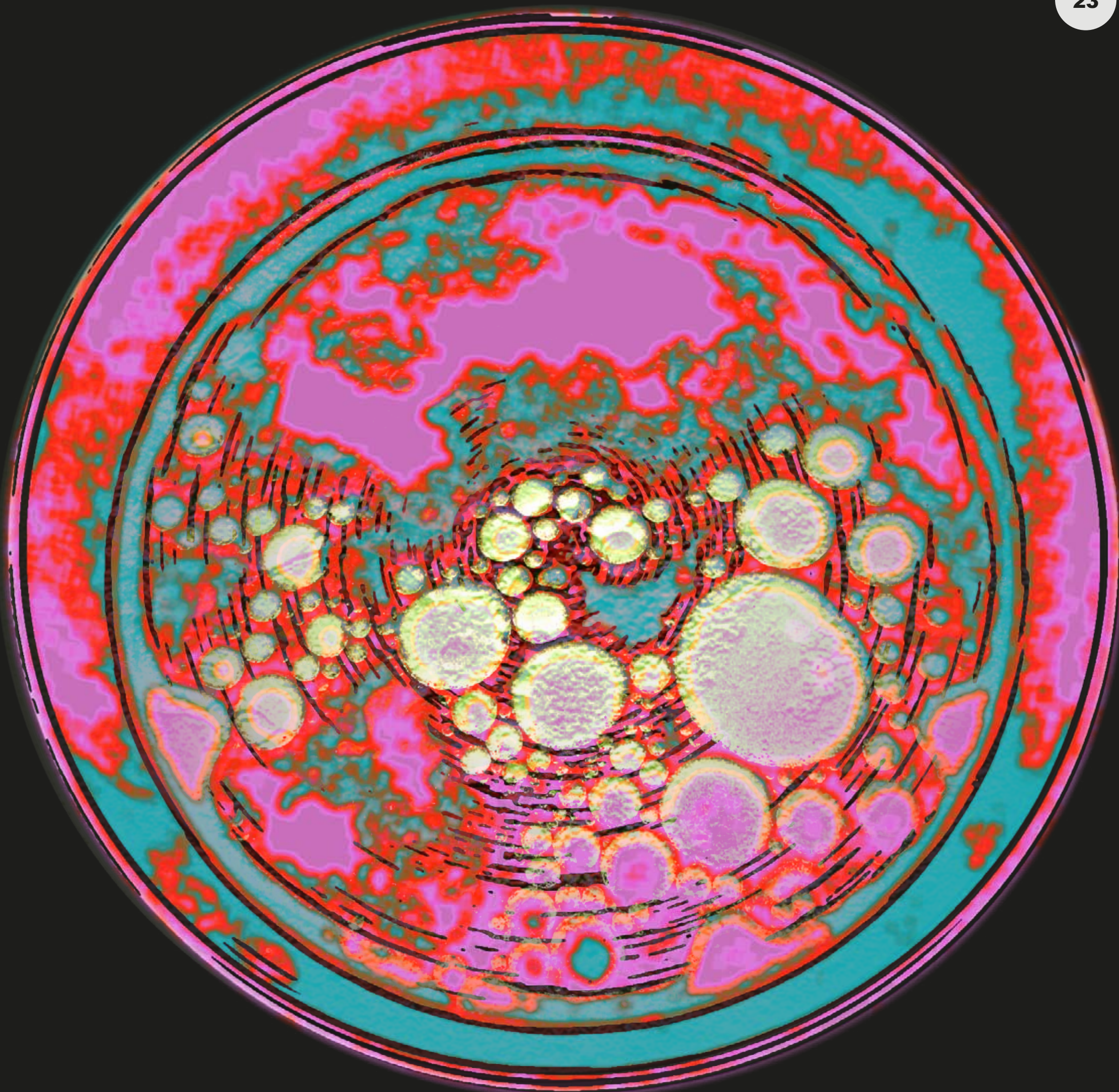
In meeting these directives this digital image is a complete failure – nothing relates!

However, what this exercise does demonstrate is the rift between visual output/communication using contemporary technology – and the stifling effect of inappropriate Art “conventions, motivations, meanings” ... or associated verbosity.

If you detect a whiff of cynicism, you are right!

This and many other resource images can be found in **Response to Vision**

• **NAMING THINGS SEEN.**



The *Pond* 'node' showed how aspects of a focus of attention can be developed as output using both verbal and visual *modes*.

The *Fat in the Frying pan* was another node developed as a purely digital image.

Both these nodes came from the general focus of HOME.

There are other areas to explore ...

This page shows four possible nodes: around the *Home* – flowering pot plant; the *Beach* – vertical view from cliff to sea; the *Countryside* – horizontal view from beach inland; and the *City* – central business area and port. Although these represent massive variation of scale, they can share the same approach beginning with close observation.

Each image could motivate students to *find a parallel node for exploration using the actions of SEEING*.

This involves exploring their node by:

Looking, Recording, and Naming.

Two additional aspects need consideration:

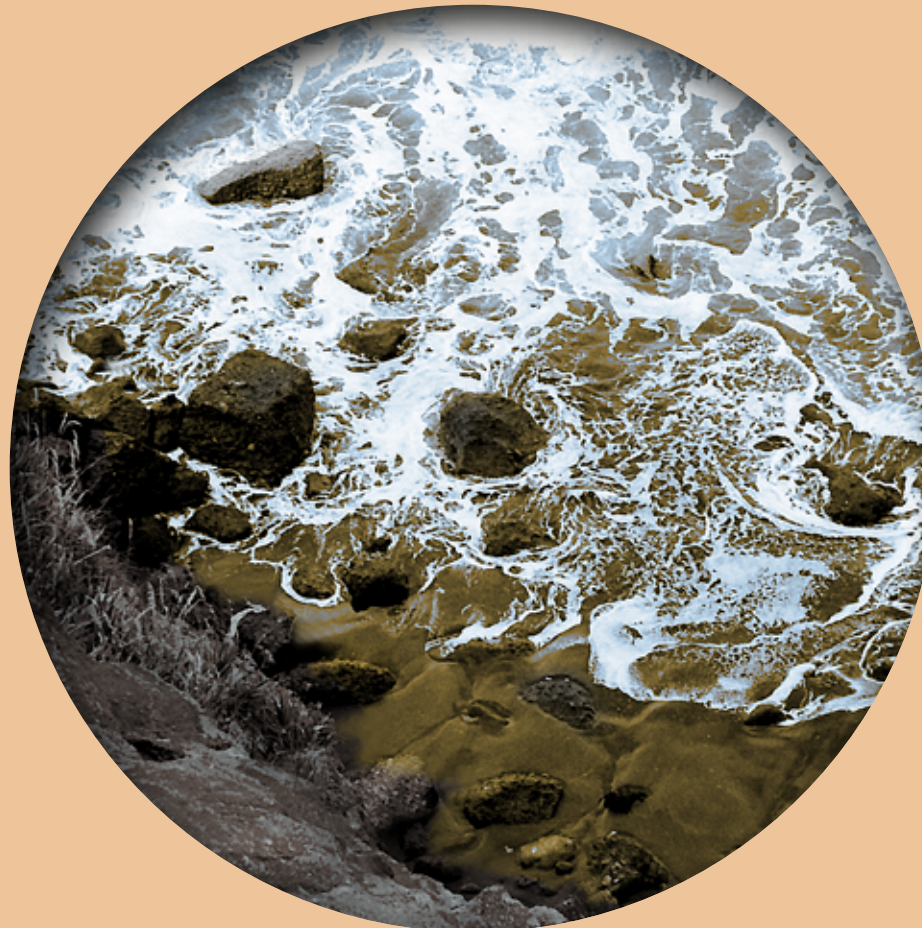
relating this information to **Personal Memory** and also to **Other People's Seeing** (this taps into other people's related observation – resources such as libraries and InterNet).

The outcome is a large body of information from which to select for response across a range of subjects including the Visual Arts.

Source for above text summary and images:

*Response to Vision • COMMUNICATING VISUALLY; and
Response to Vision • NAMING THINGS SEEN.*

The next four pages show other items of interest displaying VISUAL INGREDIENTS such as **Effects** (*pattern and shape ...*) around the Home; natural **Organisation** (*repetition ...*) along the Beach; and **Influences** (*view, light ...*) around trees in Landscape; and manufactured **decoration** on a Building exterior.



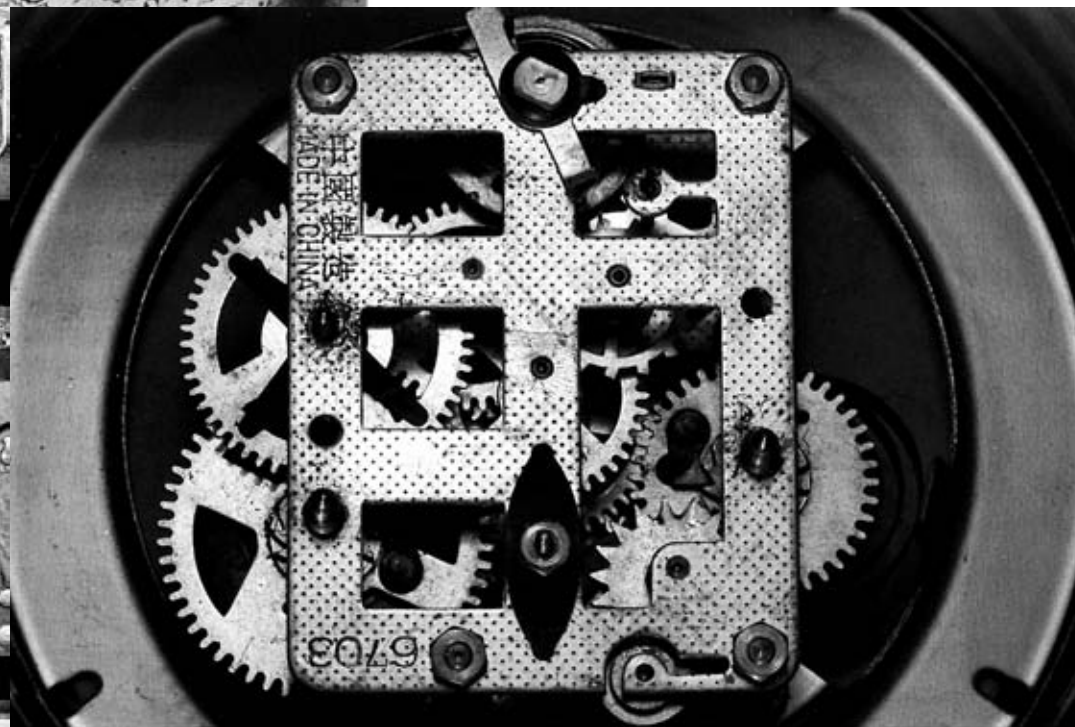
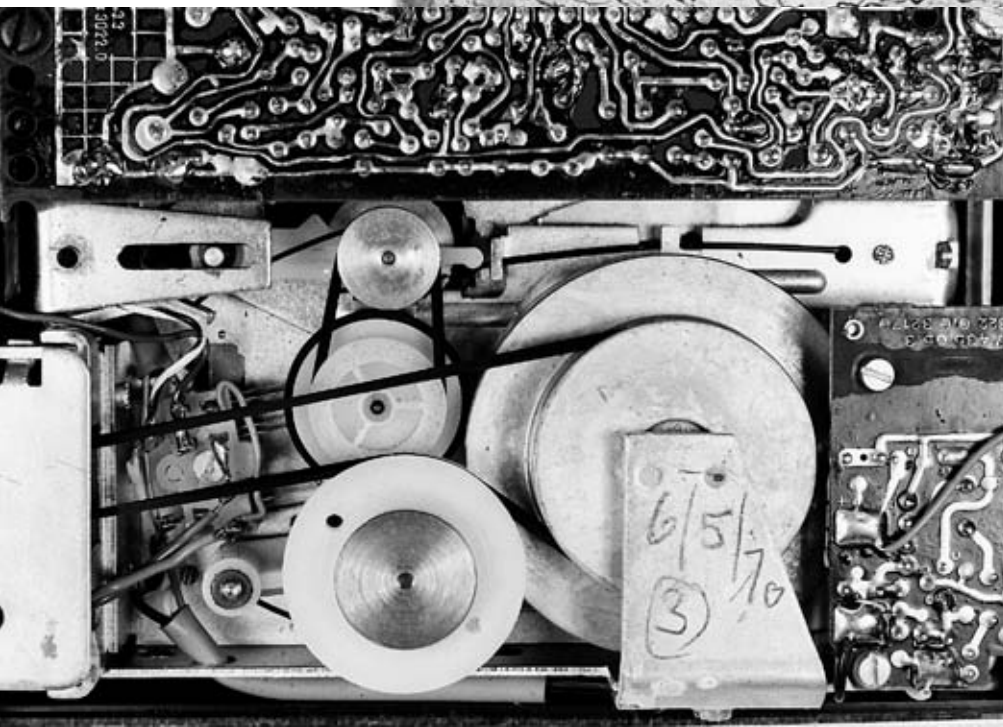
Remembered images from around the Home.
All are *manufactured* products showing a range of
Visual Ingredients: Effects, Pattern
in a variety of materials, with differing contents and
purposes, from different times.

At right:
Fat globules coagulated into a pattern in
a frying pan (colour and grayscale) –
see pages 20-23.

Far right:
Bubbles seen through
curved glass container.

At right and below:
empty sauce Bottle,
electronic Equipment showing
transition between mechanical and
solid state functioning,
Gears,
purely mechanical Clock
and Watch (enlarged scale,
rear view).

• Look up:
coagulated
and find related
names.



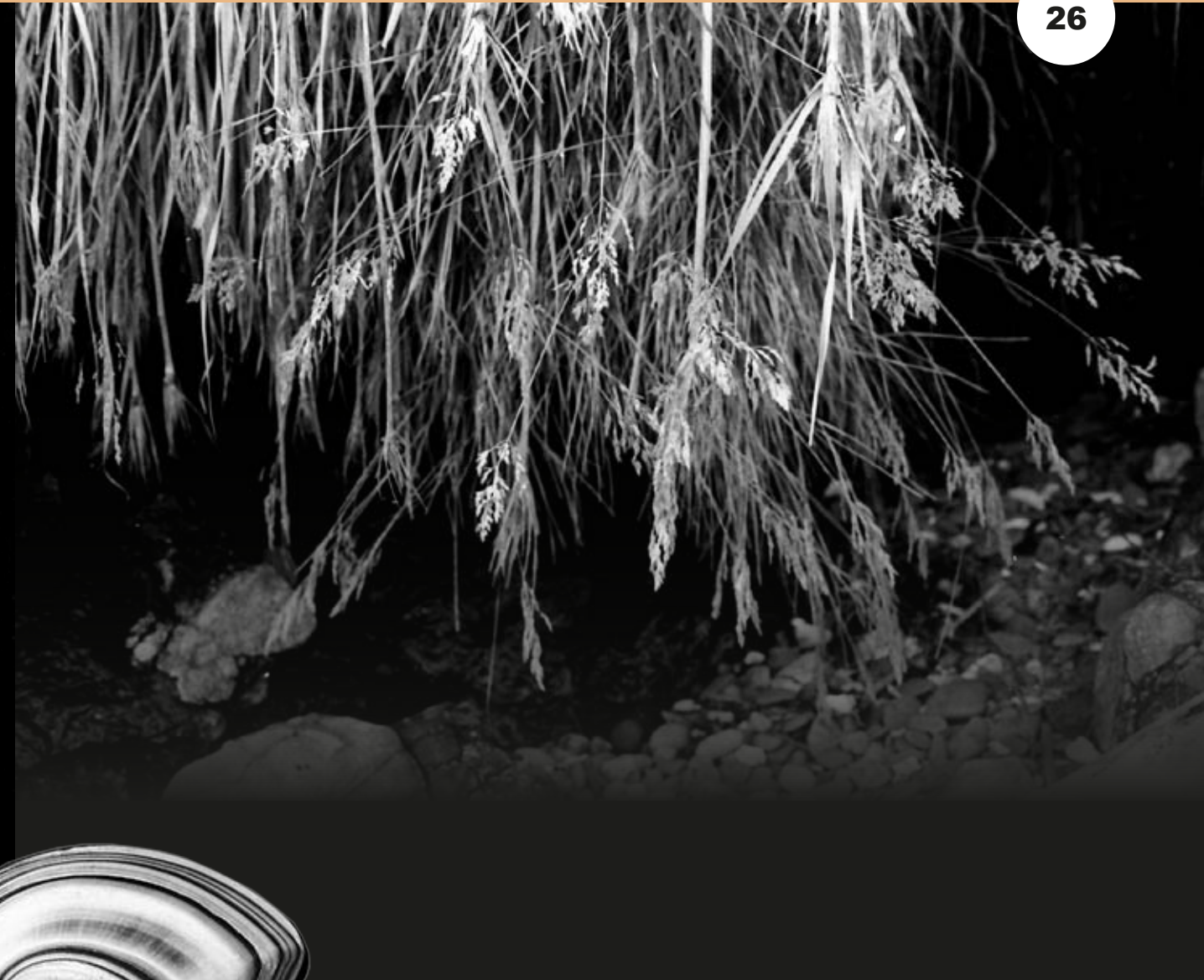
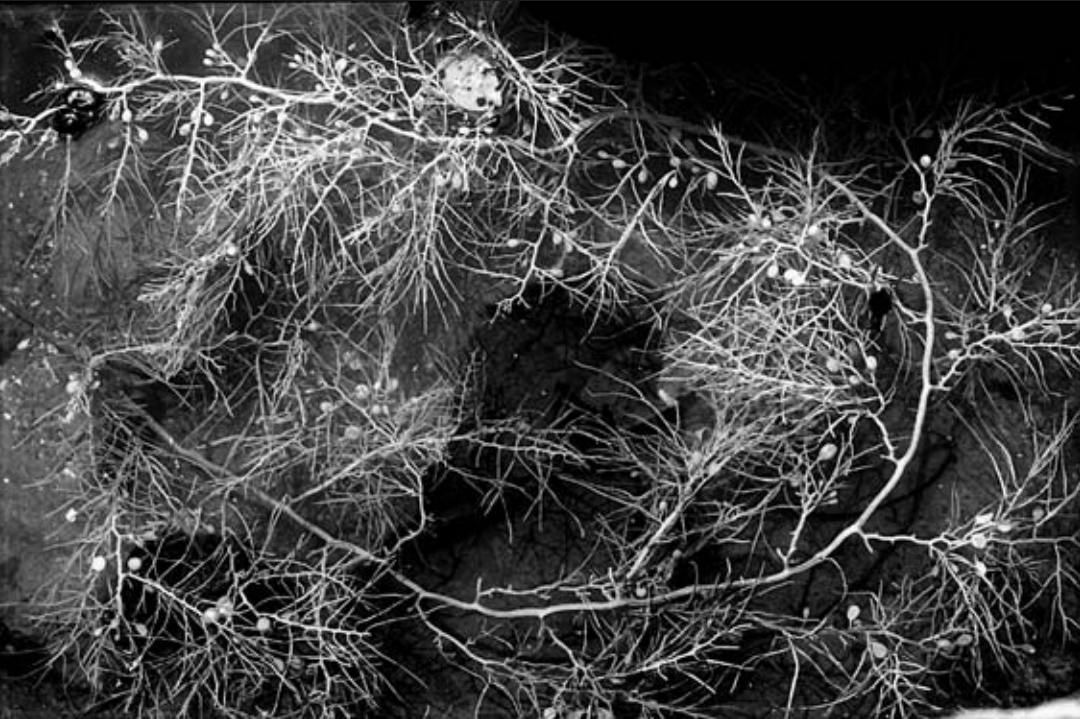
The intertidal area also reveals other evidence of Living forms: seaweed, shells, and plants on the sandy verge.

All these display **Visual Ingredients**: particularly so with the central vertical seaweed image that echoes land-based plant form; shows **Effects, Organisation, and Influences**.

• **Activity**

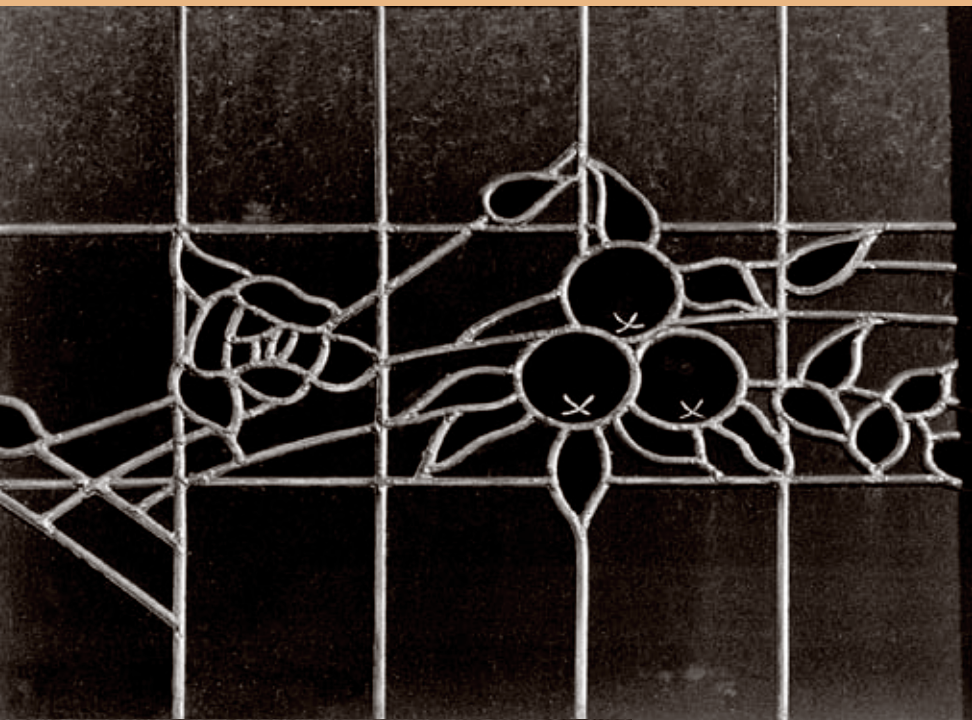
Google: Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology, *Pigmentation patterns of Shells*.

Images for Pattern on Shell – *Natural*; (View All).



Visual Ingredients: Influences – Light and tonal distribution ...





Visual Ingredients:
Organisation, applied
decoration ...

The National Tobacco Company
• Google (images): Napier, corner Ossian and Bridge Streets.

WHY RESPONSE TO VISION?

Other than the *Response to Vision* series, to date there are no substantial *student* resources that explain the common features and ways of working that we call *Visual Learning*.

With this aspect of Learning, attention is paid to gathering information and processing aspects as personal response in a variety of forms. How this process works has been shown on the previous few pages where a Pond (page 13) was the focus of attention. The outcome was two-fold, a story and supportive illustrations. A different learning focus could have produced a different outcome slanted more towards Science or Social Sciences where less creativity was expected, and with greater use of symbols/diagrams and maps.

Primary school teachers will see the relevance of the *Response to Vision* approach particularly at the top end of the school and at Intermediate school level, where teachers may work collaboratively across subjects.

The most important function of *Response to Vision* is that it is a **process** that encourages students to advance their learning in a *visual* mode in a *systematic* way, and *understand* what this process involves. (The visual mode is certainly not the exclusive domain of “artists”!)

Definitions

When moving across the phases of *Response to Vision*: Seeing, Shaping and Making, the outcome is **Visual Learning**.

This is described as – *the ability to perceive, think, organise, and produce visually*.

Visual Learning involves **Visual Thinking*** (see Activity at right).

This generates a **Visual Vocabulary**.

Combining all these produces **Visual Literacy**.

This aligns with general Literacy, Musical Literacy, Computer Literacy ...

Visual Literacy is essential for **Visual Communication** – interaction with the broad range of predominantly visual information available to be shared with the visually literate viewer ... all of which is explained in the expansive ebook,

Response to Vision • COMMUNICATING VISUALLY.

(See website: www.responsetovision.com).

Activity

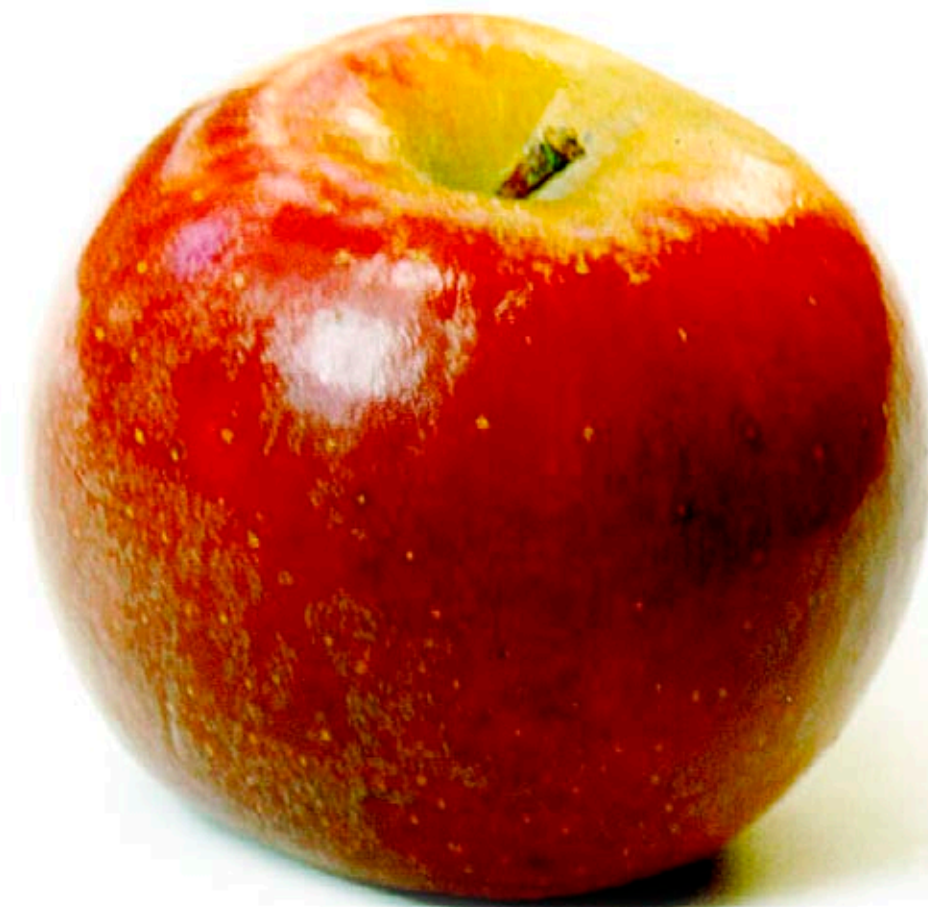
**Visual Thinking* –

If your friends or colleagues maintain that people can't think visually, try this exercise on them.

- Imagine an apple (or any other form easily divided into parts) – there it sits, colourful, ripe and sweet-smelling.
- In your mind pick up a knife and cut the apple in half.
- Now cut one of the pieces in half again, making two quarters.
- Now, try to mentally balance one of the quarters on top of the half, then sit the remaining quarter on top of these.
- When the problem has been mentally solved, *draw* the outcome (or make a model).

The *drawing* is the evidence of mental problem-solving using *visual thinking*.

In turn, this may be shared digitally with anybody, anywhere ...



What happens to children prior to their entry to Primary school is not part of this Talk. However, this does not mean ECE lacks validity, quite the opposite. Here, visual learning is deeply imbedded in the exploration of the preschooler's immediate world.

In New Zealand we have allowed to develop a strange mismatch of groups offering 'childcare' to a variety of ages, for varying durations, supervised by people, mainly women, with varying understanding of their responsibilities, with varying qualifications and underlying philosophies (some influenced by cultural and/or religious beliefs), working in differing environments – something not seen in other parts of schooling. They all share the same curriculum, Te Whāriki, however, their interpretation is varied. Generally, Government funding prevails.

It would be hard to intentionally design the current provisions – in all dimensions, they are totally devoid of cohesion. Kids deserve better than this.

These diverse groups are beyond self-direction, so *any move towards unification becomes a Government responsibility.*

Learning through 'play' is fundamental in the Early Childhood Education sector and *visual* learning is an important associated mode.

This early holistic learning should be integrated with existing educational goals of the Primary school and all younger children should be encouraged to participate.

In making this recommendation, the view of some academics that Art Galleries are worthy of special attention in the experience of young children must be challenged. The sophistication of adult art is well beyond the understanding/concept development of preschoolers. Similarly, visual forms with strong cultural significance should be avoided, just as polysyllabic language is meaningless to preschoolers, indeed to most Primary school students – the key word is 'relevance'.

PRIMARY/INTERMEDIATE and SECONDARY SCHOOLS

These sectors were largely covered earlier starting on page 4, *The Clients*; then continuing with the *National Curriculum; Need for Change – Learning Visually ...*

Although the National Curriculum does not apply at the Tertiary level, aspects of education at this level, such as Teacher Training, are pertinent ...

If there is a single area of education that is critical in its delivery it is the initial training and on-going professional development of teachers. This is complex and mostly beyond the scope of this Talk. However, at its most fundamental, the issue of *who trains teachers remains unresolved.*

Historically, separate institutions variously named, Teacher Training Colleges, Teachers' Colleges, and Colleges of Education were providers.

In 1981, Prof. Tony McNaughton wrote,

In Auckland, all College courses run parallel to University degree courses, and when completed, these College courses are accepted as cross-credits for a University degree ... The two institutions are seen as independent while maintaining an integrated relationship to further the goal of producing a 'graduate' teaching profession combining a broad general education with sound professional training.

Again on teacher training, in 1981, Basil Kings, then Director, Teacher Education, wrote,

As with so many developments in the recent years of rapid technological and social change, our problem will be to gear up the system to train the teachers. Teacher training in New Zealand is, in my view, well placed to meet any demands future schooling developments may place on it.

On the same theme, in 1999 I wrote,

The independence of teacher education twenty years ago has largely given way to mergers with Universities, while the previous exclusiveness of Teachers' Colleges has been eroded by a rapid growth of other training agencies. The effectiveness of this diversity is yet to be assessed.

Later I wrote,

Since 2007 all Colleges of Education have been subsumed into universities. The stated aim was, 'to strengthen links between research, pedagogy and practice.' *However, as no national review of Teacher Education has taken place, there is no evidence that this aim has been met.*

Three years ago I wrote,

In a world where imagery increasingly dominates human communication, university education clings to its long-held use of language as the prime mode of thought and communication – *verbal*, which is good for *describing*. On the other hand, young learners gravitate to technology that is predominantly *visual* – good for *showing* how things are. The result is an increasing divergence between younger preferred learning and adult-provided learning, schooling. This presents a serious issue for teaching and in particular the training of teachers.

I am again expressing concern about the training of teachers, particularly Primary teachers, via the university. *Contact time in The Arts is too short.* Some may well enter training with their last experience of Art being at Intermediate school. *What provision is made for advancing this before entering or during training?*

PRESSURE FOR/AGAINST CHANGE AFFECTING THE VISUAL ARTS

Background

An analysis of the position of Art Education in New Zealand has revealed a disturbing situation. Over the last 25 years a way of learning that used to be available to the majority of students for most of their formal education has been progressively downgraded. This started with the four previously individual subjects of Art, Music, Dance and Drama being combined into one, **The Arts**. This was on the premise that as they each had something to do with culture, they may as well be grouped – there was no educational justification for this move. Each of the initial four has its own ‘mode’ of perception, mental processing (brain function) and output form. While the amalgamation may have saved funding, it was ill-conceived in that it allowed choice from within the grouping, rather than taking all four.

This downgrading of The Arts was further accelerated by a previous Government that increased the time allotted for English and Mathematics at the expense of all the other subjects. Schools are still recovering from this misdirection – a lack of balance between learning that can be *measured*, in contrast with **learning through experience**.

The evolving student mix

When considering the Visual Arts the anticipated learning cannot be seen in isolation from the clients, the *students*. Little is mentioned of them in the Curriculum Statement, however, should the numbers or the ethnic mix change, then this needs to be anticipated and accounted for. There is evidence of change.

Studying the changes in school rolls across the Country shows not only a drift to Auckland, but a significant change in student ethnicity in that Region. The Ministry of Education **2019** figures for **enrolments in Visual and Performing Arts** are, by ethnicity: European – 96,611, Asian – 65,979, Pacifica – 54,575, and Maori – 43,378. When these are included in the total school rolls, then combined with the most recent Census returns, ‘European’ ethnicity holds a slim majority. However, if the rate of change in ethnicity is considered, it is reasonable to project that **in five years, Asian (largely Chinese) will dominate**, followed by European, Pacifica, Maori, then Indian. ***This makes a lie of Biculturalism. Catering for this shift in dominance will require a re-assessment of educational priorities and course content regarding cultural values and delivery from Intermediate school onwards.***

Student and provider inertia

It has been observed that changes in technology move at greater speed than education and so teachers and schools will always fall behind what technology offers. The Visual Arts is a prime area for the application of technology, but with a focus on traditional media and ways of working, the possibilities of digital imagery have been largely ignored. This can be seen at a tertiary level where both providers and students display inertia. (From personal experience), Photography students objected to learning *Photoshop*, and in another institution, Painting students vigorously objected to *Deep Paint* digital painting software being added to their art programme.

Beware, inertia is the great inhibitor of change and teachers are not immune!

Additions to the Curriculum?

There are several aspects of learning where pressure for inclusion in the curriculum can be anticipated, with potentially disastrous consequences for Art Education (indeed all The Arts).

The *first* is coming from Technology itself where there is a body of opinion which maintains that *Coding*, the language that tells computers what to do, should be compulsory. (If this eventuates, it is hoped that it is confined to Year 7 onwards.)

The *second* is that *Financial Literacy* should be compulsory (at Secondary school).

The *third* is based on evidence that *Student Health* is being compromised by faulty diet and reduced exercise which needs correction (at all Years).

A *fourth* is the increasing insistence on adding a *Second Language* across the curriculum (which conveniently overlooks the fact that Visual Learning is another language, along with Coding, plus Musical notation ...).

A *fifth* might be *Water Safety*, and there could be others such as *Cycling Safely*.

To these add *political interference* in Curriculum content similar to that seen with the introduction of compulsory *New Zealand History*.

All these additions require contact time. Unless the school day, and/or term times are increased, some current subjects will be minimised or removed – this process has begun. Stand by for Art, like Music lessons, becoming a Saturday paid extra for individuals.

All these changes lead to the decline expressed last year in an article by Peter O’Connor, Professor of Education, University of Auckland, where he stated:

Visual Arts, music, dance and drama, the life blood of a creative education have been systematically disbanded from schools.

National standards in literacy and numeracy narrowed the curriculum in primary schools and the biggest casualty was the arts.

The arts remind us of our common humanity, of the possibility of joy and wonder. How awful it is then for our education system to deliberately turn its back on all this at such a perilous time in history.

To which can be added, but the University has done little to correct this situation. It is disturbing that the University of Auckland has *progressively reduced the contact time and staffing in its Initial Teacher Education course for Primary teachers*.

More regrettably, having been gifted the largest Teacher Education campus in New Zealand, it plans to consolidate Teacher training on a more central site (using part of the Elam campus) and isolate itself from access to long-standing associated Normal Schools.

It would make sense if the Government bought back the current site and converted it into a coeducational Secondary school, along with an Institute for Advanced Teacher Education, under independent control.

RE-IMAGING ART EDUCATION – think Visual Learning

All the indicators show that across the Curriculum, **Art Education is 'Going'**. **Survival requires re-thinking its purpose to match the learning needs of future students and their world.**

Can this be done? A random look at a few published Secondary school Art programmes suggests that it can. One such enlightened school has managed to offer both traditional 'artist' focussed courses, *along with Design* that reaches across subjects.

Primary schools are lucky in that they have no difficulty with *collaborative teaching*. Not so in subject-bound Secondary schools. However, if Art teachers realise the possibilities of espousing *Visual Learning* to the student majority (rather than promoting 'artist' elitism for a minority), their teaching will become exciting, refreshing and future-orientated – think of the art teacher working collaboratively within The Arts, together with Science, and Social Sciences, and English ... and along the way giving the Technology department a creative uplift.

So, in a world where we mostly learn visually, ask yourself, **'How does the prospect of leadership in Visual Learning feel?'**

Returning to the title of this Talk, ART EDUCATION – Going, or Gone?, it has been established that students learn by confronting their environment and that a major part of this learning is visual. It has also been established that their ability to understand what they discover develops across time, and the ways in which they show this growth include visual output in a variety of forms – *Art Education* (see pages 4-8).

How to assist this growth is the responsibility of teachers – this is no mean task! Various educational sectors share this task where there must be continuity from Preschool to Tertiary, with the focus on student needs. However, *at Secondary school, Art Education has been hijacked by a narrow focus on Fine Art*. Currently, the progression towards Year 13 has narrowed to providing traditional knowledge of "Art" and "Artists", ignoring the majority of students who will not progress to Tertiary Art. This outcome is a significant gap, indeed chasm, between traditional Artists and other visual communicators, and must be closed if Art Education is to survive.

With pressure from new curriculum areas, those areas seen as small or of limited relevance will simply disappear (see previous page, "... Art as a paid extra ..."). As the National Curriculum *Visual Arts* progressively emphasises the need to talk about art, the *verbal* mode, at the expense of seeing/thinking/making art, the *visual* mode, some educators will say, "Why not simply let Art Galleries get on with the talking?" Further, now that the intricacies of processing film have been replaced with digital software that provides arrays of automatic image modification, what is left for Photography to do? Technology has claimed Graphic Design; English has absorbed Theatre and what used to be called Film; Art History merges well with New Zealand History (there is an abundance of Colonial and Post-Colonial art showing social context). The same goes for Sculpture ... and so on. *Goodbye Visual Arts!*

On the other hand, a concern for the wider aspects of Visual Communication that impinge on everyday life: what we wear, the structures we live in, work in ... , along with the 'stuff' we use daily ..., offer rich and relevant material for study!

'Un-fine' art

The opportunities of learning through the wider aspects of Visual Communication deserve greater attention. One aspect is Graphic Design – *an example is what you are looking at on your computer!*

This whole digital spread/page of the *Illustrated Talk* is the outcome of visual observation, visual thinking, visual manipulation, visual composition, and visual output. It comprises blocks of text and an assortment of images: photographs, scans, symbols, and diagrams. This *graphic design* has received as much time and attention as would be devoted to the production of *Fine Art* (and its message might have greater clarity)!

As a PDF digital file, all, or part of this Talk (see the three page spreads at right, from *Example 2*, page 20) could be transmitted worldwide, quickly, and with little cost. If required, revisions could be made as feedback from multiple viewers. It is a working resource, technically not possible a decade ago and points a way forward for education generally.

These **spreads are an example of visual communication**, pure and simple – there is no associated deep 'meaning', or 'support by the study of artists' works' ... however, it does use 'art-making conventions' and application of 'knowledge of elements ...' in the production of an output, but with a different 'intention' – to describe/show the development of a visual idea, some 'Un-fine art'.

We should be encouraging students to use their visualising ability to respond to their world – so, they learn and communicate through image-making, not necessarily Art.

Three page spreads showing the RESPONSE TO VISION process: Seeing/Shaping/Making

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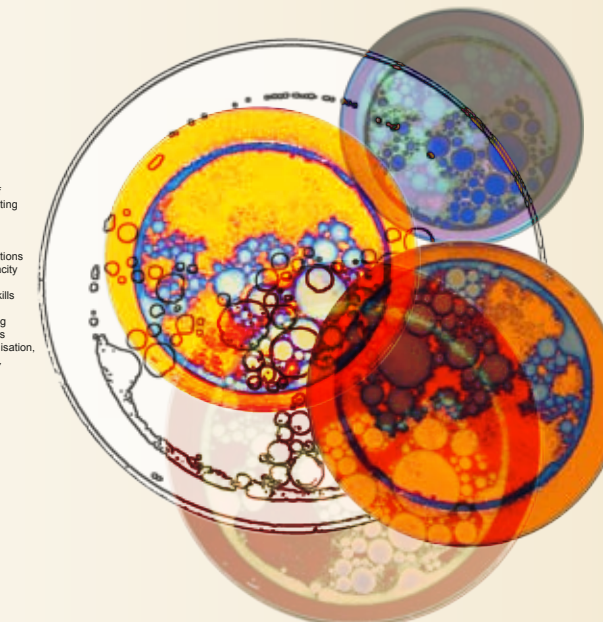
SEEING
Looking
Recording

WHEN searching the node of *HOME Kitchen*, there was an abundance of manufactured (previously called man-made) objects. One such observed object was a *frying pan*. It had been used to cook pork chops. Its unwashed state revealed an assortment of fat globules repeated in various sizes – an interesting *Effect of accidental pattern*. This Looking was recorded using digital photography from a vertical view.



SHAPING
Organising
Planning

Next, duplicates of the digital photographs were altered using software Filters, and variations of colour explored, the more interesting being saved. This processing was further manipulated, then image Layers superimposed, followed by alterations using software Blending and Opacity controls. Although no artistic painterly skills were applied, many variations of composition were trialled involving aesthetic judgement. Some of this sequence is shown here – Organisation, involving *Selecting, Manipulating, Combining, Arranging ...*



MAKING
Realising

Then, on this page, a final single composition was produced – *Realisation*. Being digital, this image could be used on anything from a business card, to a large, digitally printed mural.

'Artists' sometimes take themselves very seriously, but not here. The whole 'exploration' process was *sophisticated play* – particularly discovering/learning combinations of shape and colour impossible with traditional materials. *See Eisner and Richardson quotations, page 3.

The Curriculum Statement for the 'Visual Arts' Level 4 can be summarised as follows:
... investigate purpose of objects ... from ... cultures, and identify contexts ...
... use art-making conventions and apply a knowledge of elements ...
... respond to a variety of motivations, supported by the study of artists' works
... explore, describe ways in which meanings can be communicated ... and interpreted ...

In meeting these directives this digital image is a complete failure – nothing related! However, what this exercise does demonstrate is the *fit* between visual output using contemporary technology – and the stalling effect of inappropriate Art 'conventions, motivations, meanings' ... or associated verbosity. If you detect a whiff of cynicism, you are right!

This and many other resource images can be found in *Responses to Vision* - NAMING THINGS SEEN.

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ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATION

As there is no other organisation capable of showing leadership in supporting Art Education, the Association has a major job ahead.

- The first task must be *to appoint a part-time, paid, Wellington-based Executive Secretary/Treasurer* (teachers are far too busy to assume this role).

This Secretary will be responsible to the Association Chairperson(s) and for:

- all inward and outward Association communication
- all Association financial matters
- co-ordination within the Executive and communication between it and the Membership at large
- using the Website as the main vehicle for communication
- assisting Executive members with their delegated responsibilities (for example, there should be an Association Resource listing all texts used by providers of Teacher Education, this should include an abstract of the publication, an indication of the appropriate sector and relevance); and that one such responsibility will include watching for new or changes in image recording/processing and outputting *technology* (for example, what has been done to review new 'visual' software?)
- establishing/maintaining links with other areas within The Arts; with unions representing other sectors such as ECE, and within Tertiary; and with other professional groups such as Principals' Associations ... links should be made with Government and Opposition members associated with Education, similarly, links should be established with the media
- maintaining an up-to-date record of Membership and representation across sectors and actively encouraging Membership *especially from areas poorly represented* ...
- developing communication with parents, showing and explaining developments in Art Education ...

Post-Conference research reveals that of those attending 74.92% were Secondary teachers, 7.95% Primary (incl. Intermediate), 3.06% 'All Years', and the remainder 'Other'.

Casual observation was that of these, the majority were relatively young women, of West-European stock. No matter how much attention is paid to such things as cultural balance within the Association Executive, the reality is that it represents just the Secondary sector, (with a female bias).

There are two options, simply change the name to, ANZSAEA, or more sensibly, give top priority to being more inclusive. After all, Primary (with Intermediate) is by far the largest sector teaching Visual Arts and certainly needs the greatest professional guidance if Art Education, in any form, is to be retained within the National Curriculum and be effectively taught.

SOME RELEVANT QUESTIONS

What attention does the Executive pay to courses in Initial Teacher Education provided by the universities? (Page 30.)

During Initial Teacher Education, what provision can be made for trainees to better understand the contribution of each sector to the overall education of students from Pre-school to Year 13?

Nationally, are there any substantial Advanced courses in professional Teacher Education in Art (directed to the classroom)? – if not, actively encourage such development. (Page 30.)

If Intermediate Schools are to be maintained, in what way are associated art teachers trained?

What knowledge base has the Association regarding Members potentially teaching Art Education on a *part-time contract basis, as a personal business?* (there are significant Tax credits) – if nil, then establish a knowledge base and offer advice to Members on this employment alternative.

How to reflect changes: student ethnicity; broadening of Art Education to embrace *Visual Literacy – "closing the gap"*? (Pages 9-12, 29, 32 ...)

In Secondary schools, how to encourage shared (collaborative) teaching between Art and other subjects, particularly with Technology staff?

How to encourage Government to recognise the place of ECE in overall education and provide associated re-structuring? (Page 30 ...)

Why is an Auckland tertiary institution offering a Certificate in "the fundamentals of Arts, Design, and Digital Media" – surely this should be a Secondary school course?

Conclusion

ART EDUCATION – Going or Gone?

I always get to where I'm going by walking away from where I have been.

– Winnie the Pooh

AA Milne 1926

To survive in our maelstrom of educational change and 'match the learning needs of future students', the Association, indeed all teachers, will need to expand the narrow focus of teaching for 'artists' and their 'art works', to recognising the majority, for whom *Visual Literacy* is fundamental for communication across Society.

If the learning is visual, it's Art Education!

If the learning mode is visual, it's part of Art Education!

TALK AND WORKSHOPS

Although the primary objective of both the Talk and Workshops (to follow) was to offer information and opinion, an important secondary objective was **to demonstrate effective technology used in the transmission of visual information.**

The intention was to use WiFi to link the speaker's computer content with the attendees computers, and also to show this using a cable link to an oversize monitor.

The first aspiration failed as WiFi was not available in the teaching space; *the second was eventually successful when a very large monitor became available (proving a significant advance on 'traditional' projected image systems).* *Such technology should be available in all Secondary schools and supplement digital visual resources used on student devices.*



For further information, please go to:

www.responsetovision.com

email: derekolphert@maxnet.co.nz

WORKSHOPS FOLLOW

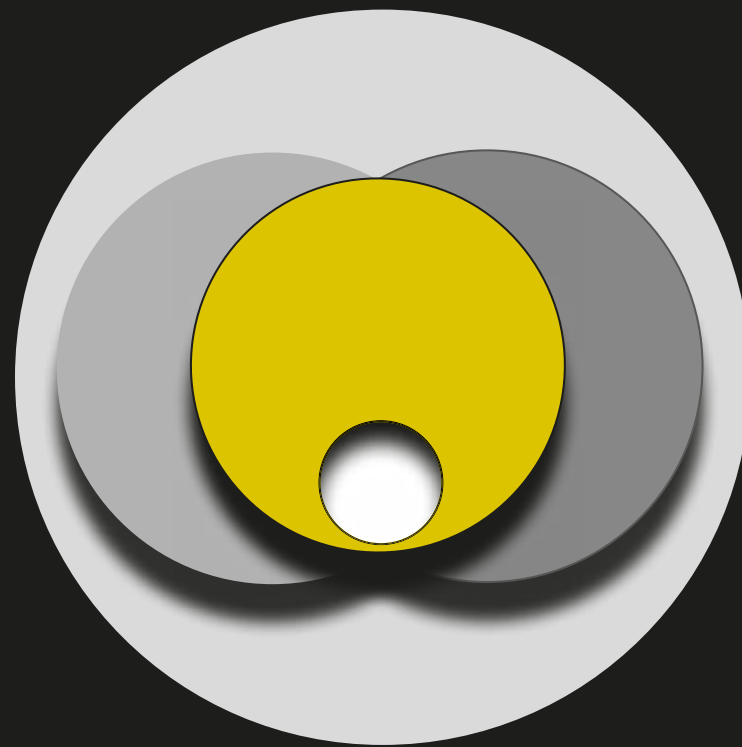
ART EDUCATION CONFERENCE

2021 Workshops **A** and **B**

– Derek Olphert

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The symbol below represents *Response to Vision*, phase 1, SEEING



Response to Vision

ENHANCING MEMORY VISUALLY

Observation and Manipulated Observation

The objective of these Workshops: *To demonstrate how manipulating observed visual data increases its mental retention.*

Two Workshops Part A covers OBSERVATION
Part B covers OBSERVATION and MANIPULATION

Task: Drawing from memory of Observation
Task: Drawing from memory of enhanced Observation ...
the second drawing should reveal greater remembered detail.



Source image – *Still Life with Clocks*
In normal circumstances, this would be observed in reality, from multiple angles.

Memory

Without memory you couldn't read this page, you would be restrained to respond only to immediate sensory input.

Human memory has probably developed as a necessary source from which to gather information useful in 'shaping' *constructions of future possibilities* (which includes *thinking*). Clearly, both *curiosity* (as motivation) and *creativity* (as processing) are involved.

Memory can be enhanced visually in at least two ways:

- by **Motivation** – given a reason to learn/remember, and
- by **Manipulation** – *active further processing of the data to be remembered/used.*

Improvement in memory is conditional on the outcome seeming to have *meaning* (comprehension) – little sense, poor retention!

GIVE YOURSELF A VISUAL MEMORY TEST

People who have observed something closely will have mainly used this 'visual mode' to enhance their memory of things seen.

Better personal memory means better communication can be made with other people: by using descriptive or imaginative elaboration in speech or writing – *English*; by describing and explaining – *Science*; or showing 'how it is, or might be' by using visual means – *Art*.

Regardless of age, the more you 'play' with what you have seen – manipulation – the better you will remember what you have seen.

Let's prove it with some visual material – a Still Life.

For this Activity, starting on the next page, you'll need some basic drawing materials and free time.

Note: This Activity is designed for adults or students at Year 8 and beyond.





OBSERVATION

When observing a focus of attention, the objective is to extract as much information as possible for subsequent use.

Care has been taken with arranging a collection of objects providing a range of Visual Ingredients.

So far, this has been recorded for you as photographs.

SUMMARY

The Part A task is to add these images to your memory.

Initially, your observation will be as though the Still Life has just been set up and you are seeing it as an image-gathering task.

After a week, you will be asked to make a drawing showing what you remember of the Still Life.

ACTIVITY FOR PART A

- **Look** carefully at the photos of the Still Life with Clocks, (pages 37-38) for *two* minutes.

Now close this File.

WAIT A WEEK then reopen this File ...

- **After the week, from memory, use a soft pencil and sheet of A4 paper, to Draw the main features of the Still Life (the shapes of the objects and how they were arranged) from a single viewpoint. In your drawing try to show all that you remember about how it looked.**

Take as much time as you need.

When finished, mark the back of your drawing with an **A** – then put it in a folder for safe keeping.

- *Now, either read text at right, or wait a few days before reading.*

Background – preparation for Part B

The Activity that follows, next page, explores the use of *Motivation*, and especially **Manipulation** to improve your memory of a given image (the Still Life).

The *motivation* will hopefully come from your interest in testing a way to improve your memory.

The manipulation can be clearly prescribed under five headings:

1 Heightened perception – *engaging in extended and systematic visual exploration – looking for other views of the subject, evidence of Visual Effects such as shape, tone, pattern ... memories of other similar subjects ... (if manufactured) considering material involved, production methods, style ... your feelings about the subject matter; visually recording aspects of this exploration.*

2 Schematic representation – *making a conventionalised visualisation (abstraction) – drafting as technical drawing, map, or diagram (rather than 'pictorial', how it looks from a single point of view realistically as in a photograph or sketch).*

3 Change of mode – *switching communication processing mode – from visual (using imagery) to verbal (using speech or writing) or using number ...*

4 Elaboration – *imagining further visual developments/extensions of the existing subject – add to or alter in similar style and showing these elaborations using 1 or 2 above.*

5 Transformation – *changing form or arrangement of parts – alter in different style, or imagine aspects using different materials (clay instead of wood ...) ... or different context.*

The outcome of these manipulations provides 'depth of coding' in memory – you should remember more and for longer!

You can now move to Part B overpage ...

OBSERVATION and MANIPULATION

Heightened perception
Schematic representation
Change of mode
Elaboration
Transformation

SUMMARY

The Part B task is to not only re-observe the given subject, Still Life, but to undertake a series of five Activities (see previous page), manipulating what you re-observe.

After a week, you will be asked to make a new drawing, B, showing what you remember of the Still Life. Hopefully, this second drawing will show greater retained visual information than the first, A.

B

ACTIVITY FOR PART B – no time limit

• Look carefully at the *main Still Life photo, page 38* – use a finger to *Trace/Feel* the larger shapes, then do the same with some of the smaller shapes, then look at a blank surface and use **Mental Imagery** to recall how it looked; trace in the air.

• Explore the **Visual Ingredients** of the still life – decide what are the main shapes, which are light toned and dark toned; what colours are evident, and where they are placed in the composition; what evidence of symmetry, radiation, repetition, and pattern...?

Draw a thumbnail sketch (around 6 x 8 cms).

Compare the pattern on the plant leaves with the decorated fabric (above the mirror) and decoration on the black clock.

Think about the two clocks and eras they represent and other objects of that era.
(= 1 Heightened perception)

• Look at all the Still Life photos. Draw shapes, and make **Symbols**, to represent some of the objects; arrange these symbols as a **Map** showing the position of the main objects.

(= 2 Schematic representation)

• **Count** the objects in the Still Life – write the number at top left of a fresh piece of A4 paper. Mentally **Re-group** these objects in *relative size*: large, medium, small, and record the number in each group.

• In writing, on the same paper, **Describe** how these objects look – instead of a drawing use *visual words* such as pattern, texture and colour; compare shape, size and use other visual words such as symmetry and repetition. (This names **Visual Ingredients** from above.)

(= 3 Change of mode)

• In the middle of a new sheet of paper, lightly draw the Still Life. As a heavy drawing, **Extend** it with a wider view showing more of the objects or *other* objects that *could* have been included.

(= 4 Elaboration)

• **Imagine** that the clocks were a different style or different shape/form, or different material (metal instead of wood and marble; or plastic ... perhaps the mirror was a different shape in a different frame made of ..., what sort of flowers might be produced by the plant? Make a 'collage' of how the Still Life would look if *you* had arranged it.

(= 5 Transformation)

Now close this file and put away your B Activities.

WAIT A WEEK.

• **After the week, take a new sheet of A4 paper and, from memory, with a soft pencil, Draw the main features of the Still Life from the earlier single viewpoint of the main photo – then try to show as much detail as you remember.**

Take as much time as you need.

When finished, mark the back of your drawing **B**.

Now, find your drawing marked A.

Place the two drawings **A** and **B** side-by-side.

Look at them carefully – if all has gone well, **drawing B should show much more that you have remembered.**

Get someone else to try this Activity – compare their proof of enhanced memory with yours.

This should convince you that 'manipulation' works.

This Activity is also useful when searching for ideas for Visual communication.



Comprises 2 PDF files



Comprises 2 PDF files

For further information, please go to:

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PUBLICATIONS:

Response to Vision

- COMMUNICATING VISUALLY
- STORY and STORYTELLING
- NAMING THINGS SEEN



— keep taking a closer look at your world