CONCEPTS, CONSIDERATIONS AND METHODS
OF
MODULATIVE CONFIGURAL PAINTING
FOR
REALISM

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Fine Arts
by
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Thesis Statement:

A. All objects within a three dimensional space relate to that space in a definite form and fashion. The configuration of these forms can be discerned through the manner of organization of certain definable shapes within each given form. The abstract shapes existent, either randomly or by order of its nature within a given form, can be schematically arranged as a network of color planes on a two dimensional picture surface, in complementary and/or analogous hue relationships. This is the first order.

In the second order, by manner of their complex organization, by method of medium's application and technique of modulation, forms become powerful, real images. These images possess a visual force that is also further enhanced in sensual affect by representation of varying textural transitions, arbitrary angles, focal variety and the like.
B. In the development of the second order, Light plays a most important part in the development of this visual phenomenon. It is the most important vehicle, allowing the scrutiny of varying configural shapes within a given form, as well as producing dramatic effects by manner of variance in the degree of its intensity.

The photograph can serve as an effective and convenient conveyor of information, from the source or motif to be developed, to the painter. Thus the painter, by deliberate scheme of development, can carefully scrutinize, within the photograph, the manner of intricate arrangement of what are essentially flat shapes of color: these shapes of color produced by reflections of light and highlight, creating the illusion of image and form.
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INTRODUCTION

For many years, traditionalists somewhat scorned the idea of using unconventional, technological means of producing works of art. In the wake of the photographic intrusion into the sphere of artistic effort, many found it necessary to reevaluate such concepts. Being intimidated, as well as fascinated by photographic imagery, the painter and aesthetcian are constantly being forced to make choices-to receive or not to receive. They must ask themselves, "At what point does the implementation of technical devices destroy the art?" Yet, simultaneously, they must intelligently consider and accept the positive aids to creative stimuli that are to be found within the contemporary world; a world of sophisticated technology and technical media.

The contemporary artist must be a hallmark of his times and be able and willing to perceptively change within them, or serve as an impact on their change. He is never free of his environment but always a contending force within it. He need not be fettered by traditions of the past, but rather he can mature from and stabilize himself upon them. He then can grow from that point, seeking new horizons. It is this that separates the artist from the craftsman. He recognizes that what was yesterday a revolution may well be today a conventionality.
In doing my own work, I view the photograph as a positive, convenient conveyor of endless information to be found in elements of the "real" or tangible world. Within a close, uninhibited working relationship between the two mediums, photography and painting, there is a wealth of powerful, visual experiences to be had, if there is control. In my assessment of priorities, the primary concern is always the painting, therefore photography becomes a tool of my time, a means to an end, producing a new convention.

The first chapter of this thesis seeks to lay groundwork that puts into clearer perspective my own direction, and attempts to reflect the developments of both painting and photography, from photography's point of intrusion as a new medium, up to present trends in the area of "Realism".

Although hesitant to label my work as being that of the trend, "New Realism", I most definitely attempt not only to present images realistically, but by virtue of their transcendent order and organization, to also make them more than just "real" images. For this reason, I consider my work to be a sort of "Modulative Confiruralism", that by its process, results in "realistic" imagery. In this sense it is a form of Realism. In Chapter Two, I discuss the concepts of my style and direction, followed by a description of methods used in Chapter Three. This
is followed by a statement of conclusion with speculations for the future.
CHAPTER I
THE PARADOX OF THE PAINTERLY PHOTOGRAPH
AND THE
PHOTOGRAPHIC PAINTING

In order for anyone to deal with the arguments of painting versus photography, he must first look objectively at the physical elements as they first lent themselves to the all-important evolution of photography during the nineteenth century. Then he must further examine the progressions of both disciplines, simultaneously from that point. But let us go back much further to begin with, to the Renaissance, which was the first period in history to be aware of its own existence and to coin a label for itself.¹

An age of rebirth and vigor was the Renaissance, which truly attested to the inventiveness of man and his tendency to produce that which he felt represented the humanistic interests and concerns of man. During the Late Gothic and Early Renaissance, painters such as the Van Eyck brothers in Flanders displayed an uncanny and almost staggering ability to produce profound life-like images through the use of oil paint. The intricacy of detail as well as the exuberance

and accuracy of color were truly marvellous. Painters who possessed this type of expertise were highly revered and in the greatest demand.

One need only to examine Jan Van Eyck's painting entitled "Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride" done in 1434, which now hangs in the National Gallery, London to discover the awesome, painstaking care employed by this man to reproduce every intricate detail that was present in the setting at the time of the rendering. As a result, what must have taken months to produce appears to us as if it were done through the clicking of a shutter.

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1 Janson, p. 290.

2 Ibid., p. 290.
This brings me to my first point. People of the period of the Renaissance found a great scientific intrigue and fascination in the ability of the trained hand to achieve such feats as did the Van Eycks, Ruben, Rembrandt, and others, simply because the illusions they produced were so closely akin to what they felt they were seeing. It was "realistic". Without anything like a camera to record their visual realities, the trained draughtsman was invaluable for his depictions, interpretations and recordings of the images of his times, by his mastery of illusion. There would continue to be respect for this ability as shown primarily by the constant demand for portraits.

Now, let us progress to the early nineteenth century. After the period of the Renaissance, the inventive spirit of man, as well as the diversity of his ideas, ideals and philosophies, would know no bounds. Man was becoming "modern".

There had been early inquiries into the elementary principles of light-reflected images as far back as the time of Sir Isaac Newton. This could be seen through the "camera obscura", which was based on refracted rays of light passing through a small opening in a dark room or box producing images on a wall. However, the first chemical experimentation in photography took place only in the early nineteenth century and during the 1820's. about
1826, the first photograph had been made by Nicenhore Nienne from a window in France, using a sensitized pewter plate.¹ L.J.M. Daguerre made the first photograph which included a figure in 1839 by use of a silver-on-copper plate made light sensitive with silver iodide.²

I will continue with a synoptic chronology of photography's development; however, we must first come back to ask the more important question, "What was happening to the painters during this time?" Needless to say, the invasion of the camera created quite a stir within the painting world. Many painters would have to adjust styles merely because the camera would eventually be able to accomplish within minutes what it would take them months to achieve. The tragedy is that a non-acceptance of this fact at a time of fever-pitched interest in the photograph took its toll on many otherwise tremendously talented draughtsmen. One case in point was Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867) who was famous for his life-like portraiture. Although he pretended to dislike it, portraiture was his strongest gift and his steadiest source of income. He was in fact the last great professional in a field soon to be monopolized by the camera.³ He would be

²Ibid. p. 62
aligned with such past greats as Titian and Poussin as well as such contemporaries as David and others. His paintings were actually deceptive and brilliantly combined psychological depth and physical accuracy, with the final image showing movement from the original sketch. However, one casual look at his work today would unjustly dismiss this ingenuity, simply because our psyche has been heavily bombarded with the photograph, so that what we would utter upon sight of an Ingres painting would be "Wow, it looks just like a photograph, almost." (See fig. 3)

As a result of the camera's supposed powers, the period from the late nineteenth century on through most of the twentieth century saw a dramatic evolution and revolution of the painter's concepts, as well as new approaches to the two-dimensional surface. This was hopefully a means of counteracting the powers of the camera.

It would be unfair to say that the camera single-handedly served to intimidate the painter. On the contrary, many painters felt unaffected one way or the other, but I think it must be admitted that it did serve to precipitate much of the change in concept of how paint could be used on the canvas. The impressionists started off using paint to create subtle to brilliant effects of light by
Fig. 2. Jean-Auguste Dominque Ingres. Louis Bertin, pencil. 1832. Louvre, Paris.

Fig. 3. Ingres. Louis Bertin, 1832. Louvre, Paris.

1. Janson, p. 471.
2. Ibid., p. 471.
use of only suggested impressions of images and atmosphere through brushwork. Painters like Manet, Renoir and Monet lead the field.

The process of interpretation of life and its images increasingly became more introspective and psychological, as was evidenced by work of the Pre-Symbolists or Post-Impressionists, such as Cezanne, Van Gogh, Seurat and others. The prospects and properties of images were now not so much taken at face value. Use of color, form and shapes of images became adapted to the artist's own set of criteria. This was only the beginning and "Modern Art" was born. The Symbolists came—Gauguin and others, the Fauves—Rouault, Matisse, etc., the Expressionists—Nolde and others, on up to the Cubists—Picasso, Braque and many more. I could go on, but the point is that the intense amount of introspection and the fast paced, sophisticated intellectual development of all the undiscovered possibilities that the painter could lend himself to, might well have been catalyzed by the introduction of the photoraph back in the early 1800's.

This could be first sensed in the late 1840's when many painters had begun to feel that the Romantic emphasis on feeling and imagination was merely an escape from the realities of the time. Such a painter was Gustave Courbet, who right at the time when photography was becoming a
phenomenon of the day, made the statement: "The modern artist must rely on his own direct experience, he must be a 'Realist'." By his reference to realism, Courbet meant something more akin to the "naturalism" of Caravaggio. He played upon the stark allegorical revelations to be found in the common man or the simple but unprudish individual, beyond pretense. The realism employed in his work was blunt and highly symbolic with the real statement becoming almost a parody of absurdity.

Later, Edouard Manet, an admirer of Courbet's ideologies, showed in much of his early work that which dealt with the viewing of nature and its components, both pretentiously and without pretense, simultaneously (the seemingly absurd truth of reality). To Manet, the world of painting had "natural laws" that are distinct from those of familiar reality, and the painters first loyalty is to his canvas, not to the outside world.

By this statement, one can almost sense the emergence of a mode of consciousness that by its introspective implications will give the painter claim to a supreme perceptual distinction that transcends the commonly accepted, everyday visual experience. Art for Art's Sake would avidly describe this syndrome and would become a matter of

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1 Janson, p. 489.

2 Ibid., p. 490.
contention between progressives and conservatives for the rest of the century.

Manet became intensely dedicated to an ideal of "pure painting", to the belief that brush strokes and color patches themselves, not what they stand for, are the artist's primary reality. This premise would consistently reoccur as a thesis of modern painting, especially strong during the Fauvist movement of the early 1900's.

Fig. 4. Édouard Manet. A Bar at the Folies-Bergère. 1881-12. The Courtauld Collection. London.

1 Janson, p. 490.
2 Ibid., p. 491.
Manet's paintings, whatever their subject, have an emotional reticence that can easily be mistaken for emptiness unless his purpose is understood. Courbet is said to have remarked that Manet's pictures were as flat as playing cards. Manet had begun to eschew most conventional methods of transmuting a flat surface into a pictorial space.¹

I've explored the direction of Edouard Manet specifically because of his immense presence at the forefront of change from Romanticism and Neo-Classicism into what became the Impressionism of the late 1860's.

What brought about this "revolution of the color patch" use by Manet? Janson's History of Art makes the following inference:

"It is tempting to think that he was impelled to create the new style by the challenge of photography. The 'pencil of nature', invented a quarter-century before, had vindicated the objective truth of Renaissance perspective, but it established a standard of representational accuracy that no hand-made image could hope to rival. Painting needed to be rescued from competition with the camera. This Manet accomplished by insisting that a painted canvas is, above all, a material surface covered with pigments— that we must look at it, not through it."²

The counter-response to the camera had been initiated and its subliminal impact on the painter was perhaps much greater than its physical austerity.

¹Janson, pp. 490, 491.
²Janson, p. 492.
Manet gave no name to his style, but his followers of course came to be known as Impressionists: the name being coined in 1874 after a hostile critic had looked at a picture entitled *Impression: Sunrise*, by Claude Monet.¹ And so Impressionism was in full propulsion, making brilliant interpretations of nature by virtue of the phenomenon of light and light as color.

This the camera could not do. It could not take subject matter and give it vibrant, interpretative brush strokes of brilliant color, creating works that emanate all of one's dreams. The shortcomings of the marvelous light recording box did become increasingly apparent, but its dynamics were least affected. Later, color was finally achievable by the camera to further intensify the duel between painting and photography. It should be noted that, even though intimidated by the photo, painters did reservedly use them as convenient sources of subject matter for paintings. The imagery was generally greatly altered in the painting from that found in the photo.

¹Janson, p. 492.
Fig. 5. Edgar Degas. The Glass of Absinthe, 1876. The Louvre. Paris.

1Janson, p. 492.
Fig. 6. Edgar Degas, Impressionist. Prima Ballerina. c. 1876, Pastel. The Louvre, Paris.

Fig. 7. Paul Cezanne, Post-Impressionist. Fruit Bowl, Glass, and Apples. 1879-82, Collection of Rene Lecomte, Paris.

1Janson, p. 493.
2Ibid., p. 506.
Fig. 6. Vincent Van Gogh, Post-Impressionist. Self-Portrait, 1889. Collection of Mr. & Mrs. John Hay Whitney, N.Y.

Fig. 9. Georges Seurat, Neo-Impressionist, Pointilist. Bathers, 1883-84. The Tate Gallery, London.

1 Janson, p. 506.
2 Ibid., p. 507.
Fig. 10. Pablo Picasso, Cubist. Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon, 1906-07. The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.

\footnote{Janson, p. 525.}
Simultaneously however, while painting was moving more into abstraction, photography, at a similar rate of speed was becoming more expert at producing sharp, "realistic" images by virtue of its improving technical development. It is because of the sophistication of the technical and mathematical elements of photography that for many years kept it from being accepted as an intuitive art form by others (by artists in particular). The difference between the achievements of the painter with his brush and the photographer with his shutter are still a basis for argument.

At one time Daguerreotypes, as they were called after the inventor Louis J.M. Daguerre, became the immediate sensation and major precipitator of attention towards the development of photography as a medium to be taken seriously. At the same time an Englishman, Fox Talbot, was making his "film" by coating paper with silver. The result was a paper negative capable of reproducing many prints by use of sunlight and sensitized paper.¹

By the 1860's, Daguerreotypes and Talbot's paper negatives had become obsolete because of the introduction of chemically treated glass plates as "film". Glass proved to be an excellent base for the sensitive chemical emulsion because of its complete transparency not hindering the

passage of light, thus making sharp, clear prints possible. Scott Archer was the main proponent and developer of this technique.¹

Because of Archer's discovery or process, photographers were intrigued enough by the imagery capable of being produced by wet plates, as clumsy as they were, to lug heavy equipment to all parts of the world. Such pioneers were William H. Jackson, who photographed America's West, and Englishman Roger Fenton, an early war photographer.²

In 1876, the heroic trials of wet-plate photographers came to an end with the advent of dry plates which were based on a gelatin formula that dried fast and was stable. Richard L. Maddox is given credit for its development in 1871. These dry plates could be prepared ahead of time and because they were much faster and more sensitive than the old wet-plates, action could now be "stopped" for the first time. The much faster film called for more efficient, faster mechanical shutter devices on cameras. This, along with studies by Eadweard Muybridge on locomotion allowed men to see for the first time how they actually move.³

¹Mueller & Rudolph, p. 66.
²Ibid., p. 66.
³Ibid., p. 69.
The phenomenon of the camera became even more widespread as the invention of roll film and an easily operated hand-held box camera opened photography to the amateur. A dry-plate manufacturer in Rochester, New York named George Eastman wondered why a material more flexible than the heavy glass plates couldn't be used to support emulsion. He wanted a material that could be wound up on a spool, and put inside a camera, exposing only one frame at a time. By 1889, Henry M. Reichenbach, who worked for Eastman, had perfected such a backing, made from a mixture of nitrocellulose and wood alcohol. It proved successful and was used the world over until the 1930's when the less flammable cellulose acetate replaced it.\(^1\)

Meanwhile, Eastman perfected the film roll and the camera to hold it—the Kodak. A masterwork of simplicity, the Kodak reduced photography to two easy steps: Sighting the subject through the viewer and clicking the shutter.\(^2\) The phenomenon of the camera and the photograph had come of age and was a tremendous impact on the world, greatly modifying its manner of seeing things. It created a visual dynamic that was appropriately in tune with and necessary to accompany the wave of the industrial revolution.

\(^1\)Mueller & Rudolph, p. 71.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 71.
Even though all images produced at this time were black-and-white and subject to problems of preservation, the process of capturing and preserving a convincing image by the focussing of its reflected light through a lens onto a sensitized recorder became quite naturally the major means of documenting events, social as well as historical. Thus, the use of paintings for recording times and events became more and more unconventional, where it had been the only conventional means before its gradual displacement by the camera.

Photography took on further challenges as its technology expanded. Ironically, the initial motivation for the photograph was essentially the same as was the painting's, that of capturing images of the visible world for their natural, aesthetic beauty and as a record for posterity. In spite of this, photography became entrapped in its own phenomenon. The accuracy to be achieved in its recorded light images was greatly contrasted by painters' selective interpretative statements of the same imagery, and this became the heralded, major distinction between the two mediums: The finer painting vs. the too technical photography.

In the final analysis, however, one must admit that the painter and the photographer could perceive equally well, but that for a time, the rigidity of the technicalities of photographic processes held certain limitations
for the photographer, or so it seemed. Even in light of this, there have been and still are, many photographers who employ both the perceptions of a painter and the techniques of photography to produce what they felt made an artistic photograph. Many serious early pioneers of photography were originally painters who for one reason or another became disillusioned by their lack of success in painting, or may have been excellent painters, just seeking the challenge of transferring their aesthetic sensitivities to a faster medium. Of course, many if not most painters were and are today amateur photographers. However, this is not inversely characteristic of the majority of photographers.

The fast development of photography for its capability of producing a sharp, clear, visually accurate image, and stepping further to enable the most inexperienced, ordinary individual to achieve the same, created much discussion. On one hand, it produced a commercial phenomenon, but on the other helped to make many of the previously accomplished works by a once small, select number of craftsmen obsolete, cliche images, seen hundreds of times since.

Photographers of the late 19th century who were genuinely artists at heart made attempts to paint with their cameras using techniques of deliberate distortion of images to create a painterly effect. In spite of frustrating results imposed by the mechanical limitations of this
technical medium, they persist. However, within the
bounds of those limitations, a long line of photographers
made very strong and penetrating statements with their
photographs that opened the medium up to the aesthetician
for more serious consideration. The answer, many felt, was
not in seeking to imitate painting, but rather in explor-
ing more closely the positive, distinct attributes of photog-
raphy itself.
In 1891, after a long love affair with painterly affectation in photography, such as soft focus to produce "artistic" qualities, Peter Henry Emerson, an artist-photographer (1856-1936), made a statement of seemingly bitter disillusionment. He stated that "a great painter", whom he did not identify, had shown him the fallacy of confusing art an nature, and that experiments by Hurter and Driffield (two scientists and amateur photographers who studied the relationship between exposure and density in the negative) had convinced him that control of the image was less than he had expounded. "Photography was not art."

In January of 1891, in a black-bordered pamphlet, The Death of Naturalistic Photography, he explained that:

"The limitations of photography are so great that, though the results may, and sometimes do, give a certain aesthetic pleasure, the medium must always rank the lowest of all the arts... for the individuality of the artist is cramped, in short, it can scarcely show itself. Control of the picture is possible to a slight degree, by varied focusing, by varying the exposure (but this is working in the dark), by development I doubt, and lastly, by a certain choice in printing methods.


2 Ibid., p. 99.
But the all-vital powers of selection and rejection are fatally limited, bound in by fixed and narrow barriers. No differential analysis can be made, no subduing of parts, save by dodging—no emphasis—save by dodging, and that is not pure photography, impure photography merely a confusion of limitations... I thought once (Hurter and Driffield have taught me differently) that true values could be altered at will by development. They cannot; therefore, to talk of getting values in any subject whatever as you wish and getting them true to nature, is to talk nonsense.

..... In short, I throw my lot in with those who say that photography is a very limited art. I deeply regret that I have come to this conclusion."  

Although Emerson could not recall the fresh spirit he had brought to photography, he did not give up photography. His bold renunciation was more a matter of semantics than of aesthetics, for to him "art and "painting" appear to have been synonymous.  

The acceptance of photography as an art became a burning issue and scenes of outright campaigning on both sides resulted. Various photo-clubs developed and held exhibitions that were intended to project the artistic capabilities of photography as a pictorial art. Salons became the order of the day and all forms of propaganda were used to produce psychological associations between fine art principles and pictorial photography. Jurors were often found to be painters, art critics, sculptors, printers, etc.

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2Ibid., p. 99.
At these international exhibitions a most frequent and honored American exhibitor was Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946). He had won his first recognition from Emerson, who awarded him the first prize in a contest held by the British Amateur Photographer in 1887. It was the first of a hundred and fifty medals Stieglitz was to win.\(^1\) Stieglitz carried on the fight for the recognition of photography as an independent art from the point where Emerson renounced it. During the early 1900's, he organized the Photo-Secession, which was a group of artist-photographers who were determined to further promote the acceptance of photography as an art.\(^2\) The biggest problem with this was that many of the works produced had an affected, pictorial quality about them, but lacked a certain sustenance of imagery that went beneath just the surface quality.

One thing groups like the Photo-Secession did was bring to photography an aesthetic self-awareness rarely encountered previously. This type of spirit would continue to exist and play a part in keeping photography from being merely a tool of the documentalist. Salons, independent exhibitions and similar interest groups steadily increased in number and were supported by the emergence of highly

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\(^1\) Dowhali, p. 102.

proficient craftsmen who added each his or her own touch of style and conventions to the expanded acceptance of photography as a viable art form.

Out of the Photo-Secession alone came, in addition to Steiglitz, such noted photographers as Robert Demachy, (1859-1936) noted for his Lautrec-like photogravure poster designs; Clarence H. White (1871-1925), noted for his soft focus, deep shadowed works with brilliant highlights and strong linear composition; Edward Steichen (1879-1973) known for his intense studies of sculptural artforms in composition with human images; and others.

As it developed, more straight photography was being used in addition to the affected use of the medium. It became evident that the aesthetic use of the photographic technique, the appreciation of both its potentials and its limitations, and the divorce of photography from certain

\[1\] Newhall, p. 103.
of the canons guiding the aesthetic principles of the other visual arts, was becoming recognized by critic and artist alike.\footnote{Newhall, p. 111.}

By 1907, Stieglitz had become most supportive of this view and gave to photographic art his finest work, perhaps: The Steerage. (Photo unavailable.)

Much of the work done in photography from this point showed an increased degree of "... concern for technical proficiency as an important characteristic of the medium." Subject matter was not only be selected for its social and emotional impact, but also for its properties of pure design. Men like Paul Strand (1890- ) showed this in anything from a town hall building to an Italian family composed outside their home. Charles Sheeler (1883-1965) and Edward Weston (1886-1958), both American photographers, made a truly formidable homage to the qualities and visual impact of pure design and texture in their environments. Weston's work in particular shows technical excellence and focal clarity accompanied by qualities of abstract pattern. This can be seen most specifically in his famous works, Artichoke, Helved, 1930 (fig. 16) and White Dunes, Oceano, California (fig. 17). He had no qualms toward realism and approached it directly.
This fusion of strong imagery and pure design is bound to have been influenced by abstract movements in painting and conversely served to influence trends in painting of the mid-twentieth century. Ansel Adams (1902–), trained as a musician, also showed a high technical proficiency in his work depicting the order and natural power of nature's design in his sharp focal photo-images. Adams really epitomized in his work the height of technical control and visual pleasure achievable by that control. This can be seen in his works, Mono Lake, California, 1947 and Mount Williamson- Clearing Storm, 1944 (figs. 18 & 19).

The growing appreciation and acceptance of straight photography during this time prompted a closer look at other photographers who were making social comments in their work and playing upon the strength of mood of their images to induce a sympathetic feeling in the viewer. Such photographers were Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940) and Dorothea Lange (1895-1965), famous for their poignant documentary photos of the proletariat. Examples of this are Hine's Carolina Cotton Mill, 1909 (fig. 20) which is a statement on the social conditions of child labor in the early 1900's, and Dorothea Lange's now famous, Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California, 1936 (fig. 21).
Early Photographic Attempts for
Pictorial and Painterly Effect

Fig. 12. Hill & Adamson: *The McCandlish children.*
Calotype, c. 1845. MOMA GET.

1Newhall, p. 41.
Fig. 13. Lewis Carroll: Alice Liddell, the original Alice in Wonderland, c. 1859. (E1 (A.L. Coburn Coll.)

1Newhall, p. 61.
Fig. 14. Degas: Self portrait with Zoe, c. 1895. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

\[\text{Newhall, p. 95.}\]
Fig. 15. Strand: The Family, Luzzara, Italy, 1953. MOMA GEN

\[\text{Newhall, p. 121.}\]
Fig. 16.
Edward Weston:
Artichoke, halved. 1930.

Fig. 17.
Edward Weston:

\(^1\)Newhall, p. 126.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 127.
Fig. 16. Ansel Adams: Mono Lake, California, 1947.

\footnote{Newhall, p. 132.}
Fig. 19. Adams: Mount Williamson—Clearing Storm, 1944.

\[\text{Newhall, p. 133.}\]
Fig. 20. Lewis W. Hine: Carolina Cotton Mill, 1908.

1Newhall, p. 140.
Fig. 21. Dorothea Lange: *Migrant mother*. Nipomo, California, 1936.

1Newhall, p. 143.
The paradox here exists in the fact that photography, which originally invaded the avenues of the painter and served to catalyze his deepening conceptual introspection, has not ever yielded to the accusation of being just a medium of accuracy and extreme realism, as it has been so often branded. The idea of the "painterly photograph" even sounds a bit paradoxical when viewed in the light of all that is being discussed here.

However, the trends of thought found within both disciplines are becoming increasingly receptive to each other and now many artists are bringing the discussions full circle to intuitively and sensitively incorporate many of the positive aspects of both mediums in their work.

Although color photography was introduced by the British physicist, James Clerk Maxwell, late in the 1860's, it did not become truly advanced in technology until after World War II. The advent of color in photography is just now coming of age. Its early use was so limited not only because of its expensiveness, but also because it was difficult to control and produce truly accurate color. The greatest portion of color photography's sophistication has developed within the last two decades.

Color produced a phenomenon of its own in photography, but it has had its limitations with photographers' attempts to use it effectively as an artistic medium. The problem
had been primarily that, while brilliant colors were achievable with the advanced films, they were highly plastic and superficial in quality and hardly ever what one actually saw. As Beaumont Newhall put it in his History of Photography:

"...The temptation is to choose subjects which are themselves a blaze of color, and to ignore the fact that color is everywhere, and that it is not the colorful subject itself, but the photographers' handling of it, which is creative...

The line between the photographer and the painter is no more clearly drawn than in color photography. Imitation is fatal. By the nature of his medium, the photographer's vision must be rooted in reality... he cannot hope to rival the painter with the range of pigments which he can place at will upon his canvas. On the other hand the painter cannot hope to rival the accuracy, detail, and above all the authenticity of the photograph..."

This statement was made prior to the remarkable advances made in color photography in recent years. However, even though color photography is undoubtedly an intriguing and fascinating medium, the majority of the better-known photographers of the past two decades have shown a preference to black and white over the use of color for their most serious work, leaving color to be used primarily by those in advertising and other commercial areas. Edward Weston addressed the dilemma this way:

"..." The prejudice many photographers have against color photography comes from not thinking of color as

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1 Newhall, p. 194.
form. You can say things with color that can't be said in black-and-white... Those who say that color will eventually replace black-and-white are talking nonsense. The two do not compete with each other. They are different means to different ends."

In regard to the last sentence of Newhall's statement quoted earlier, "...the painter cannot hope to rival the accuracy, detail, and above all the authenticity of the photograph...", one must view the contemporary trends of a New Realism in painting, primarily in this country. Indeed, the seemingly endless discussions of differentiation between the disciplines have truly come full circle. Unabashed, extremely facile painters of the last decade and a half opened up a whole new and exciting realm of encounter with the canvas to produce powerful, vibrant, contemporary, real images in a dynamic "New Realism". What for many years had been "tabu" as the result of photography's intimidations has now found a rebirth or a new birth from a different kind of embryo. The new embryo was conceived within the womb of a contemporary, hypersensitive society conditioned by a world of highly sophisticated media and an ultra-technology. The "New Realist", as he has been called, creates that which is acutely attuned to the age in which he lives. Unfettered by tradition, he employs the positive advantages to be found in a highly sensitive use of the technical media available to him. The visual images

1Newhall, p. 104.
produced may indeed be those of photographic sources, but the results become transforming and unique.

In an exhibition of major significance in Ohio, both at the New Gallery in Cleveland and later at the Akron Art Institute, works by many of the early as well as recent proponents of so called "New Realism" trends could be viewed. The show included painters such as Phillip Pearlstein, noted for his striking male and female nudes composed in cropped poses; Don Eddy, noted for his reflective, multiple image paintings; Kay Kurt, with her remarkable approach to illusions of minute objects metamorphically depicted as plastic organisms; Ralph Goings, with his super-ultra, chromium creations; Ben Schonzeit; Frances Kuehn; James Valerio; Janet Fish and others.

Robert Doty, in a published brochure on the event, acknowledged the following:

".... The invention of photography eased the painter's desire to attain an absolute rendering of the world as he knew it. Artistic transformation of various aspects of reality were approved and developed. The artist interpreted the things and events he saw and represented them as subjective symbols of his thoughts and emotions.

During the past decade, there has been a striving for a more perfect realism, a search for the means to retain reality rather than let it become the vehicle of subjective correction or idealization. A new assertion was made for the importance of visual perception as the basis for the structure of the image. Any possibility of meaning was denied and the formal qualities, planes, space, etc., became the subject, rather than the object itself. New attention was given to the meticulous rendering of surfaces as a means of emphasizing a tactile illusion. Photography, the air-brush and large scale
were employed as techniques to achieve an even greater sense of verisimilitude. The result was a flood of images which heighten the impression of physical presence..."¹

There is some diversity within the trend itself shown by varied methods of approach to the canvas, either by use of brush, air-brush, projection or straight use of a particular motif. However, the visual impact of the results gives unanimity to that ominous reportage that is "New Realism''. Whether Sharp-focal, Photo-real, Hyper-real, or Real, the diversity of approach leaves room for discussion, even amongst the so-called Realists themselves, which is healthy. We must remember that "New Realism'' is not a school and by many, not really considered a movement by virtue of the dispersion of its implementors, throughout all parts of the country, East to West, many never having ever met. This makes our appraisal of the scene not only inevitable, but also timely.

In a recent publication, Hyperrealism, Linda Chase, the author, takes a most timely look at this growing art form. Without reservation she examines again what she terms "an exciting, viable, controversial, and quintessentially modern art form"². In her book are striking examples of

¹Selections In Contemporary Realism. (pamphlet . Edited by Robert Doty, (Akron, Oh.: the Akron Art Institute, 1974), designed by Roger Boltz, F. Eugene Smith Assoc.

Works by Persons in The Akron Art Institute

"New Realist" Exhibit, Oct. 27-Dec. 1, 1974

Fig. 22. Janet Fish, *Six Glasses of Water*, oil, 1973.

Fig. 23. James Valerio, *Pat and Paul*, oil, 1973.

\(^1\) Doty, *Selections In Contemporary Realism*, p. 3.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 5.
Fig. 24. Philip Pearlstein, Female Model Seated on Iron Bench. oil, 1973.

1 Doty, p. 5.
Fig. 25. Ben Schonzeit. Linda, acrylic, 1974.

Fig. 26. Kay Kurt. Untitled (detail) oil, 1974.

1 Doty, p. 6.
2 Ibid., p. 6.
Fig. 27. Don Eddy. *New Shoes for H.*, acrylic. 1973.
work done by many recognized painters of the Realist vein, in addition to some mentioned earlier. To be seen are such painters as: Richard Estes, noted for his highly reflective, semi-abstract, realistic paintings (fig. 28); Chuck Close, who doesn't identify himself with the Realist movement, noted for his painstaking renderings of bigger-than-life-size human faces (fig. 29); Richard McLean, with his modern western-rodeo, high style paintings (fig. 30); David Parrish, noted for his anthology on the phenomenon of the American motorcycle (fig. 31); John Kacere, with his powerful studies of striking pure design inherent in the female torso and posterior—not in its nudity, but rather, more sensually, by subtle contrasts of skin to dress or lingerie seen close up and objectively larger than life-size (fig. 32); as well as many others. In her reference to these painters, Chase States:

"...With his use of the photograph, the New Realist painter combines the tools of technology to record the objects and icons of the modern world. Rejecting the emotional subjectivity of earlier realist painting, he reports what is. The paintings present visual fact without comment on the pictorial subject. The New Realist, like all of us, is media's child... he has forced a new way of seeing which derives from the emotional distance of media and employs the wealth of precise and concentrated data available through the camera.... reality is rendered with a purity we have come to accept as real through the ubiquity of the photographic image..."1

1Chase, Hyperrealism, p. 7.
An interesting characteristic of the "New Realist" image, an image which transcends the realism of pre-camera days, is that the sequence, from the early reaction to the camera to greater introspection in painting to abstract directions, has served to give the "New Realist" a much more intense understanding of the nature of objects and elements of the physical world. Mindful of this tradition, he has been able to achieve powerful visual imagery that is very complex, therefore unique. The viewer recognizes immediately that what he is seeing is something much more than just an illusion. It is a dynamic phenomenon on canvas.

For most of the painters currently working in this vein the use of photographic motifs is essential. Many, when interviewed in the November-December 1972 issue of *Art in America*, alluded to this, yet at the same time gave slightly different, but mostly similar reasons for using them. For example, Tom Black stated that in his interest in developing the cross-section of an engine for its "abstract design" qualities, he found that taking his own photos gave him the clarity of parts he needed for his study series. He feels that the camera makes a two-dimensional approximation of the three-dimensional reality in a way that can aid the painter.¹

¹"The Photo-Realists: 12 Interviews", *Art In America*, November-December 1972. (Whitney Communications Corp.) p. 75.
Fig. 25. Richard Estes: Diner, 1971.

\[1\text{Chase, p. 16.}\]
Fig. 29. Chuck Close: Bob, acrylic, 1969–70.

Fig. 30. Richard McLean: Hustler Charger, oil, 1971.

1"12 Interviews", Art In America, p. 77.

Fig. 31. David Parrish: Motorcycle X, 197...
Fig. 32. John Kacere: From "Panty Series". (Title unavailable.)

Chase, Hyperrealism, p. 36.
Fig. 33. Ralph Goings: Airstream Trailer, oil, 1970, Neue Galerie, Aachen, Germany.

1Seitz, p. 59.
Richard Estes states that he started using photographs for lack of models. It was convenient yet at the same time he found interesting things happening in photographs of subjects other than figures. His scrutiny of the design and order inherent in the city was enhanced by being able to study his photographs in the studio. He later realized that taking a series of shots on a certain subject gave him interesting choices.¹

David Parrish stated that, "Since I have to chase the subject down in the first place, I could never try to draw it; it would take forever. I'd get too involved with the drawing... to get the kind of information I need to do the kind of painting I want, I start from the photograph. It's strictly a means to an end."²

Consistently, the majority of the painters of the "New Realist" vein express the sentiment that the "photo" is merely a means to an end, mostly a convenient tool, the drawing for the painting to be done, a source of detailed information, etc. He generally does not accept the photograph as the end statement itself, but rather transforms, modifies or makes clearer what is given him in the photograph.

¹ "12 Interviews", Art In America, pp. 76-79.
² Ibid., p. 83.
On the whole, the acutely aware and technically proficient "realist" painter of today is not inhibited by the photograph because he has truly come to understand it. He respects the photograph and those who are photographers. Likewise, the trend in contemporary photography is not in competition against the painter, but rather an intense realization of its own distinct and technically unique qualities. Perhaps the time has come when painters and photographers need no longer feel intimidated by each other's disciplines.

END OF CHAPTER 1
CHAPTER II

CONCEPTS
OF
MODULATIVE, CONFIGURAL PAINTING
FOR
REALISM

In the last part of Chapter I, contemporary trends in painting that were termed "New Realism" were viewed and discussed. My present direction could very well be described as such, and I don't reject that description, but find it necessary to further describe it more as "Modulative Configural Realism" with implications that distinguish it from other forms of contemporary realism.

Like many of the "New Realists", I view contemporary realism as being much more than, and not the same as, the trends of realism prior to the age of "Modern Art". The realist painter today has the advantage of insights and perceptions that are subliminally affected by an era of intense, constant, introspective deductions about his environment. Modes of abstraction have given him a pre-conditioning that provides him with a means for internal analysis of objects in this environment, enabling him to produce a powerful visual surface phenomenon that is imbued with and enriched by these sophisticated presents.
However, unlike some contemporary realist painters, I do not aim to produce a flawless image. I impose certain limitations upon myself because I feel that it is still possible to lose the art, if process becomes "key-punch" perfection. There must still in my mind be present a respect for the medium as paint: the viewer must still recognize it as paint, smell it as paint, but see a visual transformation that epitomizes the powers of "painter and paint" as one.

The illusions I create are not attempts at the super real. It is also important that the images not become too pictorial, or give undue attention to setting. Those painters who paint projections of unaltered slide images, for example, may indeed create super-real imagery, but the extreme minimization of any human touch can be, in my opinion, somewhat detrimental to the art of the thing.

Subject selection should also be sensitively made and objectively approached as opposed to over-emphasizing the subject itself. What is painted is not as important as the manner in which it is painted.
Modulative Configuralism

I use the term "Modulative Configuralism" as a description of the style and concept of my work. As observed in the thesis statement, I view each object or element, animate or inanimate, as holding a definite place in space, and therefore relating to that space in a definite fashion by its form and position. The configuration, meaning in this case, the essential structural make-up, as well as contour of these forms) can be discerned or realized through the manner of organization of specific, definable shapes within each given form. These shapes may be initially realized by reproducing the characteristics of the material, its value response to light and the position of the element in a given space.

In the first analysis, these inherent shapes produced by the form can be seen as being basically irregular abstract shapes. They are arranged in a sort of network or irregular pattern, configuring a whole image.

Likewise, upon discernment of this inherent arrangement, I can consequently be provided enough information from the source to schematically organize, by drawing a correlating network of flat planes on the picture surface (in this case, the canvas). This part of the perceived image is all basically abstract in nature, and pertains to the essence of structural pattern within the form.
The quality of design of the form or forms, and their arrangement, must be carefully considered for harmony, rhythm, and balance in composition. The subject becomes objectively less significant than the success of the arrangement of its configural design on the picture plane. Schematic or actual color denotation of the internal shapes, as well as the technique of modulation of the forms, sensual, textural, and focal variety in the images, etc., all contribute to the attainment of a convincing "real" visual illusion. This illusion is also powerful by virtue of its sophisticated scheme of organization and development.

In material subject matter, where emphasis is placed on structural, as well as tactile properties, this configural concept can be most readily observed. Let's look at one painting, entitled, Color Configuration: Paper Series 74 #1 (fig. 34) seen here in detail (fig. 35). This particular painting was based on the idea that any material holding some sort of definite position in space could be translated by the painter into a unique, schematic arrangement of its collective, configural shapes.
As master planner, it was my job, once I had perceived certain changes of shape and pattern occurring within even so random a thing as crumpled paper, to translate this potentially pure design into a schematically controlled presentation. The entire form is achieved by the inner development of each integral shape as form and color. The specific color denotations here are primarily based on a "limited palette" concept. The decisions of what shapes
assume what hue, in this case, are made according to a carefully planned, balanced order of arrangement of complementary and analogous hues, derived from the pre-determined limited palette.

So the basic idea behind most of my work derives from this conceptual discovery in my series of paintings and drawings of crumpled paper. These studies are not done with photographs, but rather from set-ups of large sheets of brown paper that were crumpled and allowed to rest, by chance, on a studio table. The motif of the paper as well as a look at the painting in progress can be seen in Fig.

Fig. 36. Shot of studio showing painting in progress with paper motif on table.
The "conceptual discovery" more specifically becomes that perhaps all material elements of the real world, no matter that their position in space be achieved by chance or by deliberation, assume a certain configural design arrangement that is left to the sensitive eye of the artist to scrutinize, control and develop. Once he sees the inherent structural patterns, he can then proceed to develop an image from them; one that is compositionally ordered by design and balance in the drawing of shapes. Then it is schematically ordered by arrangement of color. This color can be bold, moderate, or subtle, depending upon the color information provided by the subject.

The prospects of examining other material subject matter for a realization of the constancy of this premise becomes increasingly intriguing to me. It is not so much what the subject matter is, as much as the manner of the handling of it. But I can't leave it that open: I have to be selective.

My feeling is that certain material, either alone or in combination with each other, contain a certain visual dynamics, by virtue of their response to light. Achieving a realistic and sensual image in paint is interesting, working with such synthetic subject matter as cloth, plastic, leather, glass and metal. Composed in textural relationship
with each other as well as in addition to the soft, subtle sensation of skin, these elements make an excellent base for subject selection.

**Use of Photographic Motifs**

Because of my concern for being able to carefully scrutinize the manner of configuration of shapes within the forms, formulated basically by the value response to the light imposed, it seems to me that the photograph is a most logical means of capturing this visual information needed from the source of interest. The photograph, I feel, also serves as a convenience, enabling me to work from certain subject sources which may either be arbitrarily arrived upon or deliberately staged but which, by their transitory natures are impossible to maintain for any long period of time. With the photo, which serves only as a tool or a means to an end, I have the source and the information I need, allowing me to work at my own set pace.

**Manner of Motif Selection**

Thus developed my union with the photographic image. My manner of thinking when looking for subject matter to photograph becomes mainly that of capturing the qualities of materials and objects in space so that shapes and patterns of design can be seen and expounded upon. The prospect
of creating a compelling illusion of certain textures, intriguing to me, is consistently a consideration in my selection of subject matter.

When including the human form, it is my intention to not allow it to possess any subjective importance or significance. It therefore becomes important to take the photograph in such a way as to include the structural form, design and textural attributes of the human form within the composition, but without any primary concern for the picturesque. My paintings and drawings become increasingly objective and design oriented.

An important thing to note here is that technical proficiency with the camera is not a major concern in the photography; I just want to get the elements down compositionally, and to provide a good light for the realization of their form and configuration. Once having received the finished photographs, usually taken in a series, I can make numerous choices and decisions about the image I desire to place on canvas. The image, having been once cropped by framing in the taking of the picture, is again subject to cutting and cropping before arriving at the desired compositional idea. Often times I want to completely modify the image by changing the drawing or the color, an act which I fell is the painter's prerogative. This is just one way in which the painted image can be a more satisfying
visual phenomenon than the photo itself. I do not intend to be dictated to by the photograph. I constantly remind myself that although I am after a concise, realistic, visual image on canvas, it is still important to modify the photographic image at times for the sake of the painting.

These two photos, (figs. 37 & 38) are both examples of working photographs used in the paintings, Boots and Shoes.

Fig. 37. Working photograph for painting, Boots and Shoes.
(fig. 39) and Posture In Swing, Pink Satin Baggies (fig. 42) respectively. Notice how the color schemes, as well as the manner of composition, have been completely altered in the paintings from those in the photographs.

Fig. 35. Working photograph for painting, Posture In Swing, Pink Satin Baggies.
By careful analysis and a close scrutiny of the photographic image, one begins to recognize that every speck of color is by nature merely a flat shape of light's refraction off the subject. Upon the basis of such a revelation, and keeping it constantly in mind that the photograph is a sophisticated maze of these flat shapes of light and highlight, it becomes mostly a matter of accurately creating correlating shapes of the image on the canvas. The basic large shapes inherent within the image are primarily abstract with the development of increasingly intricate shapes and patterns giving the illusion of form and space. At that point the image's production becomes more one of modulative process rather than fragmented design. It is this process of application of the paint and treatment of the forms that produces the realistic illusion, beginning with a schematic arrangement of flat, abstract shapes of color.

Many times, with some series ideas, I find it good to work with highly developed drawings of the image or images to get a strong feeling for the form in them. A successful drawing may become an idea for a painting, or sometimes I find that the drawing itself is the height of attainment for a particular image, so I don't follow with a painting. In most instances, however, I'm pretty certain of the visual results that are achievable with the image I've selected, and go straight to the canvas for sketching. The sketch
generally gives a rough idea of the placement of each configural shape I've discerned within the forms as being a major planar area of the design structure of the composition to be developed.

Use of Color—Schematic Organization

Within the first order of development of the composition, each pre-determined configural shape is designated a specific hue. That hue is derived from a limited palette of oil pigments. The hue distribution is schematically arranged through deliberate planning of the surface in certain paintings where the source is basically colorless. For example, again in the painting, Color Configuration: Paper Series 74-#1 (fig. 34) one can see that from a completely colorless source (the crumpled paper) I have deliberately and systematically assigned specific hues to each essential configural shape within the form. The colors are determined first within the range of a self-imposed limited palette of pigments and then secondly by a hue's complementary or analogous relationship to another hue.

For example, the reds, possessing a strong intensity, are arranged by shape to balance the greens, while accentuating the pink shapes. The reds, actually having a reddish-orange quality, characteristic of a cadmium, also tend to counterbalance the blues and violets. Simultaneously there exists a corresponding network of balancing shapes of pink
and lavender tints in an analogous value relationship.

Value change on the subject is often represented by a color change in the painting. In other instances, the larger configural shapes are developed by varying the intensity of the specific hue. Black, however, is never used to darken the value of the color. Blue or Alizarin Crimson serve as bases for helping to darken some areas. Likewise, yellow and white are used to lighten some areas. The hope is to keep the colors harmonious and true to the limited palette of pigments. (Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, Ultramarine Blue, and Alizarin Crimson). This also assures some degree of control once the painter is familiar with the palette.

In other instances where the source is nearly colorless, the same type of scheme is employed. This can be seen in the painting, Boots and Shoes (fig. 39), which was taken from an almost colorless source. In comparing a detail of this painting (fig. 40) to a detail of the painting Color Configuration: Paper Series 74 #1 (fig. 41), one can recognize the similarity of the schematic color arrangements, and the stability of the hue relationships. The visual force of these images is greatly enhanced by this order and gives more than the photograph's basic information. Both paintings are equally forceful in their manner of organization and solidarity of compositional structure and design.
Fig. 40. Detail of painting, **Boots and Shoes**.

Fig. 41. Detail of painting, **Color Configuration**: Paper Series 7471.
In other instances, where the subject matter may contain color unsuitable to my purposes, I may seek to develop a scheme of hue relationships specifically suited to the configural shapes existent within the forms. Many times the color variance may be very minimal, as evidenced in the painting entitled, *Posture in Swinging, Pink Satin Baggies* (fig. 42). Here, the underlying shapes are less intricate and are basically a pattern of large, swerving shapes. The painting is developed around three basic hues: The pink (a tint of red) represents the lighted areas of the form, complemented by green in the shadow areas. Simultaneously, the pink and green areas are treated by varying their intensity. The whole subject is pitted against a violet background, analogous to the pink. Notice how the hues are incorporated within each other; the pink within the violet, pink within the green, etc. This can be seen more clearly in detail, (fig. 44).

Some subject choices may already possess much color, and in such instances, the degree of color modification is at a minimum. However, the scheme of development within the painted image is still kept within the limits of the self-imposed palette of pigments. This allows for a higher degree of control in hue relationships. The painting, *Clothes In Cushion Layers* (fig. 43) is a good example of this. In comparing it to the working photo (fig. 45), one can find verification of this point. One also finds
Fig. 42. Posture in Swinging. Pink Satin Baggy, oil, 1975.
Fig. 44. Detail, Posture in Swinging, Pink, Satin Parries.

Fig. 45. Working photo for Clothes In Cushion Layers.
evidences of a play on the inherent pure design quality of the collective forms and the sensual impact of the visual illusion of the textures of the materials.

When the human figure, or parts of it, are incorporated within a composition, and there is much color information given by the photograph, I again make choices based solely on my feelings about the possible success or failure of that color information for the purposes of my painting. These choices are also made within the limitations of my palette. If generally pleased with certain color relationships within the photo, my modifications are less severe. By now it should be obvious that I've never intended to literally duplicate any photo-image, but rather to use its information, transcribing it into a visual phenomenon that transcends it.

**Textural Transitions**

Often the variety of contrast that an illusion of the textural quality of human skin adds to a composition proves quite interesting. This is especially effective when use of "focal variety" is made. When the human figure is represented in a composition, it is treated objectively as just another form with a certain tactile sensation to contribute to the overall composition. In this way the images remain important for their respective qualities and less significance is attached to any kind of pictorial imagery.
The manner of structural development by drawing and schematic color arrangement by configural shapes is essentially still the same, but with the representation of human skin, the use of abstract pattern is much more subtle. It relies to a greater degree on the technique and manner of modulation of its form to maintain its textural characteristics.

This can be seen in the painting, *Slipper and Glass* (fig. 46) which by its title implies the insignificance of the human form within the composition as being nothing other than just a supportive element for the slipper and glass. Notice how the idea of schematically denoting certain hue relationships to originally flat shapes within the woman's back and arm can be seen beneath the glazes.

The employment of varying materials and objects of varying properties and tactile qualities within the same composition adds much to the sensual power of the illusions the images create. When these images are brought together and presented in an unconventional manner, by the arbitrariness of their focal angle or point of view, and by the totally objective organization of their parts harmoniously within the composition, they give a strong sense of design. The process of modulation of each respective shape solidifies all these elements of concern into a very realistic image.
Fig. 49. Patterned Satin With Foot, oil, 1975.
Fig. 48. Glass At Her Back, oil, 1975.
Fig. 49. Reflection of A Hatted Girl in Violet. oil. 1975.
Fig. 51. Coke Bottle: "It's The Real Thing." oil, 1970.
My painting entitled, *Patterned Satin With Foot* (fig. 47) employs all of these concerns simultaneously. The detail (fig. 52) allows a closer examination of this.

![Image of the detail of Patterned Satin With Foot](image)

**Fig. 52. Detail, Patterned Satin With Foot.**

My intense interest in material and the sensual possibilities of contrasts of different textures can be seen in most of my work. Treatment of the canvas produces the image through application of several glazes. Then the forms are carefully rendered by a process of modulation of wet surfaces into a realistic visual illusion. I tend to find textures such as satin, skin, shimmery cloth, patent leather, glass, plastic, metal, etc. the most provocative illusions to create. This is because they all provide interesting and unique responses to light. The complexities of producing a convincing illusion of the reflective
qualities of glass and plastic in relationship to sur-
rounding textures is terribly fascinating. This is par-
ticularly so because their structural organization is
based on a careful scrutiny and establishment of what is
basically an ordered, accurate arrangement of specific,
flat shapes of color. They are literally shapes of light
and highlight, as colors being reflected from colored sur-
faces around and within the clear glass or plastic, which
are themselves essentially transparent and colorless.

This treatment of glass or plastic surfaces can be
seen in the details and color plates of these paintings:
Slipper and Glass (fig. 53), Glass At Her Back (fig. 48)
detail, fig. 54), Plastic and Cloth Hanging In A Closet
(fig. 50), and Coke Bottle: "It's The Real Thing" (fig. 51)
detail, fig. 55). Carefully notice how the illusion of
glass or plastic, in each instance, is produced primarily
by an accurate representation of specific shapes of re-
flected light as color. The hues that you're seeing are
actually all the surrounding hues of that setting.

In all of this work, the intent is consistently that
of providing the viewer with powerful visual illusions.
The dynamics of this, by its complex, sophisticated and
systematic nature, is phenomenal. These qualities of
realism are achieved by technique: the impact of sensual,
textural contrasts of various man-made and natural materials, all schematically built upon an essentially abstract order of design.

END OF CHAPTER II
Fig. 53. Detail, *Slipper and Glass*.

Fig. 54. Detail, *Glass At Her Back*. 
Fig. 55. Detail, Coke Bottle: "It's The Real Thing".
CHAPTER III

METHODS

The process by which the medium is applied to the canvas, as well as the attitude towards technique of surface development of my paintings is a vital part of the whole concept of my modulative, configural approach for realism. The medium, in this case oil paint, is used to produce realistic visual imagery, but always with respect for its natural properties as paint. It is because of this respect that I maintain use of the brush for application of the paint as opposed to air-brush or other mechanical devices. This way I'm able to attain a certain union with my medium that is harmonious in every way. The process is very fulfilling because I know that it is accomplished by the human hand.

Certain self-imposed limitations are, I feel, essential to maintain the art, keeping it free of total reduction to a precise science. There must always be present some degree of movement and freedom of expression. My work may be viewed as being realism, but it must also be appreciated as being more than just realistic images. It must also be appreciated as having been "painted". This is one reason why I do not employ such methods as projection to attain a technically perfect image. In spite of
the high probability of human error, developing the composition free-handedly allows more freedom of choice and leaves a feeling of an individual, human touch. This is imperative.

Medium

I prefer using pre-mixed oil paint with the addition of a graduated solution of linseed oil, Damar varnish and turpentine as a medium. I stress no particular preference of brand but have found Grumbacher permanent pigments suited to my tastes. The medium is mixed fresh for each painting and contains 2 parts linseed oil, (usually refined, not raw) 1 part Damar Varnish and 1 part turpentine.

This medium is essential for the process of glazing that I employ. The linseed oil provides added fluidity and elasticity to the pigments, while the varnish stabilizes and makes permanent the "sheen" finish. The turpentine serves as a thinner to avoid sticking and allows me to maintain a flowing, smooth consistency with the medium. After constant use, over a period of time, this procedure also becomes vital to the overall process of development of the painting. All elements and stages of development are equally important.
Limited Palette

In my choice of specific pigments, I restrict myself to a limited palette of four basic hues plus white. These hues are: Cadmium Red Light, Cadmium Yellow Light or Medium, Ultramarine Blue, Alizarin Crimson; plus the neutral Titanium White. No siennas, umbers, or any other earth pigments are used. The reason for using only these hues is to restrict myself to the development of all my color by mixing my own variant hues from basically primary color. The Alizarin Crimson adds just an accent to some hues and helps expand the depth of the color field. The result is usually very rich, intense color.

Black is never used because it has a tendency to deaden and neutralize the intensity of pure color. When it is necessary to create a very dark area of value within the painting, it is achieved by using Ultramarine Blue and Alizarin Crimson as a base. So often times, what may appear as being a very dark or almost black area in a painting, is still color.

White is used primarily to heighten the intensity of certain hues and to lighten values within the color. Yellow is also sometimes used for purposes of increasing the intensity of some hues. This limited palette concept was arrived at after several years of having used various pigments arbitrarily with fluctuating results. The idea of using a four color
limit was initially introduced to me by a former undergraduate instructor, Mr Lee Knotts from the University of Cincinnati, in Ohio. I adopted the palette then and have used it consistently.

**Canvas Preparations**

I build most of my stretchers to a dimension of 40" x 50". This may vary at times, according to a particular format desired. Pieces of inch thick white pine are used. However, the width of each piece is 3 and 3/4 inches rather than 2 inches. The reason for this is that I like the psychological effect of the added distance the painting will have away from the wall when viewed. To me, it seems to further enhance the qualities of depth and space back into the field of view.

Light, fine-toothed, raw canvas is used for stretching, in preference to coarse-toothed heavy canvas. This, I feel, provides the flexible and absorbent surface that is essential to my process of glaze build-up. Once stretched, sometimes the canvas is sized first with rabbit skin glue, but many times I will go straight to the primer. There is no real reason for this inconsistency, except to say that depending on the height of the illusion I wish to achieve, I may vary the procedure. Despite the fact that rabbit-skin glue is a better preservative, I find that flat
latex paint adequately protects the canvas from the deteriorating effects of oil paint.

Applying primer directly onto the raw canvas leaves the "tooth" of the canvas open just enough to breath. Although the surface is more absorbent and much dryer than if sized with glue, for me it provides a better surface for developing a high glaze finish. This is basically due to the fact that such a dry surface tends to impede the process of glaze application, by soaking up much of the first couple of glazes. As a result, the process moves at a very deliberate pace, allowing the build-up to occur very gradually and translucently with each application.

Because it is less expensive and spreads farther than pento, I use a priming procedure in which flat white latex paint (leaded or unleaded) is first evenly applied to the raw canvas, and then after it dries, a thin coat of white latex, semi-gloss enamel paint is also evenly and deliberately applied, because it is important to the overall success of the illusion that the finished surface presents to the viewer. The coat of semi-gloss serves the purpose of providing just enough resilience to allow the oils to spread.

I must feel very good about this period of canvas preparation, as it affects my whole attitude towards the undertaking to follow. Again, I feel that all elements of the development of the painting are equally vital. The canvas preparation is just as vital as the image itself.
Although this method of priming may raise questions about longevity of the surface, I have found it to suit my purpose as well as, if not better than, some customary priming methods.

**Instrumentation**

As stated earlier, I use conventional hog bristle oil brushes to paint with. Usually the sketch is done directly onto the canvas, using a small square tip brush (no. 4 or 6) and a washy, muted, turpentine solution as a medium. After the drawing has been established, a series of different size brushes, all flat, square tip, are then used to treat the surface.

**Process of Surface Development**

Before starting the sketch, I generally brush a washy ground of the most dominant hue of the photograph over the entire canvas. This serves as a ground for the drawing, killing the stark white of the primed surface, and also serving as underlay for the glazes.

Once the sketch has been established on the canvas, and all drawing and compositional problems have been worked out, the washy, muted lines of the turp wash serve as indicators of the larger configural shapes to be developed within the painting. Essentially what is present at this point is sort of a grid of the basic irregular abstract shapes inherent within the image presented by the photograph. After these shapes have been determined, the hues to be devoted
to each shape are schematically pre-determined, either by virtue of the color in the photograph, or by a complete modification of hues that are suited to the palette. Once the scheme of color has been determined, thin turpentine washes of these hues are applied, each to its particular shape. The result is an irregular pattern of basically flat planes of color (a planar network).

This first application lays a foundation for the glaze development of the surface. Sometimes it is a color contrary to the one that is actually desired, in hopes of adding character and richness to the final glaze of color that is really desired. Once this first application is completed, the canvas is generally left to dry for a day or so. The canvas is then ready for the first glaze application, which is merely an even, light mixture of the pigment with the medium solution. The desired color or hue for each shape is now more accurately discerned, and then applied very evenly and thinly (using a little turp as a thinner). This allows the character of the underlying surface to come through. What results is a translucent layer of "paint on paint". Should I feel still another layer of glaze is necessary before starting the process of form modulation, I will leave the canvas again, to return later when it is mostly dry.
Having returned to the canvas this time, I study each area to determine its readiness for final glaze application. If pleased with my surface, I proceed to apply another layer of glaze, evenly over one specific, large area or shape of color (this time using medium solution without extra turp thinner). Then, while the paint is still wet, I proceed to develop the form by adding variant intensities of color directly to the wet surface. This is determined by the more intricate shapes of light as color or value seen within the photograph. One small area of the canvas is done at a time, so that while still wet, the intricate shapes and patches of paint can be gradually modulated into a very real image or form. This is done by use of a "blending" technique, wherein a completely dry brush is use to lightly and meticulously brush across the surface of the painted area to skillfully develop each configural area of the form. This process is repeated over the entire surface of the painting, in each area of the composition. Each area gradually overlaps, or blends into another until eventually the painting is completed. The result speaks for itself.

Examples of how this process works can be seen in these paintings underway: (fig. 56) and the following fig. 57 which shows a different painting underway, with a working photo seen in relationship to the canvas.
Fig. 56. painting in progress
CONCLUSION

In looking back over the last four or five years, I've come to realize the tremendous metamorphosis I have gone through to come to my present condition. Its implications for the future are far-reaching.

It often becomes the fate of the extremely facile and innately talented individual to fall prey to the clutches of conservatism and thus become stagnant. I hope that this is not my plight, for within my present style, I see more than just brilliant draughtsmanship. I see an important statement of my times; a metaphysical phenomenon that is extraordinary in concept and visually powerful.

My mind is forever open, however, for I feel that it is vitally important for the artist to reflect the dynamics of his time, at the same time producing implications for the future. Given the prospects of living in an era of intense ultra-dynamics, staggering technological advances, and dramatic re-assessments of social and cultural values, art itself faces the challenge of survival. Culture and civilization are vital to art, and inversely, art is vital to them.
LIST OF PAINTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

Listed in Alphabetical Order.

(pa) - denotes painters
(ph) - denotes photographers

1. Adams, Ansel (ph) (1902- )
2. Birmelin, Robert (pa) Born: 1933, Newark, N.J.
3. Braque, George (pa) (1882-1963)
4. Caravaggio (pa) (1573-1610), Milan, Italy.
5. Carroll, Lewis (ph) (Charles Dodgson, 1832-98).
7. Courbet, Gustave (pa) (1819-77), Ornans, France.
15. Eyck, Jan Van (pa) Born around 1390.
16. Fish, Janet (pa) Born: 1933, Boston, Mass.
17. Gauguin, Paul (pa) (1848-1903).
18. Goings, Ralph (pa) Born: 1928, Corning, Calif.
30. Nolde, Emil (pa) (1867-1956)
33. Picasso, Pablo (pa) Born in Malaga. Barcelona (1881,
34. Poussin, Nicolas (pa) (1534-1665).
35. Rembrandt (pa) (1606-69).
38. Rubens, Peter Paul (pa) (1577-1640) Flanders.
39. Schonzeit, Ben (pa) Born: 1942, Brooklyn, N.Y.
40. Seurat, Georges (pa) (1859-91).
42. Steichen, Edward (ph) (1879-1973).
43. Stieglitz, Alfred (ph) (1864-1946).
44. Strand, Paul (ph) (1890- ).
45. Titian, (pa) (14/90-1576).
47. VanGogh, Vincent (pa) (1853-90).
49. White, Clarence (ph) (1871-1925).
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. Nos.


13. Lewis Carroll: Alice Liddell, the original Alice in Wonderland, c. 1859. (A.L. Coburn Coll.)


32. John Kacere: From "Panty Series", (Title unavailable.)
36. E.C. Jones: Shot of studio showing painting in progress with paper motif on table.
36. Working photograph for painting, Posture In Swinging, Pink Satin Baggies.


40. E.C. Jones: Detail of painting, Boots and Shoes.

41. E.C. Jones: Detail of painting, Color Configuration; Paper Series 74 #1.


44. E.C. Jones: Detail, Posture in Swinging, Pink, Satin Baggies.

45. Working photo for Clothes In Cushion Layers.

46. E.C. Jones: Slipper and Glass, oil, 44" x 54", 1974-75.


52. E.C. Jones: Detail, Patterned Satin With Foot.

53. E.C. Jones: Detail, Slipper and Glass.

54. E.C. Jones: Detail, Glass At Her Back.

55. E.C. Jones: Detail, Coke Bottle: "It's The Real Thing".


57. E.C. Jones: Painting in progress with working photo.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


