OBSERVATIONS OF A
TWENTIETH CENTURY ARTIST

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

by
Betty Hebden Collings, B.F.A.
The Ohio State University
1974

Approved by
[Signature]
Adviser
Division of Art.
Contents:

Acknowledgements          iii
Introduction               1
On being an artist in the 20th century  3
With particular reference to art's insight  15
Discussion of the work     22
Description of the pieces  27
Photographs               29
Conclusion                30
Footnotes and Bibliography 31.
Acknowledgements:

The notes for this paper accumulated as a result of readings and conversations during the past eighteen months. One can express honestly only that which one sees for oneself, and when the expression, visual or literate, of someone else enhances or informs one's own insights, communication has been effected and one's concept enlarges. For this reason, except for direct quotations, I have listed those people whom I recognize to have influenced my thinking, and their specific works or writings, in a bibliography rather than use extensive footnotes.

I want to thank my husband, Edward William Collings, Ph.D., D.Sc., who, though his language and discipline differ, is motivated by a similar source and whose encouragement and support is continuous.
Introduction.

The finality of a bound book, a finished paper, the presentation of an exhibition is a confining concept. My latter day excursions into the educational systems were motivated by a desire to grow, to venture into somewhere new, to change. I do not want, even in token symbolism to say that my education is complete, that this is a termination, for I know that it is not. Therefore, the form of this thesis is open. If I have suggested answers to questions, they are answers only for the moment and I hope that anyone who reads will gain a sense of questioning rather than one of dictum.

The time spend as a 'student' has been important in that it was a breathing space - a time without pressure in which a sense of personal philosophy was able to crystallize and alternative methods for expressing that philosophy able to evolve. All thinking persons must at some time attempt to interpret the complexity of living and to probe into the realms of the ineffable. An artist's expression is his attempt to articulate his inarticulate questioning and his work a continual restatement of his progress in philosophical and physical understanding. Consequently, I approach the problem of writing a thesis with a great deal of apprehension for the subtleties of one language are not translatable into another. (As the nuances of the French language arise from the French culture and cannot be expressed
in another, so the explorations and expression of a visual artist are in a language which is not verbal and cannot be converted into verbal expression.) Each language, each expression arises out of it's specific situation and there is too much opportunity in an exercise of this kind for the "conceptual crystallization" to "break into deposits of gritty reasoning. (1) There is also the danger that too much metaphysical speculation, too much thinking about ART cramps one's responses to a particular circumstance. Even though periods of reflection and intellectual consolidation may be necessary or valuable, the most intuitive work, that which is most expressive, most fundamental, is that which is conceived quite separately from conscious intellectualizing. Knowledge and insight have a positive effect upon one's artistic action only when totally absorbed. Sol Lewitt's stress on pre-executive thinking urged me to channel my thinking more effectively; (2) but Kierkegaard's 'Present Age' encourages me to say that too much discussion emphasizes the ultimate futility of making anything, numbs the optimistic voice which assumes that some small part of what one has to say will be communicated, and stills the surge of simple joy-in-making which underlies much activity. (3).
On being an artist in the twentieth century:

The information which informs the art of the present is derived from the collective cultural information pool. We are aware of the enormous complexity of being; we are aware, not only that the structures of the past are no longer adequate, but that the relevance of those which emerge is temporary. (We pull down structures almost as fast as we put them up.) We are acutely—almost painfully—aware that there are no absolutes or that the absolute defies definition in terms of our knowledge.

The culmination of insight which underlay Constructivism and Cubism allowed art to formalize its abstract language and discuss within its own context. This had not been done before. (As examples, the laws of measurement used by some periods of Greek and Egyptian art, and the symbolically significant numerical harmonies of Gothic constructions had all been evidenced within mimetic and descriptive art.) The logic and structures of art making—art's language—had always appeared subservient to the presentation of a concept. Concomitant with this insight was the growing awareness that a new perceptive situation was emerging. This was occasioned by collectively greater insight into the complexity of the geological world and its place in the universe. In the search to accommodate and interpret this increased awareness art's language has, of necessity, developed more comprehensive concepts.
It is necessary to remind ourselves frequently that since the beginning of this century, although the fundamental nature of ultimate reality may not have changed, our conception of the phenomenological world has undergone a dramatic transformation. Quantum theory has revolutionized the study of the physical world. The electromagnetic spectrum has been revealed, measured and used to measure; the electron microscope has opened up the infinite universe within. The fields of psychology and psychiatry have been developed and expanded to interact meaningfully with biochemistry and biophysics, and, having revealed the science of genetics, reached a point where life can almost be synthesized. Our technologically expanded communication systems put the events of the real world into our living rooms, making the remote and marvellous superficial and commonplace. We are bombarded with so much information that we have almost lost our collective sense of wonder. The simplified logics of the age of reason have been exposed as a myth by the audacity and effectiveness of man's investigations, inventions and subsequent interaction with the natural world. Man's thorough investigation has shown that he is not the measure of all things, and that there is more to reality than can be individually encompassed. We are beginning to realize that our collective knowledge needs massive restructuring if it is to work in a positive fashion. Having reached a stage in the development of knowledge which allows comprehension of the complexity of life, whether awed or exalted, we are forced to continue to investigate in all directions.
to make any sense at all.

In the face of this proliferation of knowledge categorizations are constantly being re-evaluated. (As an example, in a recent B.B.C. Science Report a biochemist related the progress of the study of glucose absorption in the bloodstream in terms of the most recent biochemical concepts. At the conclusion of his descriptive narrative he said that, although these suppositions and measurements had seemed to point in the right direction, as a result of some additional enquiries into the anomalies of the thesis, it now appears that the explanation for the effect will be in terms of electron valencies. In other words, the explanation lay in the area of physics and not biochemistry and that although the descriptive information was useful, the concept was most probably entirely incorrect.) We are continually working in the 'grey' areas, the areas between established disciplines. We are evaluating previously conceived structures, attempting to find new ones, which, regardless of their eventual significance, will help and hinder the progress of thought in the future.

Analogous to the way in which physical models are no longer adequate for the concepts of science and mathematics is the awareness in art of the inadequacy of static objects to express it's vastly more complex concepts. The visual artist of this century was placed in an extraordinarily difficult situation.
It was necessary to invent new forms of expression, including those that were non-visual, and find ways in which the ever present basic forms could be used to signify more complex insights. But then, one might ask oneself, is this situation any different from that which has always prevailed? Man has always intuitively known that there was more to being than he could see or comprehend. It is man's insight which is forever changing and the artists of each age have the task of re-interpreting in terms of those changing insights.

The development of art in the twentieth century reflects the changing concepts of society. Broadly speaking, the inspired period of the early part of the second decade indicated two principal and diverging interests. One, an interest in the structures of art making, was closely related to the exact sciences. The other, concerned with subjective experience, was related to the newly emerging interest in the personal and idiosyncratic, an area which was much less exact and which was the field of the beginning sciences of psychology and psychiatry. The attitudes prompting those early insights also promoted the verbal-visual punning of Duchamp and the activities of the Dada movement which were clear evidences of quizzical minds able to perceive that the old structures were no longer relevant. In retrospect, the naivete of this early period is astounding. But it is a retrospective view which comes after the sixty year period
within which the implications of the most esoteric aspects of
the ever-growing collective knowledge have become readily available
through mass education and mass media to any intelligent mind
willing to heed.

The common key to the contemporary search has been
a search for new structures within, and new modes of expression for,
our unavoidable cognizance of this expanding awareness of the
constant reality. In art, the general directions established
early in the century have been negotiated and examined intensively
with every nuance picked clean. (Including the concepts of
non-structure.) Recently, the post-Minimalist movement has
placed order itself as the subject matter and used the objective
situation as a means to make visible this abstract concept.

I think that we are witnessing the formation of a
twentieth century language to which it is too early to apply the
techniques of philology for when people are investigating the edge
of consciousness they defy or subvert categorization. The variety
of an artist's experience and the depth of his intuition allows
a breadth of illusion in his work which is an indicator of it's
significance. The artist's satisfaction with the work, and the
observer's interaction with it are related to this breadth which
is reduced by interpretation. The fact that statements about a
period are almost always easier after-the-fact is partly because
a movement in time and place diminishes the ability to perceive. In any case, while there are very obvious disadvantages inherent in generalities, they are probably the only statements with any lasting validity.

It can be said that there is a good deal of present day interest in time, relativity, multiplicity, language structure, thought structure, the ephemeral nature of objects and their perception, process and change; that these interests are investigated at subjective and objective levels with whatever tools the artist feels is appropriate; and that methods of processing these interests, particularly through the works of the Post-Minimal period, have expanded so that borderlines between that which is art and that which is other have diminished. The newly developing language is both a product of our time and a force capable of expressing the complexity of our time. I like contemporary art and the present emphasis upon the observation of phenomena. I think that the significant work of the present avant-gard is that which places emphasis upon doing, being and seeing. Yvonne Rainier's dance, Robert Wilson's experiments with time sense, Richard Serra's observations of materiality and individualistic perception of space, Mel Bochner's visual articulation of thinking, deriving as they do from experience and observation of the phenomenological world, point out that that which is there to be perceived provides more material than the mind's invention alone. This work has within it the same solidity of observation which marked the early period of the century and it is capable of continuing the development of art's language.
Definition of reality and it's interpretation:

Max Planck defines the real world as the world of objects or things. It is a world which is constantly in need of clarification. He suggests that ultimate reality might be reached when additional clarification is no longer necessary, but that the real, that which is there, is for us a metaphysical concept. The phenomenological is that which we experience, it is an approximation to the metaphysical concept with no final bridge between one and the other.

I see reality as a sphere, infinite in extension both inward and outward, through which each individual takes his own route, building a personal phenomenological world, choosing from an infinite spectrum of possibility.

Creative thinking can be defined as the ability to distinguish and define alternative orders within this infinity of possibility. It is an act of intelligence, providing channels through a sea of phenomenological possibility, available to all sentient beings and part of all disciplines. Each man, and each developed discipline, has in common, a search for orders based on a need to structure and to organize the mass of undifferentiated stimuli. Differences between disciplines are determined by the
kind of order sought and by the type and degree of sensibility which is developed. Selection within this lattice of possibility is omnidirectional enabling alternative groupings to be made. People of all ages and cultures are continually constructing logics and systems to put their experience into a believable or manageable whole. Every experience is an interpretation of phenomena and each person, in every age, experiences for himself both the collective and a personal understanding of the phenomenological world. That is why major themes in art are recurrent. Life and death are necessarily re-occurring processes to which every man and every age has to make an accommodation.

Philosophically there is little difference between the artist, scientist and mystic. Truly creative and exploratory people in disparate fields have more in common than the creators and the technologists of a specific field. It is the differences in approach to the essential accommodation which categorize, for our fundamental aim is the same and we are all involved with the same world. Each discipline develops its own language as it specializes and gaps in understanding which occur between disciplines and cultures occur because of the inability to name, think and speak in alternate categories. The greatest tragedy of present day culture is that we have pursued specialization so avidly that philosophical communication between disciplines (not
to mention cultures), is the exception rather than the rule.
One of the main purposes of education should be to acquaint us
with facets of our own and other cultures, emphasizing commonalities
and creating understanding and tolerance for recognized differences.

Each age, and each culture, directed by it's
immediate cultural history, appears to pursue common thought
processes, but within that common stream individual intelligence
necessarily operates. It is the compound action of individual
intelligence which changes and directs the movement of an age.
In past times, within our own culture, the social structures
have appeared strong and within them people were able to make
individual adjustments to the processes of time and change. The
nature of our new insights is such that we are now acutely aware that
the simple acceptance of, and adjustment to, established structures
is a course which is no longer available to us. Individual choices
must be made from a variety of equally valid alternatives.

Max Planck also said "all attempts have failed to
discover a world view uniformly acceptable, in it's general features
at least, by all minds capable of judgement". (4) Perhaps it is
those who are most keenly aware of the illimitable expanse of
experience who are most busy attempting to construct logical methods
with which to proceed. A fundamental awareness of the essentially
ephemeral nature of such orders, an acute perception of the individual's
ultimately heterotopic existence induces a frenetic search for a personal coherency. Is this the mark of one with a large share of 'creativity'?

I have difficulty in determining the difference between, or if there is a difference between, the perception of new structures and the expression of that perception - language. Is there a difference between the perception itself; the articulation of a perception; the description of a perceived order, as in the descriptive sciences; and the manipulation of an already articulated language? If I apprehend a previously undescribed phenomena, is that creativity? It was always there. Any order pulled out of a mass of undifferentiated stimuli was always possible. If I invent a language to describe this newly seen phenomena - is that creativity? And, should I juxtapose that new language with an older perception - is that significant? Which is the more significant? Does it matter?

I can say that I think that perception requires insight, and that a language is used to describe. Furthermore, once this is done effectively, that perception becomes part of the order-language-structure which can then be used to interpret and structure further observations. But I can also see that such structures may be ephemeral, arbitrary, ultimately illogical and are subject to constant re-interpretation, re-evaluation and reconstruction. A clearly
defined order has the possibility of extreme restriction because it hinders a re-assessment and re-arrangement of its components into new orders. It is the free radicals which are most likely to generate new and changing forms.

The tendency to order, born of need, must be ready to dissolve or absorb previously seen connections so that we can constantly reform and reconstruct. It is obvious that clarity in communication requires the use of language structures in all disciplines. To be comprehended requires a basis of common reference which is the point of specialized education. It is assumed that an experienced artist has an intimate knowledge of art history, the earlier techniques of art making, and of the art of his time, so that while he is looking for new ways to express his perceptions he avoids re-inventing the wheel - or at least is able to recognize when he has. But, partially refuting this need for cultural cognizance, is the fact that an artist's productive periods are times of discovery. That is to say, they are times when the questions of whether the activity is relevant to art history, whether it is new, or whether it is even art, are insignificant compared with the exitement of discovery. The dynamism of early and generating art forms is the result of this personal immersion in perception which, during moments of developing insight, has no concern with general perceptions.

Once presented, ideas are subject to evaluation in
terms of art-craft tradition. Concern for clarity, the suppression of irrelevancy, the introduction of theme and development are imposed by the necessity to communicate and can to a limited extent be discussed and evaluated. What cannot be evaluated is the impulse to order and the results of that impulse to order. As artists we must resist and confound the attempts to order our orders, for to restate reduces the symbols which represent a complexity of experience and intention. To quote Susan Sontag: "Real Art has the capacity to make us nervous. By reducing the work of art to its content and then interpreting that, one tames the work of art. Interpretation makes art manageable, conformable." (5)

The artist, in common with all men, has a responsibility to be educated in the developments of his time and to be aware of the implications of other disciplines. Nevertheless, it is not adequate for art to model the revelations of scientific and religious thought. Art's language acts as an alternative interpretation of phenomenological experience and it's statements are notations in an alternative language of individual insight. The urge to make visible - to express, arises from individual awareness of a primordial form of knowledge which each language or discipline explores in it's own way. Whatever the language, the attempts are subject to continual restatement for a finite articulation of the ineffable is incomprehensible.
With particular reference to art's insight:

Jung has said that "a true symbol appears only when there is a need to express what thought cannot think or what is only divined or felt". (6)

A work of art is both some thing whose meaning is complete within itself and a symbol for a more comprehensive inexpressible order. A successful work has longevity, a sense of mystery, 'presence'. Objects with 'presence' have a duality of being. They are complete and contained within themselves and yet manifest an implication of a greater totality. This quality is sensed but cannot be named because it arises from the primordial, unspecified, unarticulated depth from which consciousness springs. Art communicates before it is understood. A total expression can be conveyed independantly of the incidental allusions.

An object has 'presence' when the sum of its parts indicates a totality which in itself has coherency, but when the order is implied but not specified. Examples of things which have presence for me are: defunct industrial machinery, pipes and ductwork, Stonehenge, simple solids, crystals, Gothic cathedrals, gravel and sandheaps, Ellsworth Kelly's painting. In each case these objects are the result of enormously comprehensive order which, even when it has been removed (as in the case of defunct machinery
and unused shrines), leaves coherency imprinted so that the object stands alone. What one senses is both it's symbolical quality and it's 'isness'. It's potential for belonging and it's potential for heteroclitic existence. Mel Bochner wrote that "language is not transparent", and while agreeing that language can change our perception of things, I must emphasize that what it does not change is the fundamental shape of things. Things exist both within our perception of them and independently of our perceptions. (7)

One of the advantages of object art, as distinct from performance and other forms of obviously serial presentation, is that it is presented in it's totality at every moment. This permits an experience of it to be either total or specific at any instant in time and allows the viewer to choose his particular mode.

I think that there are two aspects to knowledge; and awareness of one precludes awareness of the other. For example, my definition of intuition is that we store subliminally an infinite amount of unrelated sensation and that a subconscious dialectical takes place which results in new, not quite articulate perceptions. This is collective knowledge. In contrast, there is knowledge of a very specific kind, viz. experience of detail which is conscious, additive, acute and subject to logic. These two kinds of knowledge are analogous to the particle and the wave of quantum mechanics. If
one can isolate the particle one cannot know how fast it is travelling, and if one knows its speed one cannot know exactly where it is. While both kinds of knowledge are interdependent they are not comprehensible at the same moment. A total sense of experience—enlightenment—dissolves as one turns to detail and details in their turn, become inconsequential and blurred in the awareness of the whole. Yet, each is dependant upon the other.

Each kind of knowledge brings its own pain, for general intuitions has an attenuated quality in that it is general and does not have the special intensity of the particular, and the particular has a lonely isolated aspect. And then, there is always the agony of choice. The emphasis which Alain Resnais placed on the inevitability of forgetting in 'Hiroshima mon Amour' is also related to this question of knowing the general or the specific. If I experience this, I cannot experience that. If I go there I cannot stay here, nor will my memory of here sustain me through there because here will have become another there. It is not so much that there is no there-there, but that there is no here-and-there. In terms of personal experience, questions of simultaneity and the relativity of time and space are irrelevant. Irrelevant in face of the inevitability of here.
All of our explorations, directions and interests rotate around a nucleus of personal enquiry. Sometimes one's lines of investigation are expressed in formal arabesques which return to, and perhaps allow a more solid sense of, a point of departure. I think of the table of the elements where the elements are grouped according to the number of their electrons so that while the shells multiply the outward properties remain the same. Artists and their symbols develop such subtle complexity. One is always returning and seeing freshly as though for the first time. Whatever direction is taken, the choice is essentially that of the individual, the discoveries are purely personal.

"A work arrives from a specific moment as it's own instance; this specificity can never be exhausted nor can 'significant' aspects be abstracted from it without destroying it. Because it is experienced by a viewer with no access to a universally valid viewpoint, there is no foundation for any validity except the contingent, which is able to include validity as an aspect of itself; there are no essences, no essential reductions or clarifications - only moments from which to (re) begin." (10)

Art objects or statements, arise directly from the exploration of one who can do no other than express that which he knows. Once they are complete they become very complex.
They stand as a notation for the developing experience of the artist. They may also have cultural symbolical significance, and they are objects which stand alone and develop a perceptual connotation of their own. Any object can be seen in a variety of ways, (the 'seeing' is dependant upon the experience of the one who sees,) and it's significance grows or diminishes according to the experiences of those who interact with it. It becomes many things to many men. Because of this, the only generally acceptable communicable statement is the factual description of the object. Hence, I present a sphere and we can agree that it is an approximation to a sphere. We may also be able to agree that spheres are symbolical, but, here our subjectivity begins to separate us and we are forced to conclude that the only thing we hold in common is our general comprehension of the material fact of the sphere.

This is not to refute the notion that works of art change the way one sees the world, for I think that that is basis of art making and viewing and why significant artists' references are multidimensional. I simply want to emphasize that it is a dialectical process, wherein the art object becomes a catalyst between the thinking of the artist and the thinking of the observer which draws most of its material, for the viewer, from his past experience. As a consequence, his new insight may bear little relationships to the thinking of the artist.
'I can love you but I cannot know you, because I am not you but me and your experience is yours alone and mine is mine alone. If I am this, I am not that, if I am here, I am not there and moreover, my memory of there is already clouded and changed by my experience of here!' 

Having realized that the ultimate isolation of personal experience makes communication so haphazard, so ephemeral, one also realizes that one is not ultimately concerned with audience but "making things one would like to see". (9) Finding out for one-self. Nevertheless, we all cherish those moments when some small aspect of our experience seems to parallel that of another. We hope that our work will have cultural as well as personal significance and that it will further the insight of others. The personal sense is the understanding which the artist obtains, the structures which he perceives. The social sense is the extent to which he is able to communicate his perception to others. The second cannot be achieved without the first and the first is the only sense which has any validity for the artist himself.

"...to explain yourself you must make something tangible." (10)

"Language should .......... not end up locked up in an idea in somebody's head." (11)

Perhaps art's most significant communication is the desire to communicate. We must trust each other's intention.
Coda:

The final presentation of a piece of art is the result of much prior experience, study, knowledge and impulse. These things underlie the ability to give an object 'presence'; to place an emphasis upon it's 'isness' which encompasses and sublimes it's 'becauseness'. It is a situation where every aspect has been considered so that the object verges on understatement; economy of expression resulting from intensive insight.
Discussion of the work:

"What a man wants is already within him; but he still wanders here and there in search of it." (12)

'I am moving into a new range of experience, developing anew. As always at this point my old assumptions and conclusions seem inadequate. They may be the basis for new insight, but I am terrified by the potential for their total dissolution. What will be developed - what will be pushed aside to become the provocateur of the future?

Notes. April 16 '73.

My work evolves from an urge to clarify and extend my perceptions. The significant objects which I make are usually images generated at a subconscious level, which emerge and become a satisfactory symbol for a complex assortment of questions, feeling and understanding. In retrospect I see a formal coherency which is more related to the nature of this subconscious perception than to any conscious attempt to control of direct the formulation of expression. I use logic to execute but not to formulate ideas and the analysis is after-the-fact.

Because the formal coherency is predicated by concept, I am not very interested in discussing my work at a formal level. A conscious refinement is made in quantity and quality of symbol so that it serves a variety of conceptual nuance. A completed piece is the result of a series of revisions which attempt to
ensure that the form and its execution become at the one time totally consequential and inconsequential to the concept. In one sense objects, serving as notations for the development of an artist's concept and as catalysts between the thought of the artist and the viewer, are subservient to the thought which informs their conception. In another sense thought and communication is so subject to misconception that the object becomes the only thing with validity. Objects, like individuals, exhibit a duality of existence. A work of art is both about the world and a thing in the world.

I always have several related ideas going at once which allows use of 'retroactive learning' in problem solving and ensures conceptual longevity. As a child, in an adult environment, I used to be fascinated by the way in which one subject, in conversation, became the mode of passage between unrelated ideas. I like pieces to function both as an expression of an idea and as a bridge between ideas. To be part of, and an expression of, a multifaceted philosophy.

While the work of an artist is necessarily a reflection of his relationship to the age in which he lives, his insights are informed entirely by his own real experience, so that though my work relates to aspects of the work of other contemporary artists - particularly those of the Post-Minimalist era - I would resist having my ideas allied to those of any
'group' for while the work emphasizes conceptual content and personal experience, it is extremely classical in its consideration of form.

The work which was exhibited as a thesis exhibition in the gallery of the Division of Art in February, 1973, could be roughly divided into two categories: those pieces which used a figurative form to express an idea; and those pieces with which figures were invited to interact and formulate their own conceptions. The bronze torso and the 'Eleanor Kigby' pieces could be seen as a transition between the two ideas.

The ceramic figurative pieces were made at a time when I was formulating questions concerning the emergence of form, communication with forms, and economy of visual material. The title 'Clonal' derives from the biological technique of cloning. At the same time, a well-established interest in the infinity within began to accelerate. Questions, concerning the inevitability of the present, the transience of particular form as opposed to the constancy of process, informed efforts to find ways to express both a tangible experience of form and of form's changing relationships.

The 'experience' pieces which resulted differ from most art situations in a number of important respects.

(1) The person who interacts with them has to make an overt physical commitment. To sense their intention he must
spend a little time, take off his shoes, step up, step in etc. This gives tangible evidence of his personal commitment to the work.

(ii) Much consideration was given to the relationship between one's body and the art form. (This required a good deal of experimentation.) Perhaps a need for physicality underlies most sculpture, but in these pieces emphasis is placed upon sensory experience as a means of obtaining information about the work. Each piece allowed a different sensory approach to form. Physical experience is an important aspect of my perception and because sense perception is extraordinarily complex and all-encompassing, it is my belief that it informs much of our pre-logical thinking.

(iii) Some of the pieces require or stimulate thought about other people as a result of their function. This is an idea which, developing after the construction of Environment No. 1, was deliberately negated in 'Eleanor Rigsby and Friends', explored further in 'Triple Form Transformation' and stated very obviously in 'Hearts', but which also seems to form part of the perception of those exploring the 'Form Transformation' piece.

(iv) While painfully cognizant of the fragile nature of communication, I think that works of art become most significant when the people who perceive them have their phenomenological world expanded; when they are able to take their experience beyond the
gallery to continue a dialogue with their personal natural world. The emphasis which these pieces place upon the viewers personal experience helps to make this connection. Some of the pieces refer specifically to forms in physical world, some refer to less tangible physical experience, some to psychological experience.

(v) Reference to specific form, most clearly articulated in 'Sphere' and 'Obelisk' is extremely important because, while literalism is the opposite of conceptual concept it becomes the factor which allows optimum, personal, conceptual elaboration.
Description of the pieces:

'Environment No 1' is a rectangular box with an ovoid cavity, into which one steps and assumes a foetal position. When the lid is closed it is absolutely dark and very quiet.

'Eleanor Rigsby and Friends' is seven coffin like boxes within which one stands and peers out through a small opening. The space is confining and isolates one from the surroundings.

'Triple Form Identification' is three identical, elevated ellipsoidal forms which inflate around the participants who are able to stand with their heads out looking down around their 'new' form.

'Sphere' is a near perfect sphere about 7' 3'' in diameter, which one experiences from the inside. It focuses sound and affects one's equilibrium. It can be a nice place to meditate and was the first direct statement of an experience of a form.

'Hearts' is two ellipsoidal pods, connected with extended stethoscopes, so that the occupants of each pod simultaneously listen to each other's heart beat. This is a projection into another body using only auditory clues. The effect for some is of being an extension of that other person and it has a mysterious presence. (Co-incidentally, the ellipsoidal form is a variant on the circle which is similar to a blood cell.)

'Obelisk' a 56ft high - 7ft diameter cylinder, clear
at the top, which one enters from the bottom. Imagine an undulating grain silo, where the interior space changes as the air moves up and down the column. It is both an experience of cylinder and an experience of changing form.

'Form Transformation' is another cylinder when fully inflated. This piece, when draped across concrete form, reverses the negative-positive relationships dramatically. It also has intensified, a capacity, common to all of the inflatable pieces, to grab a world of its own from the local environment. I particularly like the way in which such a floppy non-form creates a positive situation.

'Mandala' a clear doughnut like torus, all the surfaces of which are visible.

'Landform IV' a life-size torso with which it was possible to identify by standing and looking over it's shoulders.

Evaluation of this work, which was only possible after its exhibition, prompts me to observe that 'Environment No.1', 'Hearts', 'Triple Form Transformation', 'Sphere' and a tactile piece which is under construction constitute a compact group which, presented together, explore the ideas of alternative experience with form, specificity of form, interaction of experience and 'presence'. 
Page 29 does not exist. Text is complete.
Conclusion:

The most difficult phase of one's experience is when one observes clearly that one's life, one's activity, the surrounding social systems and institutions, are all subject to chance and change; that one's personal activity and personal accomplishments are fleeting, without ultimate meaning or significance; that all systems, lives and experiences are subject to the inevitability of entropy; that merged into the stream of time we cease to exist; that form is ultimately irrelevant and process only can be significant.

This is the 4 a.m. of one's life's day, and yet it is at this point that one can begin to see as if for the first time, to take special delight in the transient, irrelevant, inconsequential activity we call living, and to investigate because one wants to do so for oneself.

It is important that creative people follow their personal investigations, for by so doing and by the inevitable expression of their curiosity, they convey a spark of enthusiasm, a delight in the coursirg of the blood and a determination to be, which does more to enhance the quality of other men's lives than any other activity.

"... a man ... may feel suddenly, when crossing the street, a mysterious happiness..." (13)
Footnotes:


Bibliography:

This list includes art works. It does not include work referred to in the footnotes. Articles about artists and their work are listed under the name of the artist.


