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IMAGE AND MATERIAL IN COLLAGE TECHNIQUE

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
1960

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We're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see.

Robert Browning
The appearance of the modern landscape has been completely transformed visually through the influence of commercial and technical elements.

F. Leger

INTRODUCTION

To some extent, many young American painters have used the collage technique at some time during their years of developing a personal idiom of expression. Some of the leading painters working today have achieved mature styles based upon relationships predicated primarily in the formal qualities inherent in combined materials and manufactured objects. For others, collage has frequently become a way of refreshing their stylistic vocabulary. Some painters have become so involved in formal possibilities that they have shifted their premise from two-dimensional relationships to sculptured form. The "found" object has become, for them, the principal motivation from which they have devised cogent and, generally, ironic expressions about the condition of twentieth century man.

In innumerable institutions, courses in design, painting, even drawing, are frequently introduced with a medium of paste, colored paper and bits of textured goods.

Some painters for whom the elements of collage technique have been significant are Conrad Marca-Relli, Robert Motherwell, Robert Rauschenberg, Ben Nicholson, Jean Arp and Joan Miro.

For example, David Smith.
The beginning student is often much more confident during the act of solving a design problem when he has the shapes, colors and textures, actually in his hand and hence is able to experience tactile sensations which support a relatively undisciplined visual response.

The technology of science and industry has provided countless thousands of objects and materials which are readily adaptable to purposes of planar design. As an adjunct to many of these products, manufacturers have invented ways of sealing, preserving, and gluing together items to increase the appeal of the originals. Among these are the very reliable acetates, glues and sizes which are capable, with a minimal amount of craftsmanship, of securing materials to a surface in permanent fashion. These newly developed adhesives are also of such quality that they are compatible to the painter's need for quick-drying media and are easily handled. So, rather than impede the act of painting or constructing, they may enhance the process by enabling the painter to grasp a wide range of tactile sensations. The tools with which he works, the resistance of

3 To mention just a few of these products: Fiberglas, Celotex, anodized aluminum, Tectum, Aircore (a paper sheeting given substance through emphasis on cellular structure), Thiokol, a very strong sealant, Epoxy resin, proxolyn putty, polyvinyl acetate, all pliable adhesives, various silicone repellents, colored vinyl sheathing, plastics, styrofoam, etc.
the surface, the material being secured, all insure a kind of variety that, particularly in the act of composition, heightens his awareness of the pictorial schema and may produce a level of articulation not available with traditional means.

Synthetic plastics, gelatin, metal alloys and fibers have been colored, laminated, moulded into panels of every conceivable size and shape. The bewildering array of products offered for public consumption are frequently of the same material, though their form may vary in accordance with function. Many of these objects can actually be assimilated into the construction and adequately secured to the surface and to elements protruding from that surface.

The wealth of utilitarian and practical objects mass produced by contemporary assembly line methods provide an unparalleled assortment of objects with which an artist may compose a palette. That palette, to be sure, may be rather expansive and include the entire studio facility. But the accumulation and clutter also establishes a presence, an environment of material, that comprises a microcosm of the artist's existence in a machine and material-oriented society.

The so-called "built-in-obsolescence" that characterizes a great many of the products of the society's economy consigns a multitude of objects to scrap heaps of one sort or another. This phenomenon makes certain
materials relatively cheap and accessible to the enterprising artist. It also causes a process of weathering and deterioration to claim certain kinds of objects in a relatively short time. This organic change generally alters the appearance, even the basic structures from which they are compounded, to such an extent that they contain considerable tonal properties. A kind of aesthetic aura exudes from the color and texture of mould, rust and assorted degrees of rot that often offers a modicum of motivation for pictorial use. In the paradox of this industrial drama, there are available numerous preservatives marketed for the prevention of decay and which, when used strategically, can contain rot in such a manner that it becomes a legitimate pictorial instrument. At the same time certain catalysts are available, which, when employed with a sense of craft and knowledge of their capacities, can stimulate and encourage organic disorders, resulting in the invention of textural and color variations most suitable for pictorial needs.

A number of American and European painters have utilized a portion of these materials with an emphasis that has led to their being referred to as "Neo-Dadaists". 4

Such a categorizing has generally failed to assay certain significant differences of attitude and milieu that constitute an increasingly positive expression in the new structures. The collective effect of works such as those brought together in the "New Images of Man" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art last season are possibly excessive in their grotesque and macabre truncations of traditional forms.

Braque, Picasso and Gris apparently used collage inventions to restore formal impact to the pictorial surface. The immediacy achieved by presenting imagery constructed from bits of material seemed to establish a new vitality with respect to contemporary concepts of reality. With the organization of elements dependent upon alien materials the actual objects became central to the idea or subject. Fragments of their existential milieu were raison d'être pictorially. See Alfred Barr's Cubism and Abstract Art.

Arp, Masson, Miro, Ernst, Schwitters and others involved in the Dada movement found the use of foreign materials and 'found' objects, given fantastic titles and presented as pictures or works of art, were effective expressions of contempt and ridicule for the values upon which traditional pictorial means depended. It became 'anti-art', so to speak, in an attempt to abrogate the social values which were assumed to inspire art forms expressing ideals which, events had demonstrated, lacked substance.

As this intent evolved into Surrealist directions, codified by Andre Breton, artists discovered that the incorporation of elements considered alien to the painted surface were useful for achieving incongruous and macabre effects. Disquieting relationships were concocted for and resulted from experimenting with 'automatic' response to unconscious impulse presumably for the purpose of revealing the inner recesses of the human psyche and hence the essence of man's nature. See the Dada Painters and Poets edited by Robert Motherwell and monographs of individual artists in the group.

Of course this excessive quality may be viewed as integral with a form of expression that reflects disgust with the conspicuous consumption and spiritual poverty apparent in the artist's environment. However, I do not believe that this should be construed as "anti-art." The incredible vitality of contemporary art is secured in far too strong a formal context to be concerned with reviling its own possibilities. What is perceptible to the public and critical consciousness as a brutal image should be considered as a statement about the limitations of that consciousness, not the plastic form that renders it viable.

They (constructions) are of factual force and their impact on our senses is as real as the impact of light or an electric shock. This impact can be verified just as any other natural phenomena. Shapes, colors and line speak their own language. They are events in themselves and in an organized construction they become beings—their psychological force is immediate, irresistible and universal to all species of mankind; not being the result of a convention, as words are, they are unambiguous, and it is for that reason that their impact can influence the human psyche.

On the other side of the coin are those artists for whom the materials of technology have created a means for the development of pictorial concepts that suggest an

7 For further discussion of this condition see Chapter on Fine Arts in William Barrett's Irrational Man, (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1958)

Integration of time, movement and space. Generally considered "Constructivists" their demands and influences are readily apparent in architecture, city planning, mobiles and certain tectonic sculptures.

The following material deals with my concerns and experiments with pictorial structure and I hope that some of the ideas are expansive enough to accommodate implications relative to the incorporation of many new materials for expressive purposes. A culture as complex as ours contains degrees of nuance important to creating a significant imagery—degrees of pictorial meaning perhaps obtainable only in the materials the technology produces.

The problem discussed in this essay holds more than theoretical interest for me. It is my problem. Certain conclusions are suggested that may have more than merely a personal utility. Those conclusions may not lend themselves to a rigorous philosophical analysis. It is not necessary or proper that they should. The emphasis is on what can be experientially corroborated as operationally effective and the concern of this writing is to present findings in a manner appropriate to the investigation.

Further, those parts that deal exclusively with my 'act of forming' are necessarily less than objective.

For example, the sculptured facade, in precast concrete, on the recently finished Mutual Insurance Co. of Hartford, Conn. or G. Kepes' lighted mural for KLM Airlines.
CHAPTER I

IMAGE AND MATERIAL

The first section deals with the problem of the conceptual image and attendant conflicts resulting from attempting expression of it with a new range of materials. This issue is magnified to some extent because of my concern (formal) and experiment with materials for which there are few traditional directives. Since relatively new materials and objects have been considered as the very subject matter of the picture, serious problems arise concerning the function of the idea or visualized image contained and expressed by these same materials. If it can be shown that the idea to be presented or embodied or made visible is intrinsically connected to the elements of construction, the character of the pictorial image may be available only through a collage technique.

Webster's New World Dictionary, College Ed., 1957, defines image to include representation of a thing or a person; visual impression; mental picture, idea; to reflect, imagine. Of the first two mentioned, representation may be discarded for my purpose here because it implies that which is perceived in a finished work and the latter because it suggests raw sensation undifferentiated by conceptual or imaginative process. Throughout this writing scheme, theme, motif may also be considered equivalent to mental idea, image or concept. As S. Rudikoff puts it, "...to speak of the image and imagery is our...conceptual way of registering the relation between forms and their effect on us, their intention for and toward us..." taken from "Image: Lost or Found" in June issue of Arts, vol. 34, no. 9 (1960).
I must limit this discussion to the problem as manifested in my studio procedure. For the present my reflections on the problem are so intimately involved in behavior in the studio that to bring any other criteria to the issue only muddles it. The second section demonstrates concrete examples that may be considered essentially as preparatory and the disclosure of directions for future reference.

Customarily my behavior in the studio is marked by a series of personal rituals which include preparing grounds, sizes, vehicles, glues, mixing new batches of color or simply rearranging the clutter of objects lying about. This is an important aspect of the picture-building process, for it is during these hours that a kind of contemplation of the objects or materials occur. It is my interaction, in the sense of acting with or upon the materials mentioned above and their evocative influence both in terms of ideas and formal potential, that establishes a mood. This 'mood' or psychological ground is the 'existential' field in which pictorial images ripen. Different qualities perceived among the stock of junk always provoke various degrees of feeling and when these feelings become most acute the concomitant ideas are clearest. When my intuitive awareness and/or

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For a more philosophical interpretation see Martin Heidegger's "field theory of being", a summary of which appears in Barrett, op.cit., pp. 187-212.
intellectual apprehension are integrated into a relatively pure state of consciousness the imagined or visualized image tends to crystallize and come into focus.

However, there seems to be a kind of proliferation of images during this process so that one rapidly obscures the next in an almost anchronistic sequence. Hence this mentally constructed image is seldom sharply defined with regard to its relationship to planar dimensions. It is a mental phenomenon and the immediacy of its adaptability to pictorial structure is not always apparent. Rather, its principal value seems to exist in its presence as an amorphous but persistent entity whose role is that of motivation and direction. The only way this image can assume pictorial value is for me to act (physically) upon

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R. G. Collingwood, Principles of Art, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 223. contains a definition of consciousness and seems to suit my purpose here: "the kind of thought which stands closest to sensation or mere feeling. Every further development of thought is based upon it, and deals not with feeling in its crude form but with feeling as thus transformed into imagination. In order to consider likenesses and differences between feelings, classify them or group them in other kinds of arrangements than classes, envisage them as arranged in a time series and so forth, it is necessary first that each one of the feelings thus reflected upon should be attended to and held before the mind as something with a character of its own; and this converts it into imagination.

Consciousness itself does not do any of these things. It only prepares the ground for them. In itself, it does nothing but attend to some feeling which I have here and now. In attending to a present feeling, it perpetuates that feeling, though at the cost of turning it into something new, no longer sheer or crude feeling (impression) but domesticated feeling or imagination (idea).
the material that originally stimulated the series of associations that produced it. And now a major problem arises, namely, that the idea or image is anathema to the material.

At this moment the disparity between the visually perceived qualities of a material and its tactile features are manifested. For example, a large piece of sized burlap and a sheet of corroded aluminum roofing streaked with rust may provoke an image of considerable excitement. As the period of contemplation progresses other objects can be visualized that would enhance and amplify that particular idea. Sometimes they are actually within the field of vision; other times they are dredged from past experience relative to the more fringe aspects of the subject image. While they are slowly collected by either means, they merge into constituent parts of the envisaged motif. When the tension or anxiety experienced by savoring the pictorial potential, accrued by this meditative process, reaches an intolerable proportion, that is to say, when every alternative (idea) has been discarded in favor of the ideal image, the complex reaction called expression must be indulged. The subsequent act, the existential "leap of faith," is characterized by a recession of the components of anxiety to a degree permitting a highly unified response to image and medium—theoretically secure.
And I do not deny that there are times when the way to resolution and completion are unmarred. But the concentration involved in this phase of the forming-thinking prelude to actual construction is usually intense and exclusive of sensations other than visual. So the tactile awareness, the concrete familiarity and acquaintance with roughness, coldness, hardness, etc., though to some degree extant in the perceived properties of the material, tend to diminish or are refined to the point of oversimplicity. Therefore, the initial physical contact with the chosen material creates a disillusioning sensation.

This is one of the most crucial stages in the use of combined materials and objects conventionally excluded from pictorial means. It is at this point that the tradition of painting is likely to have its profoundest influence. The elements of the mental image, compiled from past experience with the materials and, most importantly, from their unique appearances, coalesce conceptually largely in terms known about their capacity to be organized as traditional form. Hence the conceptual configuration may be described as illusory or even corrupt as it relates to the actual physical substance of the materials. But these materials originally stimulated the theme and to maintain their role as plastic accommodation or structure for the expression of the theme, it is imperative they remain organically connected to that theme. The tendency for the conceptual image to disintegrate when introduced to alien elements (texture) whose tactile sensations are not in harmony with the character of the image is directly related to the rigidity and conviction of the conception. On the other hand the amorphousness of the image, if, indeed, this seems its basic feature, is subjected to such modification as a result of this impact with material, that it looses its persuasiveness and direction it can better be realized in another medium, say charcoal or casein. What seems to be significant here is the initial test for durability, profundity, maybe even universality, of the conceived image.
In the case of some of the works comprising this exhibit I must confess resolution of the picture has been accomplished by according a greater degree of deference to the materials. This does not mean that the conceptual configuration was not realized in the formal structure of the picture. It simply suggests that the tradition bound image was freed to the extent that it could be held in abeyance sufficiently to permit further interpolation of the materials. The resultant discoveries tended to enable me to articulate other dimensions or find additional nuances contained in material. At times this modification, or rather the mobility of the image which rendered it susceptible to another dimension, was considered undesirable. This happened mostly when the expansion of the image was not recognized as an elastic or organic enlargement but construed to be an addition. The resultant overlap of ideas or themes aggravated the conditions amenable to my visual perception and precipitated a measure of discord in the act of forming. This indecisiveness can be a mixed blessing. It may reinforce efforts directed to discovering a way to elaborate or expand the original idea and lead to some significant inventions. Likewise it can divert attention to what may be called subsidiary features of the objects
or materials. The glare of metal or the threads of fabric for instance. If this overlap of ideas grows to the point of their contending for central authority, as the subsidiary facets enter perception, then the newness of the facet may be instrumental in grasping a lesser or weaker image with which to work. When the secondary qualities of the material are of sufficient merit to sustain an essential proportion of the original image, then there is little obstacle in assimilating them. However, the former situation is troublesome enough to warrant pursuing a bit further.

Discord between the conceptual image and the tactile sensation, that precipitates a shift of attention to secondary properties in the material acted upon, fosters the persistence of that image as total unity. It reinforces the unsuspected rigidity of the image. Consequently, the

It is very difficult to hold on to a sensation without in some manner disassociating oneself from it, becoming critical of it. With a secondary sensation it may be a formidable barrier to realization of either. This is what Collingwood calls the "corruption of consciousness" and points out: ....the possibility of such disowning is already implicit in the division of sensuous experience into what is attended to and what is not attended to, and the recognition of the former as "mine". If a given feeling is thus recognized, it is converted from impression into idea, and thus dominated or domesticated by consciousness. He also adds, incidentally, that this is what psychoanalysts variously call repression or projection, disassociation or fantasy building.

remote potential, contained in what might be referred to as the fringe aspects of the idea, is absorbed into its central tissue. In a special sense it becomes closed. It resists any comfortable alteration while the lesser textures or features of the material at hand are more easily embraced.

This resulting confusion in the act of forming the pictorial configuration leads toward attempts to incorporate secondary, even tertiary tactile sensations into the core of the idea. Since the idea tends to coagulate, foreclosing the richness of nuance it held at first, there exists the temptation to discard it. This cannot occur without disrupting the entire mood of activity. The 'mood' or 'field' of felt sensation is far too powerful a stimulant and too critical an elemental part of the operation to tolerate the divorce of the directional force of the idea.

6 Closed as determined and developed a priori.

7 W. Kohler feels "any actual consciousness is in every case not only blindly coupled to its corresponding psychophysical processes, but is akin to it in essential structural properties," quoted by Gyorgy Kepes in The New Landscape, (Chicago: Paul Theobald & Co., 1956), p. 252., and taken from Die Physischen Gestalten im Rube und im Stationaren Zustand, Braunschweig, 1920.
At this point, the encounter with emotional stress or flux further compounds the aforementioned sense of anxiety.

It will be remembered that the essential quality, the quality determined most eminent and significant as first perceived in the material, was a prime instrument in constituting the character of the mental image. At this moment the image and the material were an inseparable unit. During observation and reflection they were congealed as a whole or total entity. This feeling of wholeness and unity is an underlying factor in sponsoring the act. Now, if disillusionment is experienced upon physical contact with that material, and the image suffers alteration or severe modification, it cannot possibly be returned to its pristine state by seeking realization in subsidiary properties in the material.

Incidentally, it is my contention that here is an important phase in the anxiety issue in the sense that the point is reached where resolution starts or the anxiety dissolves the artist in frustration and purpose fades.

Part of the fragmentary or momentary aspect attributed to much of contemporary painting could be asserted to rest in the negation of the conceptual image in favor of a more pure 'visceral' behavior, i.e., so-called "action" painting. This negation of the image may have its seeds in the fact that science has demonstrated materials to be composed of unstable atoms, protons, etc. If this knowledge confuses or pre-empts the perception of appearances, which is the painter's forte, then the indulgence of raw sensation as motivation obviates clarification of a multitude of pictorial ideas contained in our milieu.
The formal or form suggesting qualities of the materials are generally so constituted that there exists relationships between the major and minor features of a particular material. During the process of contemplation the major feature may be determined but it must not be overlooked that the character of the major features possess attributes of the minor. For example, the color tone of a piece of burlap may be composed of the color (hue) of the coarse weave, the value (contrast) change existing between the raised threads (light) and the recess between them (dark), any scumble or smear resulting from wear and use tends to soften and unify the whole as well as imply another level of potential interpolation. If the hue is judged the principal or key element in determining the image then the weft and warp of the fabric tends to be relegated to minor consideration. The actual acting upon the material will necessarily include the minor features as areas to be exploited for invention and amplification. Important here is the fact that they must be suppressed to the extent that they only influence decisions about the major direction the
configuration assumes. They should not emerge to the point of obscuring the total image.

I have often sought resolution of this dilemma by seeking innovations and invention in the relationships further developed by placing additional elements in and around the initial material. It did indeed enlarge the choice. But if the focus (attention) fluctuated and became fixed upon subsidiary qualities, the relationships constantly perceived were of secondary importance. The vitality of the original image (conceptual) evoked by the total qualities of the materials could never be successfully structured or formed by utilizing features that were construed to be more than simply parts of that elemental wholeness.

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Relative to this phase of the process Juan Gris remarked, "I consider that the architectural element in painting is mathematics, the abstract side; I want to humanize it. Cézanne turns a bottle into a cylinder, but I begin with a cylinder and create an individual of a special type: I make a bottle—a particular bottle—out of a cylinder... One of my friends, a painter, has written: Nails are not made from nails but from iron... but I believe exactly the opposite. Nails are made from nails, for if the idea of the possibility of a nail did not exist in advance, there would be the serious risk that the material might be used to make a hammer or a curling tong." Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Juan Gris, His Life and Work, trans. by Douglas Cooper (New York: Curt Valentin, 1947), p. 139.

Again it should be emphasized that at inception the directional idea or image and the material that inspired it and which was obviously intended to become the structural transport for its visual, pictorial expression, was felt to be essentially complete, a highly unified phenomenon.
This section contains certain more technical observations concerning some of the works in the exhibition. They are directed to various aspects of pictorial form. A great portion of my background and training is comprised of exposure to relatively traditional experience with pictorial structure, i.e., the techniques of building form with conventional painting means (Plate V.). This has provided me with a set of precepts and ideas involving the forming process of building pictures. It is this knowledge that I have brought to focus in seeking (and finding) solutions arising from problems attendant to the use of combined materials. In the following pages it will become apparent how this background has enabled me to achieve what pictorial realization I have and that there may be directives disclosed in sundry aspects of the process which may lead to further achievement.

Some of the works in the exhibition have been constructed from a relief-like surface rather than one whose Considered here as the presentational part of the painting which contains the embodiment of the idea. Also see H. L. Sherman's definition of form as a configurational abstraction in Cezanne and Visual Form, a variation on which might be a visual presentational configuration.
character was flat at the start. This kind of surface was built by using from four to six small canvas panels affixed to a wood framework in which the various horizontal and vertical members were made to project, one over the other, in such a manner that the grid was irregular and caused modest protrusions. When the smaller panels were fastened and bent to conform to the supporting superstructure, there resulted an undulating effect punctuated by a sharp relief edge (Plate III.). Depending upon the placement of the light source in the studio, the warp and stress of this raised surface became variously and incisively appointed with numerous shape implications. The shapes that are projected across the surface are, of course, dark and somewhat similar to cast shadows. This scheme is also predominantly linear because the edges of the shapes are repetitions of the element in relief. In the previous section it was noted that at about this point in the process of constructing the conceived image was at a critical stage and, depending upon the materials, could lose considerable meaning. Some means of formal discipline becomes imperative if any kind of continuity is to be secured. From the pile of scrap material, which had given emphasis to the idea and which appeared inviting for further development and expression came the elements of construction. Many of these objects were decidedly opposite in formal connotations and could be readily incorporated to break up the rigid value
and linear patterns. While it caused assorted complicated and displeasing formal relationships it afforded more choice for future decisions.

To maintain relative continuity it is important to make selections of pictorial elements from the materials that were involved in the perception which motivated the idea. In principle, this may be considered not unlike the limitations afforded by a limited palette or other similar devices. Of paramount consideration, in a process drawing sustenance from a multitude of materials, is some kind of disciplinary measure. They are most appropriate when invented with elements upon which it is intended for the device to yield critical influence.

I suppose that it might be said that the picture or image at which I may eventually arrive is also contained in the process of selection and acquisition of many different kinds of scrap and junk. Not infrequently the context from which the materials are removed possessed the seeds of an idea or a partially suggested image. Road signs, fragments found in a war surplus depot, freshly processed construction

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2 It may be remembered throughout this section that I believe moments of despair or anxiety experienced when formal unity doesn't progress are directly proportionate to modifications occurring in the conceived image.

3 The accumulation of various elements, kept in relatively separate groupings, though arbitrary in category, to some extent afforded this measure of discipline.
materials, worn and rotten fabrics, rusty mechanical devices
or brightly colored children's toys and such, are all rich
with pictorial possibilities. With the kinds of materials
for which I have a feeling the deterioration is not clearly
natural nor is the milieu in which it was first perceived
ordered by events in the natural world. Industrial sites
and other such places where tonal and material relation­
ships are often the most compelling are those in which man
and his techniques cause inorganic changes and highly un­
likely juxtapositions to occur.

As these elements are accumulated in the studio they
are not placed in any order. If floor space permits they
are distributed in such a manner that they approximate
what, in the tradition of painting, are sketches or nota­
tions for future reference. Of course this kind of an
arrangement subjects them to a certain jeopardy in that
parts from one "possible" pile may be used for the further­
ing of another that is closer to resolution.

Regarding this accumulation, David Smith has com­
mented that "The order of the whole can be perceived, but
not planned. Logic and verbiage and wisdom will get in the
way. I believe in perception as being the highest order of
recognition. My faith in it comes as close to an ideal as
I have. When I work, there is no consciousness of ideals—
but intuition and impulse.", from David Smith's "Notes"
in Arts, Vol. 34 (1960), p. 44.
I cannot conceive a work and buy material for it. I can find or discover a part. To buy new material—I need a truckload before I can work on one. To look at it every day—to let it soften—to let it break up in segments, planes, lines, etc.—wrap itself in hazy shapes. Nothing is so impersonal, hard and cold as straight rolling mill stock. If it is standing or kicking around, it becomes personal and fits into visionary use. With possession and acquaintance, a fluidity develops which was not there the day it was unloaded...

For reasons of accessibility or convenience and sometimes accident, many of the smaller and lighter bits and objects find their way to the tops and edges of the stacks of litter. This occurrence operates in such a way that it causes an obscuring of the edges of the chance configuration and diminishes the clarity of the more prominent articles in the pile and produces an effect not disimilar to that of David Smith's "hazy shapes." A certain element of conflict arises when the shapes and the character of the whole "sketch" violate the growing intensity of the image imagined or perceived with my first acquaintance with the material in its original environment. That is, the environment in which it was discovered. Now it is when this anxiety is nurtured that the judgment is made about the quality of the materials and their inherent possibility for achieving the initial, imagined effect.

The use of found objects and materials provides, at an operational level, some significant differences in the

5 Ibid., author's italics.
act of constructing that I have observed are directly related to the problem discussed in the preceding section. The length of time it takes to introduce elements into the plastic matrix tends to be less than that which revolves around the struggle with oil paint or enamel. By using tacks, staples, quick drying glues, etc. shapes can be placed, covered, removed, and otherwise altered without disturbing the foundation materials. Hence as a decision is made, more time is available and may be devoted to reflection upon the pictorial logic or "correctness" of the act and the nature of the recent element's role, both as it related immediately and in terms of future prerogatives with other materials. Attention to formal innovations can constantly be referred or compared to the directive imposed by the conceived image. Many more incidents occur in the act of painting before I feel a need to withdraw as it were, and appraise progress. The use of combined materials stimulates a detachment and involvement interchange at more frequent intervals than painting and can be utilized to judge the appropriateness of each element singularly rather than permitting so much to occur that separation of the trouble-causing agent becomes difficult. The more frequent these periods of reflection, the greater the referents to the idea upon which the structure depends. Further, when this unrelated element is perceived, it can be removed without technical restriction from adjacent components.
The character of various materials collected for use as pictorial elements, in the collage or combined technique, invariably retain attributes of their original context. This is highly useful as an evocative phenomena and keeps the expressive possibilities rich in nuance during their storage and use. It also assigns to individual pieces particular qualities that may or may not suggest relationships at a formal level. To some degree, then, this must be resolved in the process of conception. Of course, there is no insurance that it can be realized at a formal level. Each component selected for use tends to be closed in its own unique way so that the ambiguity, easily obtainable in the early stages of a painting, accrues to the conceptual image. The spirit which gives the image pictorial credential, i.e., its expressive dimensions, must be focused on the entire mass of chosen planar constituents.

The work of art comes into being through artistic evaluation of its elements. I know only how I make it, I know only my medium, of which I partake, to what end I know not. The medium is as unimportant as I myself. Essential is only the forming. Because the medium is unimportant, I take any material whatsoever if the picture demands it. When I adjust materials of different kinds to one another, I have taken a step in advance of mere oil painting, for in addition to playing off color against color, line against line, form against form, etc., I play off material against material, for example wood against sackcloth.6

One way of soliciting the necessary feedback to promote this condition is the use of paint to obscure overly pronounced features of the materials. Since different materials accept paint (or don't) with manifold tolerances, it is usually possible to retrieve that feature when the need arises. Further, reactions caused when paint is applied to both compatible and incompatible surfaces proffer a range of possibilities for structural purposes that the obscured feature lacked. At any rate the use of paint is meaningful in terms of technical transition from traditional methods and constitutes a way to control visual focus over the entire plane. Care must be exercised to prohibit too much paint application for fear of shifting the cues more toward that of pure painting than collage.

The color and value of the paint is largely determined by the degree of saturation in the hue of the materials used to establish the working surface. Often, contrary to what is customarily advisable in painting, namely, keeping early phases of the configuration fairly neutral, the injection of a severe, garish or intense color, say cadmium red, is in harmony with the persistent and incisive character of the shapes and may advance the whole composition toward more accessible formal relationships. It will be remembered that the shift in the time element with this technique enables me to ponder such decisions longer without imperiling the total working time. Though this may be justifiably considered as
a too rapidly executed closure in painting it may not function so when the configuration is dependent upon a set of materials possessing uniquely closed properties in the first place.

A great majority of the materials acquired for use are of a rectilinear, curvilinear, round or symmetrically machined nature. It strikes me at this writing that such a phenomenon has significant bearing on the image evoked both in separate bits of material and in juxtaposition with others. It certainly seems apparent as evidenced by a collective image over a series of works. I think it worth mentioning that this does, however, present somewhat of a paradox at an operational level. The image is obvious, the more so to one who has matured under the continuous influence of this image in his environment. So is the format and configurational implication. But the peculiarity underlying the paradox is that in the process of forming at no place can the work gain substance (expressive) or merit if the given image and formal relationship coalesce too soon. The result is

7 Regarding the assembly of images available in materials David Smith has "Rarely the Grand Conception, but a preoccupation with parts. I start with one part, then a unit of parts, until a whole appears. Parts have unities and associations and separate after images—even when they are no longer parts but a whole. The afterimages lie back on the horizon, very distant cousins to the image formed by the finished work." Smith, op.cit., p. 44.
inevitably slight, whimsical, lacking any profundity. It doesn't possess that vital abrasive between the concept and the given material that motivates meaningful pictorial invention.

Many devices can be used to program an irritant or catalyst that registers potential for interpolation beyond the pale of known aspects of the material. Among them are the incorporation of textures which have a disquieting effect or which negate a recall of past association. In one of the works artificial grass has literally been planted in clay and featured to appear a part of an aluminum sheet. If it can be made to appear as a part related in terms of pictorial elements then the disquieting notion also becomes relegated to an image transcending mere strangeness or novelty to the level of insight.

The transparent effect caused by the overlapping of colored gelatin added depth and richness to the general color tone. It also became a method for achieving unique color climaxes in relation to the color tones contained in the textures of other elements. Though approximate colors for this same purpose could be arrived at through mixing oil pigments, it is more consistent to develop the color from the materials necessary to the structure. It

That material given to perception and upon which the act of construction will be directed.
discovered and treated in this manner, the color field tends to have a higher degree of integration with other pictorial elements. Another dimension of potential articulation was revealed when the light reflection from the gelatin overlays was noted to possess a freely changing character. This factor could be somewhat calculated by permitting a degree of convexity or concavity to occur as the shapes were secured to the panel. By utilizing this aspect of the light reflection, shapes of a fleeting and amorphous character (like Impressionist shimmer) could become a part of the generally rectilinear quality of the gelatin. This kind of contrast was followed up in the juxtaposition of glossy metal finishes against dull or matt surfaces. Again, control was imposed by the strategic placement of areas of flat paint, enamels or lacquers. Along with paints the manipulation of size became an agent with which to control the reflections. When they were a part of one of the relief panels the incisive quality of a raised or recessed edge provided a useful counterpoint to the fugitive surface glitter. The constant change (caused both by light source and movement on the part of the spectator) of these reflections, contained simultaneously by the thick, heavy substance of the underlying structure offers another disquieting sensation but at the same time can be felt as a critical factor in the expressive force of the materials.
Metal screening was found to be an appropriate instrument to carry the effect of transparency to materials which do not ordinarily possess that trait. By using screens of various coarseness they were built up to permit a "looking into" the composition while the transparency suggests a "looking through" the elements. The screening was also important in that it enabled me to repeat patterns and linear facets of certain fabrics incorporated in the scheme. The sensation of looking into the screen while concomitantly being brought back to a sense of unyielding surface, from one area to another, seemed a unique way of soliciting contrast of tactile and visual responses while maintaining unity in the composition. Different kinds of liquid media were utilized to enhance this phenomenon by lightly glazing the surface to emphasize the character of the texture.

Artificial grass and shrubbery, lumps of clay or plaster, pieces of sponge, etc., were felt to further embellish the sense of low relief but more importantly they added an amorphous element that constituted a hazy field. Wood, metal and such material do not lend themselves to appearing thus. Along with being still another contrast element they aided unification by relieving the monotony of edges of splintered wood, cut metal or machined curves. Since it could be too distracting to rely on any great amount of these materials, the effect of dripped and spattered paint carried this effect through other passages of the picture. The limitations of my materials and the strong influence
of traditional modes seem to keep painterly notes present but I feel that with an expansion of means it may be rewarding to obviate use of conventional media altogether.

Photographs and reproductions have been experimented with as an ingredient of the combined method because of their residual content in terms of a stereotyped image. The injection of this kind of note forms a striking contrast to the crude surface of other shapes. The refinement of a traditional icon may cause misleading interpretation but at the same time can evoke further meaning in the context of structural materials. They can be chosen for their formal qualities such as glossy or matt finish, size, contrast, color, etc. As a cue to the grasp of the image relayed by the rest of the structure, they can be significant. To the extent that they embody other images and ideas their relationship to the whole configuration increases the increment of general contrast. Likewise, newspaper and magazine advertisements, comic strips and typography are incorporated both as formal devices and as stimulants addressed to the purpose of communicating further nuances of the subject matter.

Traditional handling and placement of space cues (chiaroscuro, perspective) in the reproductions, confined by the format of the print, present possibilities of climax and denouement in stark opposition to similar cues presented by overlap of screening, gelatin, tissue and
elevated and recessed shapes. The style of the painting or other artifact in the reproduction or the types of costume illustrated in the photograph can be considered another way to advance the expression of a highly complex image by nurturing even another level of contrast.
CONCLUSION

There is nothing in nature that is not in us. Whatever exists in nature, exists in us in the form of our awareness of its existence. All creative activities of Mankind consist in the search for an expression of that awareness.

Naum Gabo

The foregoing material has been an attempt to formulate certain aspects of what I refer to as a collage or combined media technique. It is also an introduction to the works in the exhibit. I have endeavored to imply in the second section some "operational" directives which grew out of concerns rooted in the problem discussed in the first section. These concerns are not new to the painter. They are the kinds of problems that seem to recur for examination in each generation. As the conventional stock of pictorial means becomes deleted or inadequate, a new vocabulary of form must be discovered and made meaningful by the maturing painter. I have tried to demonstrate that resolution of the dichotomy that ensues when expression and concepts are disparate, even at odds, resides in the invention of form. My direction with relatively new media has been viewed as a personal, though not necessarily unique, solution. The basis from which I have secured insights into these means rest firmly on the conviction that the principles of abstract pictorial configuration or form are concomitant with the physiological-psychological mechanism that perceives. In this connection the second part
Illustrates innovations only possible because of the anxiety experienced when involved with the problem pointed out in the first. Also implicit in the notes on the "creative" process are factors which have value for the "appreciative" involvement.

The fact that these commonplace articles, "garlic and sapphires in the mud." are not customarily related for an aesthetic purpose in no way weakens their inherent potential as pictorial elements. Rather, it suggests a whole range of factors open to formal exploitation as well as matters of social content. The works reproduced here exemplify my philosophical position and demonstrate my forming process. They evidence concern with the conceived image as embodied in form, and may substantiate my purpose which is to form and inform simultaneously. The realization of self is irrevocably bound to the creation and affirmation of the total organism as unified by and in the work of art.

This dissertation represents the conclusion of my graduate work and marks a particular phase of my gradual emergence toward professional status.

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The following plates are photographs of sixteen paintings and constructions submitted as part of this dissertation. An exhibition of these works was held in the Gallery of Hayes Hall in July, 1960.
PLATE I
"CATAPULT"
40"x50", paper, casein on board
PLATE II

"FACADE"

36" x 48", oil, enamel, lacquer, aluminum, canvas, burlap, gelatin, asphalt roofing, wood
PLATE III

"MOTHER GOOSE"

41"x53", oil, enamel, lacquer, aluminum, canvas, burlap, gelatin; asphalt roofing, wood
PLATE IV

"PICNIC"

42"x56", oil, enamel, lacquer, artificial grass, wood, aluminum, linoleum, gelatin, metal screen
PLATE V

"BELLA"

44" x 48", oil on canvas
PLATE VI

"ENCOUNTER"

40" x 50", oil, enamel on canvas
PLATE VII
"GRANVILLE"

48" x 48", cardboard, oil, enamel, wood on board
PLATE VIII
"COUPLE"
36"x48", oil, enamel on board
PLATE IX
"WINTER"
36" x 48", oil on canvas
PLATE X

"BATHERS"

26"x30", paper, ink, crayon, chalk, watercolor, on board
PLATE XI

"Matriarch"

34" x 42", oil on canvas
PLATE XII

"WARD HEELERS"

32"x48", brass, aluminum, enamel, cardboard, gelatin, linoleum, metal screen, wood, photograph on celotex
PLATE XIII

"FAMILY"

42" x 50", oil on canvas
PLATE XIV
"LOUNGE"
48"x52", enamel, cardboard, metal, screen, gelatin, oil on celotex
PLATE XV
"LOOKERS"

28"x36", ink, paper on board
PLATE XVI
"COUNTESS"

48"x53", paper, casein, ink, chalk,
crayon on masonite
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, William Charles Kienk, was born in Dayton, Ohio, February 27, 1930. I received my secondary education in the public schools of that city and my undergraduate training at Miami University, which granted me the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1952. During the year 1954-55 I attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. From the Ohio State University I received the Master of Arts degree in 1958. From 1957 until June, 1959, I was a teaching assistant in the School of Fine and Applied Arts at the Ohio State University. In September, 1959, I was appointed Instructor in the Department of Art at Denison University and held this position while completing the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.
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