

ACCORDING
TO ann...

[Re-Imagined]

Susi Martin and
Elinor Severinghaus

ACCORDING
TO ann...

[RE-IMAGINED]

Susi Martin and
Elinor Severinghaus



O'HANLON
center for the arts

According to Ann [re-imagined]

by Susi Martin and
Elinor Severinghaus

Copyright © 2019 by
O'Hanlon Center for the Arts

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

PDF VERSION:
ISBN: 978-1-7338797-1-2

Cover painting (detail) by Ann O'Hanlon circa 1963.
"In memory of the assassination of a great Human or – the struggle between Light and Dark on this planet."

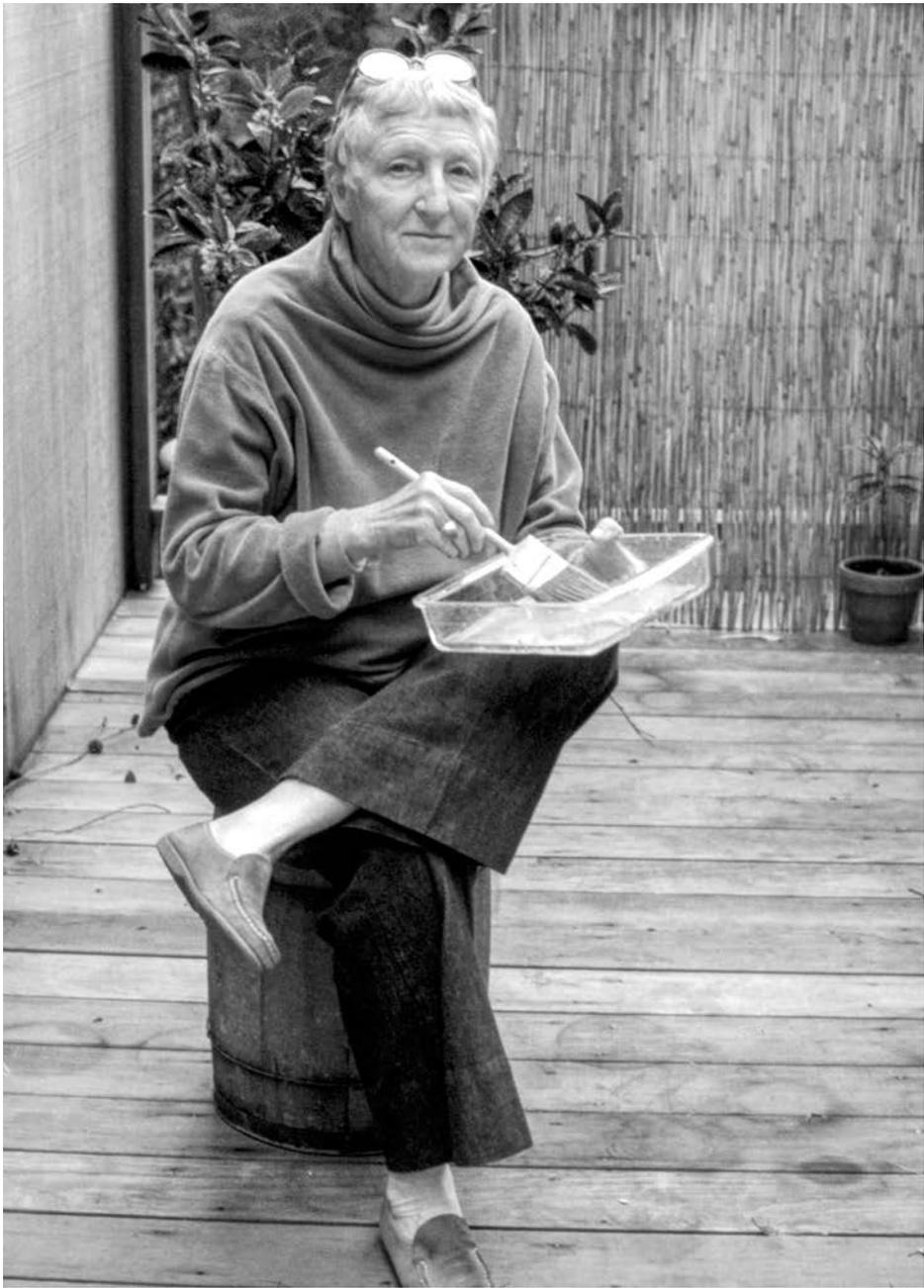
Cover and book design:
Jeremy Thornton



O'HANLON
center for the arts

616 THROCKMORTON AVENUE
MILL VALLEY, CA 94941

415 388-4331
ohanloncenter.org



to Ann O'Hanlon

Keeping its distance
when overlapping the
rock

the snow melts $\frac{1}{2}$ inch

— Elinor Severinghaus

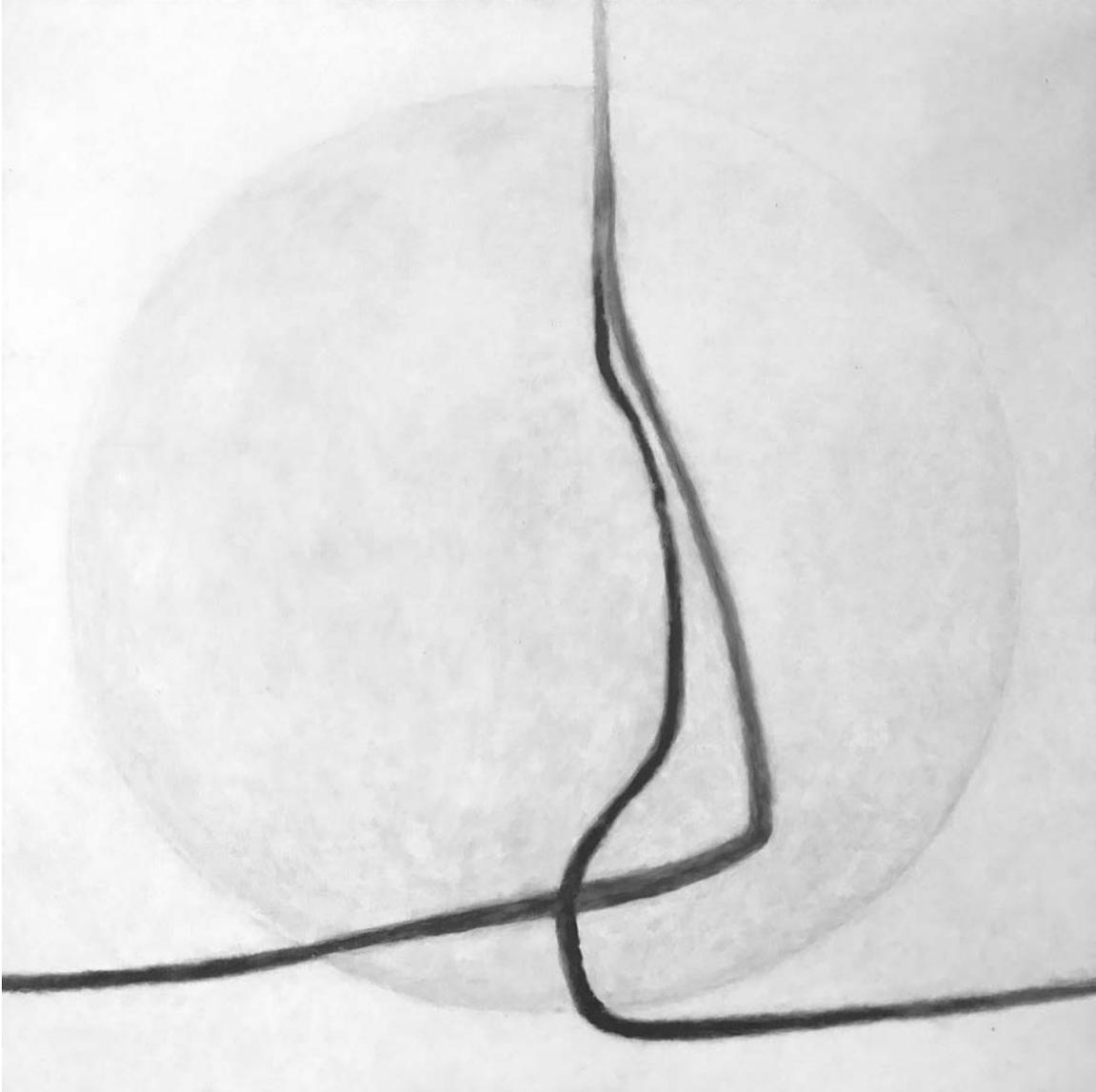
As students in Ann O'Hanlon's visual perception workshops we have occasionally jotted down something she had just said. This book is a compilation of these verbatim notes submitted with deep affection and some trepidation because, according to Ann,

NOTHING

IS

STATIC.





Background

Ann and Dick O'Hanlon together were a powerful creative force. They first met in 1932 as students at the San Francisco Art Institute. Ann Rice O'Hanlon (1908–1998) was a painter and muralist best known for a large WPA-era fresco at the University of Kentucky. Richard O'Hanlon (1906–1985) was a sculptor who taught at UC Berkeley and had many commissions throughout the Bay Area.

The O'Hanlons purchased an old dairy farm at 616 Throckmorton Avenue in Mill Valley. They lived in its modest house and turned the barn into a studio (henceforth known as the Loft). Their home was a gathering place where local artists and art students met regularly to share their work and ideas. Over time, Dick O'Hanlon's successful career allowed him to construct a large sculpture studio that is now the O'Hanlon Gallery, and he lovingly built Ann her own studio higher up on the property. Together, they created the atmosphere of the art center that you can still feel today.

Ann retired in 1962 from Dominican College, where she had established the Art Department and taught for 20 years. Free from "parochial" restraints, Ann began her own "Visual Perception Workshops" in the Loft.

She was well read and had traveled extensively, notably to Japan, where she studied calligraphy. She had a deep understanding of art – looking at an Old Master painting, she would know its allegorical history; but she was more interested in its abstract content. What did it consist of? What was its inherent energy? She was endlessly curious about life – it was to be explored – it was unfinished. She loved nature and spent every summer at their cabin in Lake Tahoe or hiking in the Sierras. With her honest, direct, no-nonsense personality, Ann O'Hanlon took all this knowledge and experience and channeled it into her workshops. She was at her peak and still painting. She also had an avid, well-educated audience who heard her and who gave her increased energy. She was doing her work at the right time, in the 1960s –1970s, when people were turning away from convention, searching for alternative ways to live and work.

Gradually, word got out and by the 1970s Ann's workshops became well attended. She was a facilitator and mentor who inspired scores of artists. It was unimportant to her whether her students were beginners or experienced. This created an atmosphere of equality and camaraderie between participants. Her approach emphasized a hands-on experience with

materials. Workshop attendees would follow an initial instruction/guideline, then all the results would be displayed on a large wall. An inclusive discussion would follow led by Ann. The emphasis was on “what do you see?” and on appreciation and understanding of what was there on the paper or canvas. It was a liberating experience for creative people with art school backgrounds who had been taught that technique was all-important. Ann possessed a unique vocabulary and her language was poetic. This opened up an atmosphere of possibility and discovery. As a result, these workshops buzzed with creative energy. Everyone was learning from one another. It was a magical time.

Artists Susi Martin and Elinor Severinghaus attended these workshops and were right in the middle of this creative happening taking notes, which they later edited and published as *According to Ann*. They were able to succinctly capture Ann O’Hanlon’s unique use of English, the key elements of her philosophy and the energy of the workshop, which she called Visual Perception.

Susi Martin was born in Czechoslovakia in 1923. She was a UC Berkeley graduate with a degree in economics. For many years, Susi was a librarian at the San Francisco Analytical Psychology Club Society Library, and was said to have read almost everything on the library’s shelves. In the late sixties she became a life-long member and participant of Sight & Insight. She was a wonderful painter and a devoted teacher of art. Her thoughtful and honest encouragement influenced many artists. Besides *According to Ann*, she edited and produced, along with Cornelia Wattley, Jeremy Thornton and CB Follett, a second book, Ann O’Hanlon’s *Seeing / Perception: looking at the world through an artist’s eye*. Susi Martin died in 2005.

Elinor Severinghaus was born in 1925. Her interest in art was developed by watching her grandmother painting on slabs of coffee tree trunk in Guatemala’s western highlands. Elinor lived in Guatemala for her first 13 years, daughter of Presbyterian missionaries among the Mam tribe of Mayan natives. Later, she graduated with an M.A. from New York University.

In the late sixties, while busy with four children, Elinor began exploring art activities. She became an active participant in Ann O’Hanlon’s Visual Perception Workshops at Sight & Insight. Her work incorporated collage, rubbing, Sumi ink, watercolors, oil pastels and

monoprinting. Elinor combined her experience from Ann and her passion for inspiring children to discover their own creative paths, and conducted workshops in perception in many Marin County public schools and also ad hoc in airports, or wherever she found participants. She died in 2015.

Although the art world has greatly changed, Ann's liberating philosophy maintains its relevance today. You can learn a technique, but that doesn't make you an artist. Art is full of contradictions, and if there are rules, they are soon broken. Ann's belief in looking deeply and then perceiving and learning to accept what is there remains liberating and inspiring. One can take her discussion of "painting" and apply it equally to other art forms. This knowledge is a treasure to be shared with new generations. O'Hanlon Center for the Arts members Cayen Robertson, Carolyn Planakis and Kris Gordon have been essential in passing on this concept.

In 1969, several students and members of the art community founded Sight & Insight (renamed O'Hanlon Center for the Arts in 2004) as a nonprofit art center based on Ann O'Hanlon's unique Visual Perception Workshops. When Ann died in 1998, the property was left to the organization.

Today the O'Hanlon Center continues Ann's core beliefs of perception and exploration. The Center is committed to continuing the work of Dick and Ann O'Hanlon through workshops, lectures, exhibitions and building a diverse community of members. For more information, please visit: ohanloncenter.org.

IN THE BEGINNING

THE HUMAN BEING HAS TO
LEAVE BEHIND THE FAMILIAR
AND EMBARK
ON THE TOTALLY NEW
AT SOME POINT.



WORKING WITH SOMETHING
unFAMILIAR
IS SELF-EXPLORATION.

DISCOVER A WAY

OF OPENING

THE VALVES OF YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS

OPEN DEPTHS

TO ALLOW

THE INSIGHT

TO SEEP

THROUGH

T
R
I
G
G
E
R

THE

E
M
P
T
Y
I
N
G



TO TAKE HOLD MORE FULLY.

FIRST ACT OF EXPRESSION: **LET IT BE!**

SAY: "WELL,

THIS IS THE WAY IT IS."



the will of the ink

THE EASTERN APPROACH:

FIRST

STOP.

BE QUIET.

MEDITATE.

LOCATE WITHIN YOURSELF.

THE WESTERN WAY:

FIRST DO!

. . . . THEN BE RECEPTIVE.

THE EAST STARTS WITH RECEPTIVENESS.



The painting has chosen its weapons!

To grab ideas out of non thinking = the West

To open oneself up sufficiently to let the logical sequence come through = the East

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO EMBODY AN IDEA:

START AS THE RECEPTIVE ONE

AND LET THE OTHER SIDE IN

TO GIVE ORDER.

OR

START WITH AN IDEA, THE CREATIVE,

AND LET THE OTHER SIDE IN

ALLOW IT TO GROW

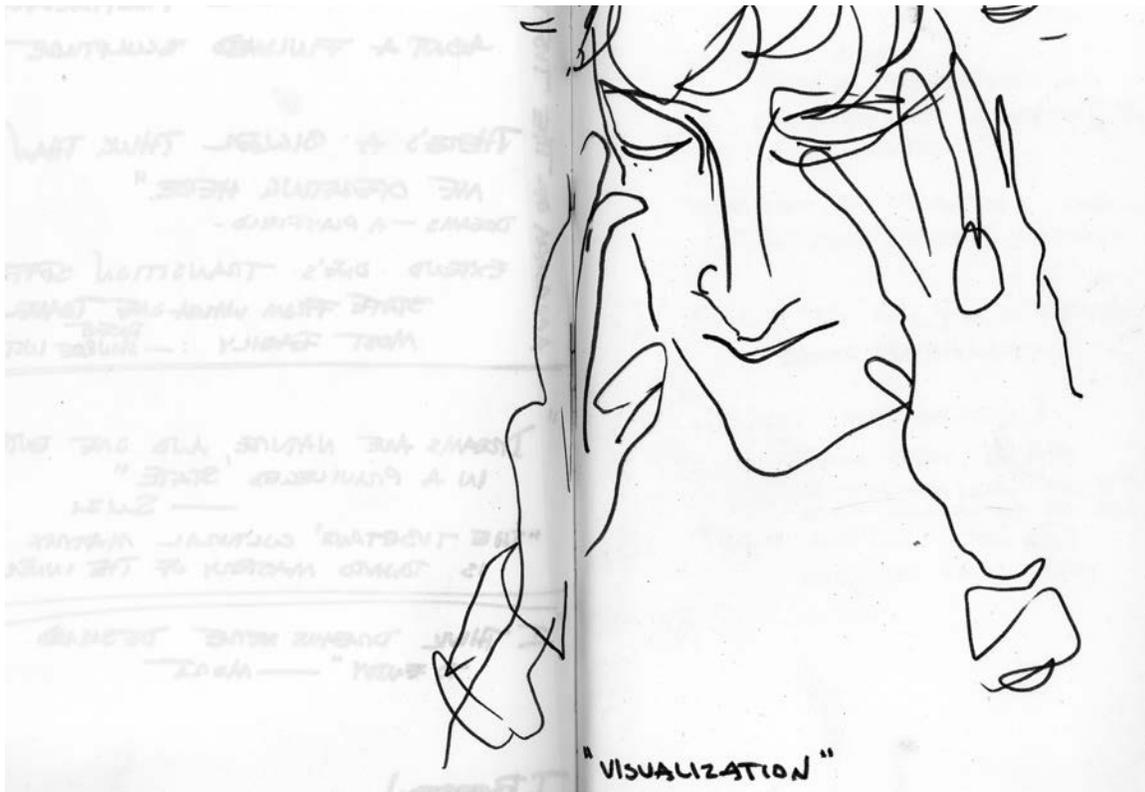
BY BEING PERCEPTIVE.

YOU ASSIST THE STRONGEST ELEMENTS OF A BEGINNING



AFFIRM ACCIDENT

BY MAKING A CONSCIOUS CONNECTION WITH IT.



YOU ARE THE DISCOVERER OF YOUR OWN WORK

– NOT ITS MAKER.

LOOK INTO WHAT IT IS TO FIND IT

AND IT WILL REVEAL TO YOU WHAT YOU ARE.

YOU CAN INTEND TO ACHIEVE AN ANSWER

WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT THE ANSWER **IS**

WITHOUT **IMPOSING** AN ANSWER

BY ORIENTING YOURSELF

ALL OF YOURSELF

TO THE PROBLEM.

THIS INCLUDES THE INTELLECT.

THEN THE ANSWER WILL BE EXPRESSIVE OF **YOU** –

NOT MERE DECORATION

NOT APPEARANCES

BUT AFFIRMATIONS

OF THIS

OR ANOTHER

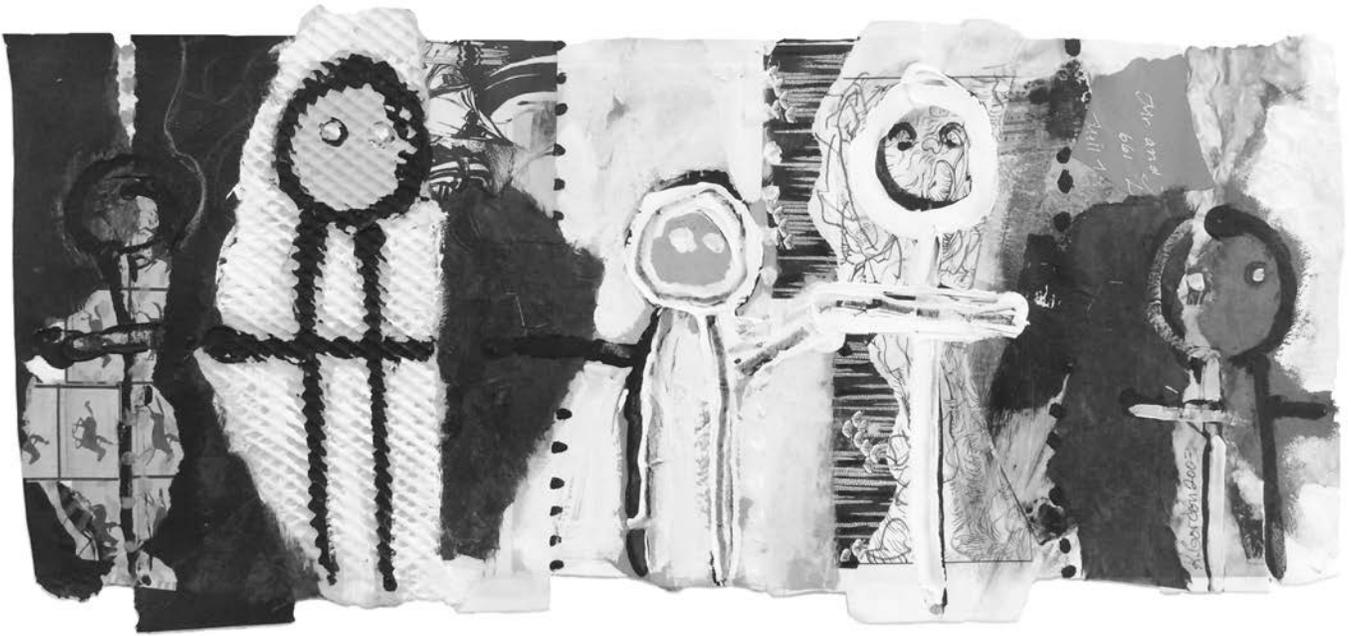
STATE OF BEING.

AVOID SELF-CRITICISM.

WHATEVER YOU DO

DO IT HUMBLY AND WHOLLY.

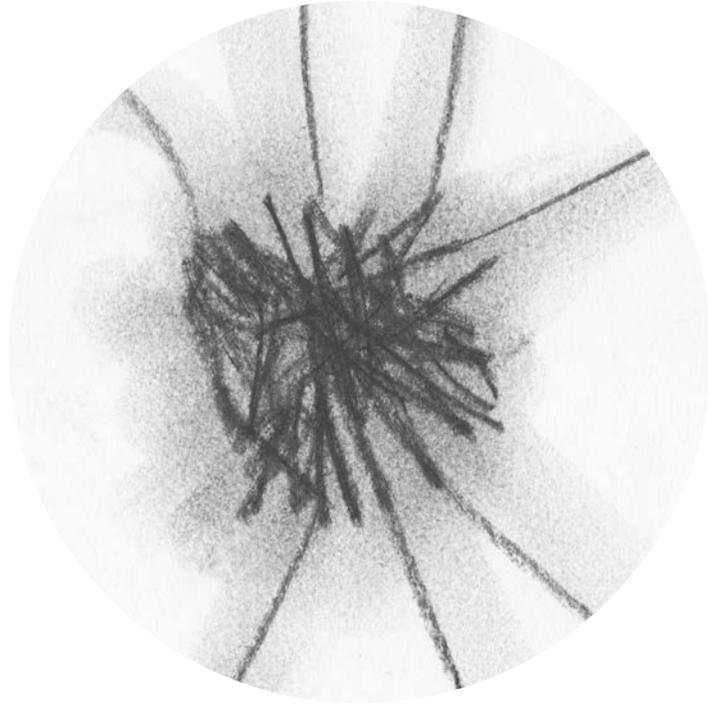
LET IT HAPPEN.



NOBODY PAINTS PICTURES ABOUT ANYTHING

BUT THEMSELVES

meaning is the approach to one's inner poetic nature.



THE SIMPLER SOMETHING IS

THE MORE PROFOUNDLY

IT MUST INVOLVE YOU.

THE LEARNING PROCESS

..a meditation
with an object
of your own
doing.

CREATION AND PERCEPTION:

THE TWO HAVE TO CONSTANTLY RELIEVE EACH OTHER

LIKE THE MOVING WHEEL OF

YANG AND YIN.



**MAKE YOUR OWN
KIND OF TRANSFIGURATION
FROM A FOCUS (PERSONAL)
TO VISUAL TERMS.**

**START WITH A KNOWABLE
AND WORK OUT THE ABSTRACT.**



DO ANYTHING THAT CAN

STEER YOU

OUT OF

APPEARANCE.

USE YOUR KIND OF ENERGY

WITH YOUR INVOLVEMENT.



IF WE DEFEAT CURIOSITY

WE LOSE

THE ABILITY TO TRANSFIGURE.

NOT SO MUCH "ABSTRACTING"

AS "SUCCINCTIFYING".....



YOU

ARE

AN INVOLVED PART OF EXPERIENCE.

Don't try to paint anything

you have not had an encounter with.

TRYING TO PAINT
ITS APPEARANCE
DIMINISHES
NATURE.

ENERGIES TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER DESIGN.



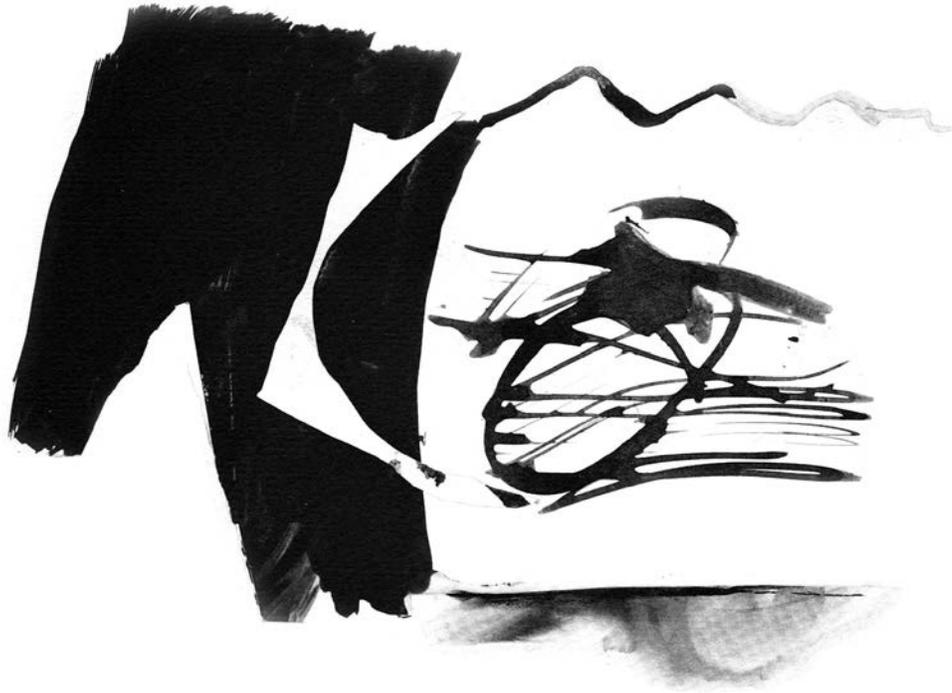
FIND

THE INTERLOCKING ENERGIES

AND YOU WILL BRING A NEW INTENSITY

INTO YOUR LIFE.

THERE IS AN EQUATION INHERENT IN THE ENERGY OF A PAINTING.



INTRODUCE **YOUR** KIND OF ENERGY CONSCIOUSNESS INTO YOUR IDEA

OR INVOLVEMENT –

AND ALL YOU NEED IS TIME TO WORK.

NO ADDITIONAL CHOICES.

IF YOU WANT TO DRAW SOMETHING

LIGHT AND AIRY

FIND THE PART OF YOURSELF

THAT IS IDENTIFIED

WITH LIGHTNESS

AND AIRINESS.

DIRECTION, MOTION: NORTHERN

PLACE, FORM, SYMBOL: SOUTHERN

Energy, motion: Klee, Motherwell

Form, space: Parker, Simpson



MASS AND LINE

IF YOU UNDERSTAND WHICH OF THE TWO YOUR OWN PERSONALITY
IS WINGING TOWARD, AGITATE THE SURFACE TO YOUR OWN NEEDS.

FIND THE COMPLEMENTS:

THE PLAY

BETWEEN

THE MEASURED AND THE UNMEASURED

THE SOFT AND THE EXACT



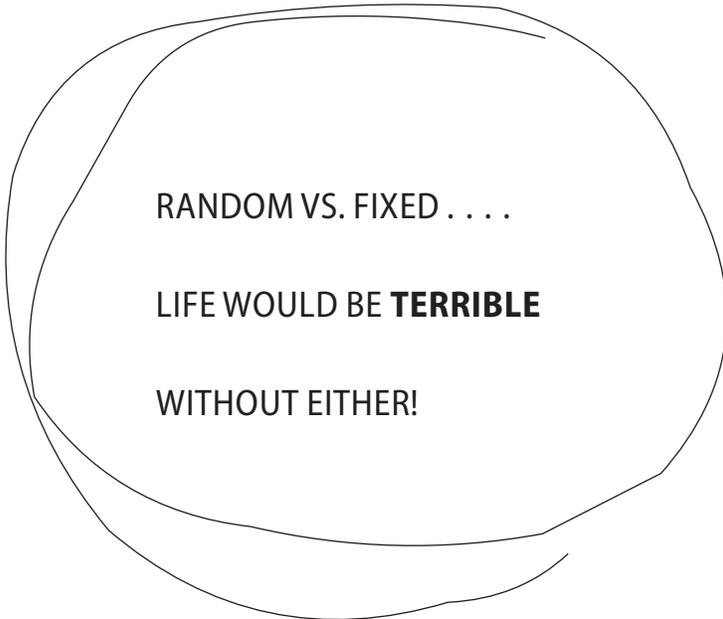
LETTING THE HORIZONTAL DOMINATE

SO THE

V B
E E
R C
T O
I M
C E
A
L
S

LITTLE

ACCENTING POINTS.



RANDOM VS. FIXED

LIFE WOULD BE **TERRIBLE**

WITHOUT EITHER!

ONE ALWAYS HAS TO PULSE BETWEEN TWO THINGS.

IF YOU DON'T . . . YOU'RE DEAD!



**TONAL VS. NON-TONAL:
NOT A PRETTY STATEMENT
BUT A
HASSLE
WITH YOURSELF.**

BLACK AS CONTOUR

OR

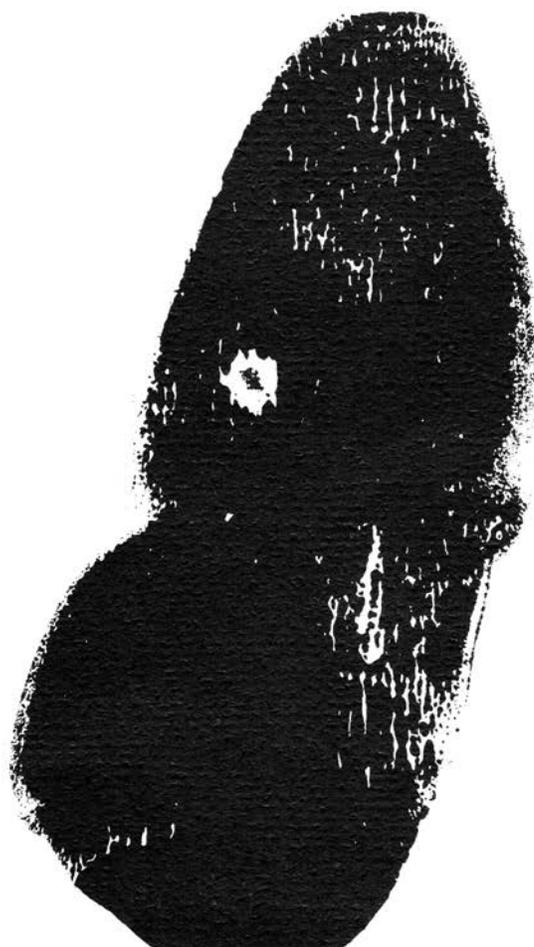
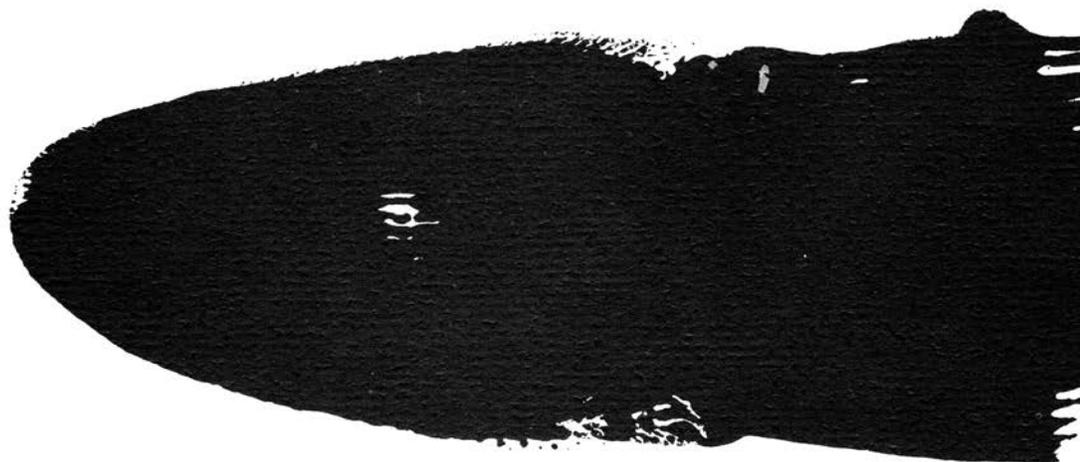
BLACK AS EMERGING?

BE AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

BLACK AND DARKNESS . . .

GIACOMETTI	OLIVEIRA
DARKNESS	man DOMINATES
SQUEEZES	SURROUNDING
SHAPE	DARKNESS

LET SHAPE OCCUR OUT OF SPACING



EACH SHAPE IS BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE:

COMPLEMENT RATHER THAN SHADOW.

EVER-PRESENCE,

RATHER THAN PATTERN.



THE VOID CONTAINS ASSOCIATIONAL MATERIAL:

IT IS NOT BACKGROUND, BUT MATRIX.



THERE'S A QUALITY IN ENDLESS SPACE AND INFINITE VOLUME.

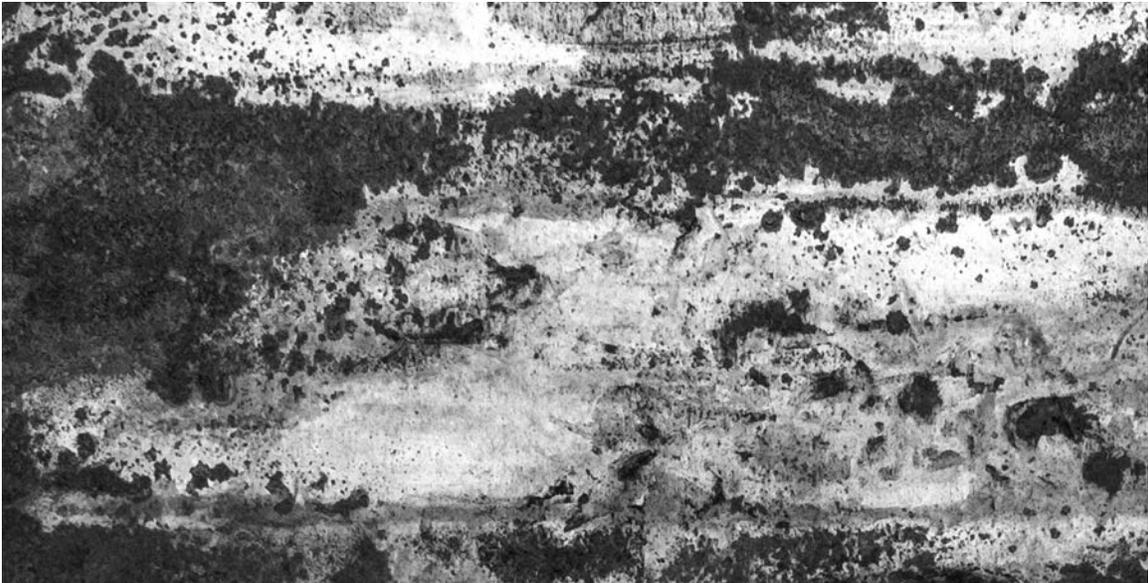
ON USING PERSPECTIVE IN DRAWING

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE OBJECTIVE SPACE

IN WHICH WE LIVE,

INSTEAD OF FORCING THINGS INTO

A PRECONCEIVED FRAMEWORK.



Cezanne:

The far brought near.
Instead of distance
one sees the relationship of intervals.

Matisse Sculpture:

A continuum between figure and space.
The figure is the condensation
of the palpable from
the ethereal body.

BEING IN IT – CHINESE

LOOKING IN – OCCIDENTAL

THE PEEP-HOLE IN OCCIDENTAL PAINTING

COMES FROM THE DUALITY IN WESTERN THOUGHT,

– THE SPLIT BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH.



Vuillard:

Subtle contrasts in hue and texture
form an impenetrable web,
linking objects to spaces.

CALLIGRAPHY IS THE TRANSPOSITION OF NATURE
TO THE LIFE OF A BRUSH STROKE.



To a tree –
a limb is
bound to be
a new event.

GO SLOWLY

LET THE MOTION OF YOUR ARM

GO TEN TIMES SLOWER

THAN YOU WANT TO GO

SO AS TO

LET YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS

CATCH UP

WITH YOUR ARM.

WANDER

IMPULSIVENESS, UNEXAMINED,

IS THE OPPOSITE OF MEDITATION.

LET THE LINE GO WHERE IT WILL, BUT FOLLOW IT

WITH YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS.

DRAWING CAN BE LIKE A JAM SESSION.

THE HAPHAZARD IS ALLOWED TO HAPPEN

SIMULTANEOUSLY

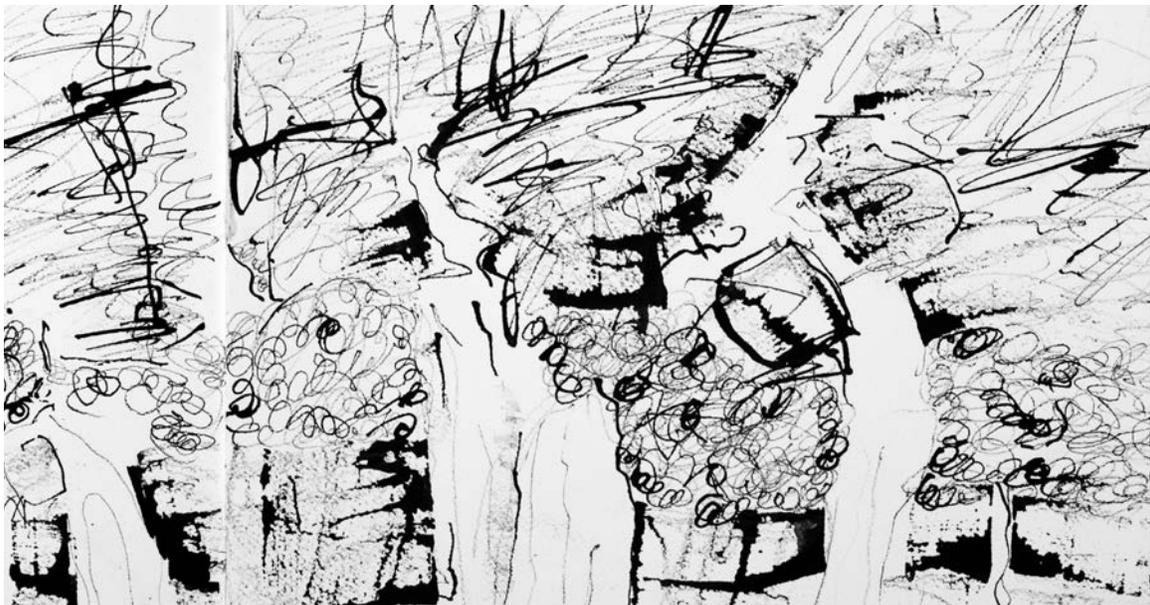
WITH THE CONTRIVED.

KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING:

WHETHER IT IS SCRIBBLING

OR

CAREFUL DRAWING.



A THIN LINE,
ALMOST BECOMING
INAUDIBLE



by following lines
one loses them.

DRAWING IS NOT OUTLINING, BUT THE ATTEMPT
TO GET AN ENERGY EQUIVALENT.



WHAT IS
THE **IMPACT**
OF HUE?

Does it have enough fuel to perform its purpose?

THE SENSE OF VOLUME IN A HUE

IS A FUNCTION OF

THE NUMBER OF CHANGES

SENSED WITHIN IT

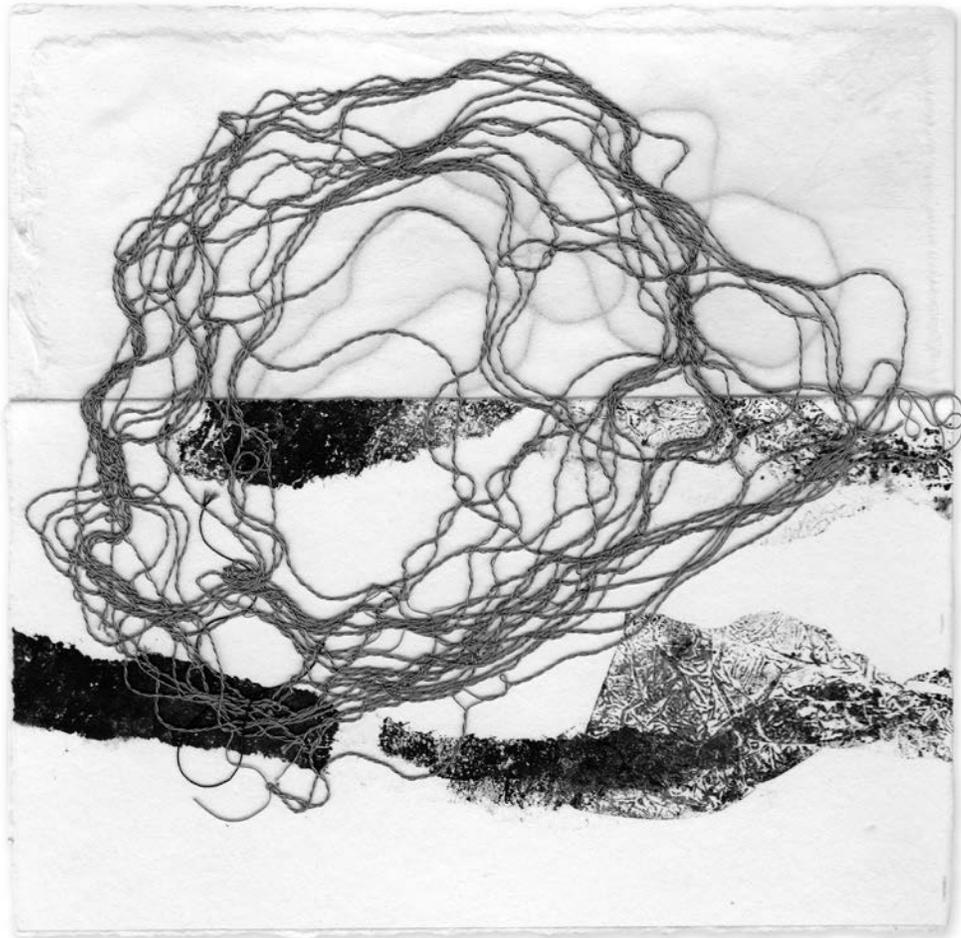
– THE AMOUNT OF EXPERIENCE IN IT.

(as in Ray Parker, for instance)

an aggressive hue, such as chrome yellow,
holds away from itself that which it is not.

**DEVELOPING A PAINTING
BY ADDING ANOTHER PROCESS**

A CONTINUING EVENT . . .



like going to sleep tonight and waking up
tomorrow morning.



TO HAVE AN ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR OWN WORK

ASK YOURSELF:

Where is the greatest activity? In the middle?

Around the edge?

Does the color have the same inner meaning as the shape?

Is the size of the brush stroke of the same quality
as its meaning on the canvas?

DOING IS NOT NECESSARILY SEEING:
PEOPLE MAY NOT BE CONSCIOUS
OF WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

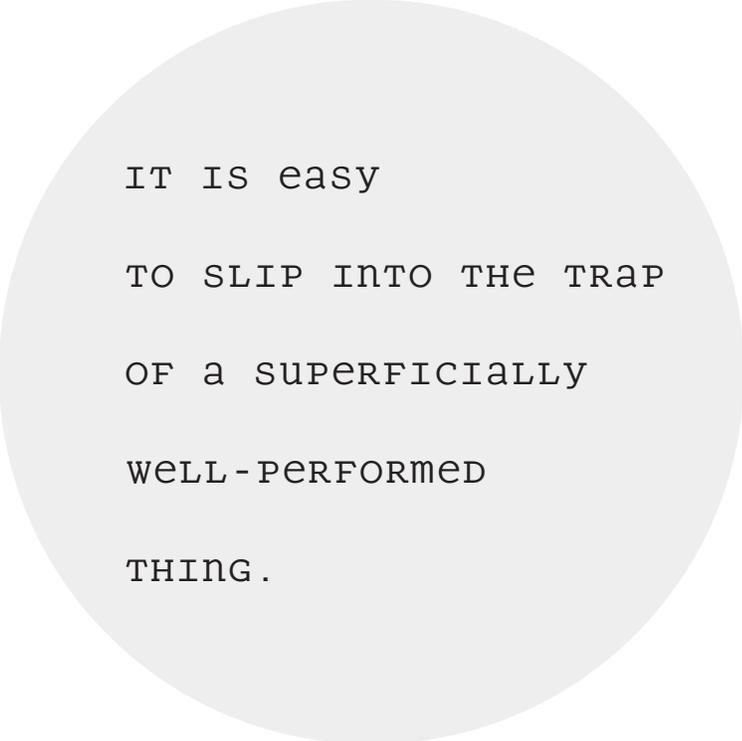
THE RECEPTIVE HAS GONE UNDERDEVELOPED IN OUR CULTURE.
ALL THE EMPHASIS IS ON APPEARANCE.

DOING, TOO, IS CONFUSED WITH SKILL.

THERE IS A NEED TO DEVELOP THE INNER EYE.

THERE IS NO PLACE IN THE WORLD FOR NON-ACCEPTANCE!

ONLY FOR DOING, AND MAKING USE OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING.



IT IS easy
TO SLIP INTO THE TRAP
OF a SUPERFICIALy
WELL-PERFORMED
THING.

DON'T TRY TO MAKE A GLASS SLIPPER OUT OF A HUNK OF TAR –

IT CAN'T BE DONE.

HUMBLeness and INNOCENCE
ARE JUST AS VALUABLE
AS PRECISION AND ACCURACY.

WHATEVER MAKES YOU TURN AWAY FROM SOMETHING
THAT IS THE FALSEST PART IN YOU.

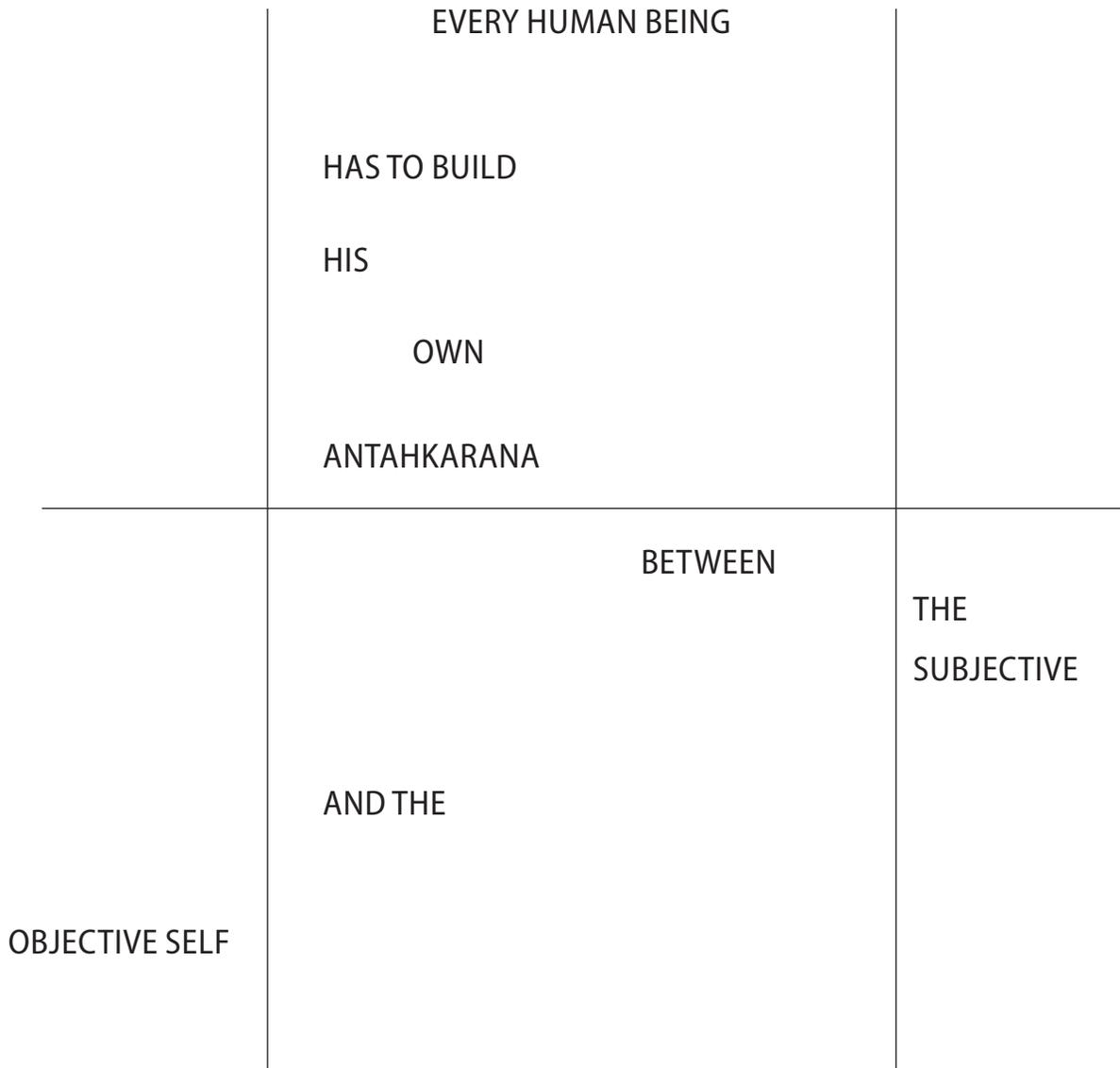
YOU SHOULD EXAMINE IT AND ASK:

“WHAT MAKES ME DO IT?”

Painting is a way of plumbing how one feels.

(The inability to paint is also one way of feeling.)





ANTAHKARANA

...the path or bridge between higher and lower mind, serving as a medium of communication between the two. It is built by the aspirant himself in mental matter.

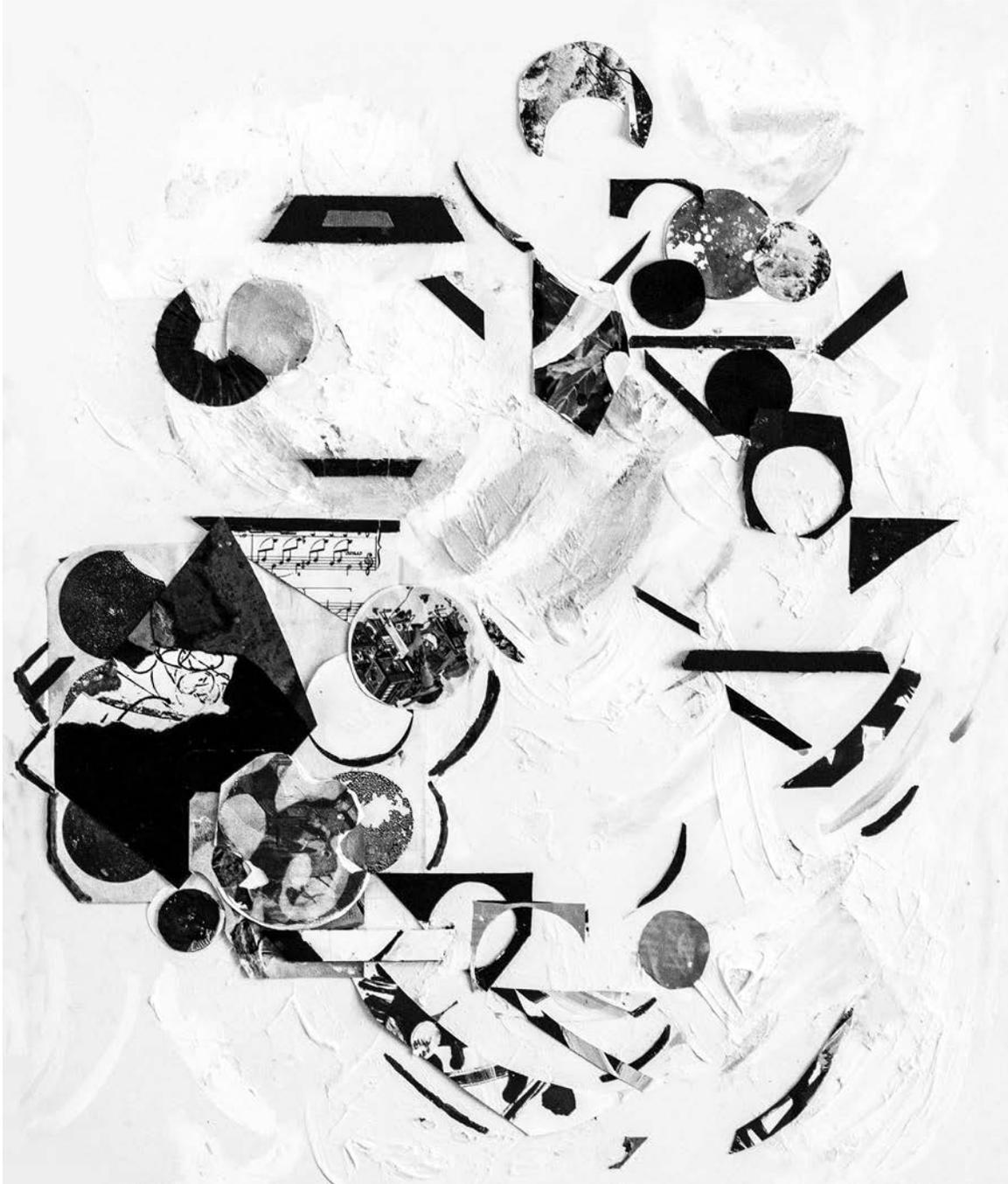
– *Imitation Human & Solar* by Alice A. Bailey, Lucis Publishing Co, NY.

THE FACT OF CO-EXISTENCE
BRINGS ALL OBJECTS
INTO COMPULSORY RELATIONSHIP.

Every experience is fragmentary in that
one looks at a part of each thing.

Therefore paintings are the relationships between fragments.

THERE ALWAYS HAS TO BE A RESOLVEMENT
BETWEEN OPPOSITES.



INTERRELATION IS DOMINANT.

(IN INTERWEAVING MEANINGS) CONSCIOUSNESS

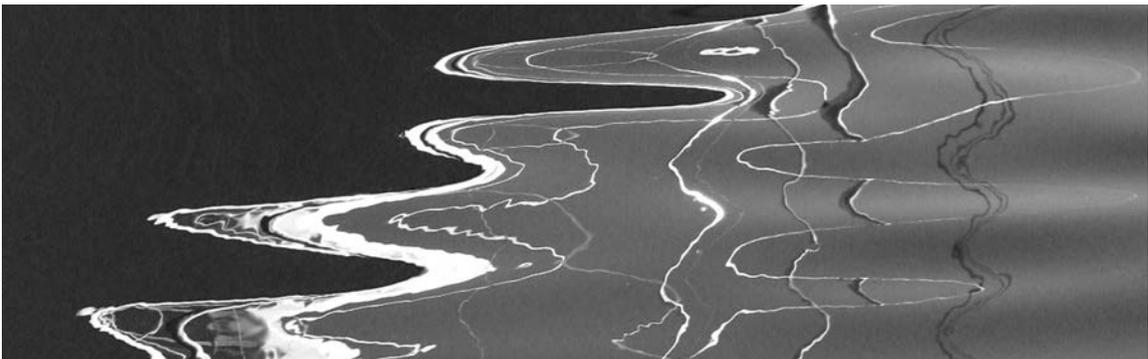
ALSO INCLUDES / INTERRUPTIONS

YOU'RE NOT LEARNING

TO MAKE ORDER

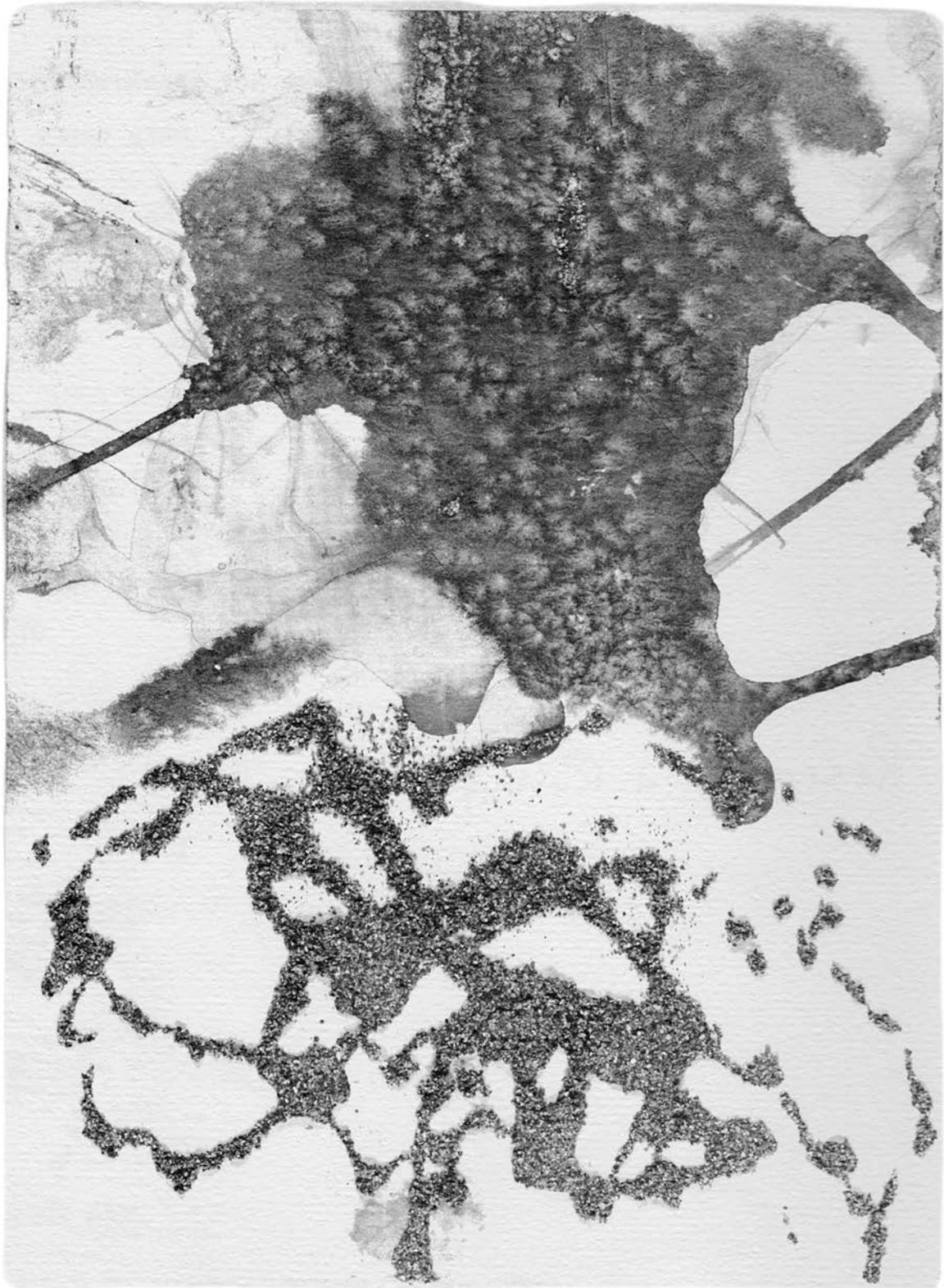
YOU'RE LEARNING TO DISCOVER IT

ALL OVER THE PLACE.



RESEARCH A RUBBING.





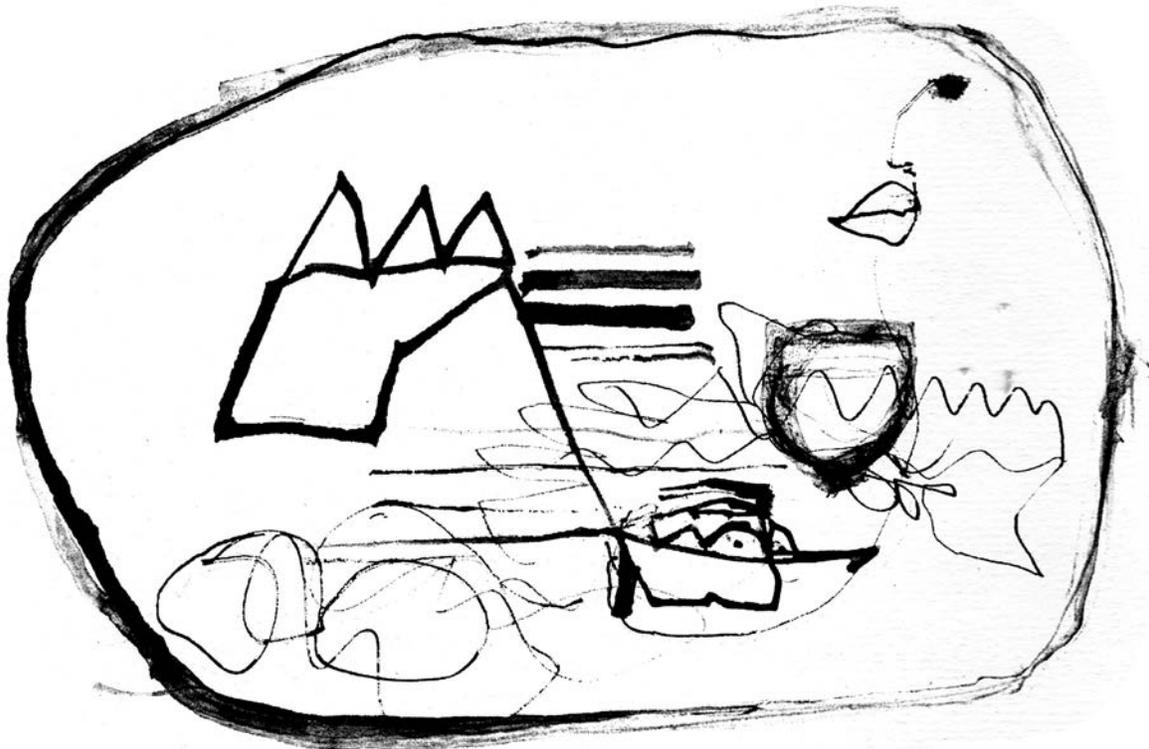
WHEN YOU
PULL TOGETHER
ALL THE FLOTSAM
AND
JETSAM

REMEMBER —
YOU ARE DOING IT
FOR THE ORDER

YOU

READ INTO THEM.

ACCEPT THE UNOBTAINABLE



UNEXPECTED INTRUSION = HUMOR

ANYTHING, AT ANY POINT, IS ALREADY FINISHED.

IT IS THE NEED FOR EXPERIENCE

IN THE PERSON DOING IT

WHICH MAKES IT

GO FARTHER.

ASK: HAVE I PUSHED THAT AS FAR AS IT WILL GO?

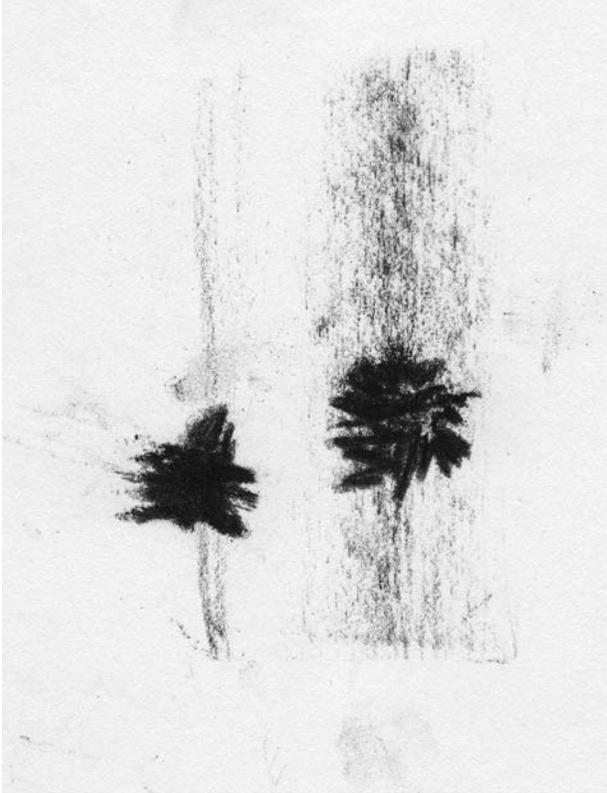
HOW FAR

MUST ONE TAKE AN ELEMENT

TO ENDOW IT WITH THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF

INTENTION, **YOUR** INTENTION?

(The spectrum stretches all the way from folk song to Beethoven.)



HOW MUCH OF
A SOUND
DOES IT TAKE
TO MAKE
A STATEMENT?

HAVE YOU REALLY SEARCHED THE PAINTING OUT?

A PAINTING IS SUBSTANCE.

SUBSTANCES MUST BE USED TO THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

THE NEBULOUS HAS TO BE GIVEN
PHYSICAL EXISTENCE.

THE PROBLEM IS TO RECOGNIZE WHAT
CONSTITUTES
PHYSICAL EXISTENCE.



AVOID UNCLARITY

PUT EVERYTHING OUT INTO THE OPEN.

DO NOT TRY TO BE SUBTLE.

DO NOT BE VAGUE.

subtlety can still result.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS OF BEING MESSY:

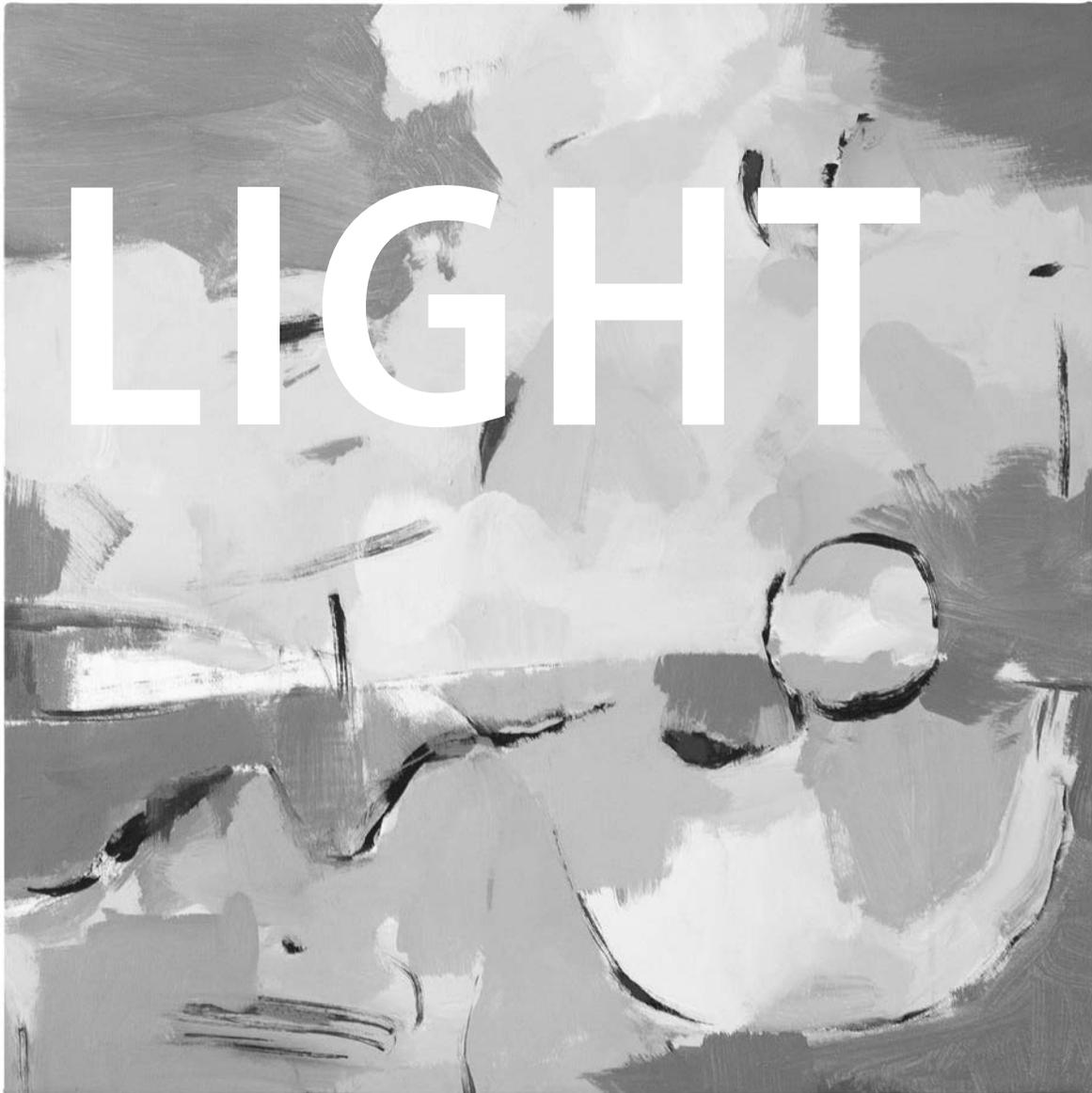
Like wilderness, in nature,

or

vagueness,

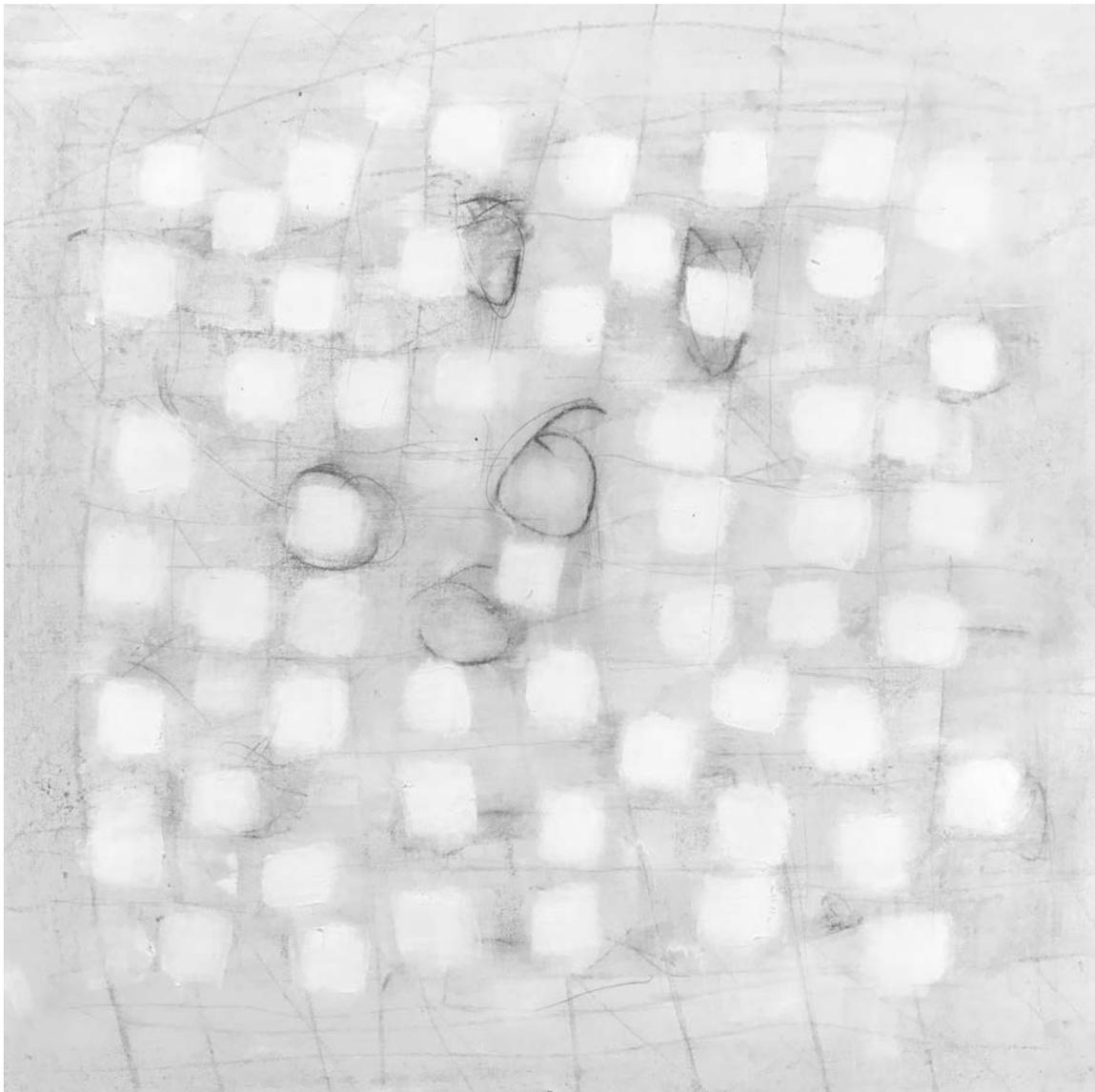
when one does not carry through.

CLARITY HAS TO DO WITH



a prototypal honesty finding where the nail drives straight.

the more ethereal a thing
the more essential
to establish its outer
limit.



FRAMING

THE FRAME ESTABLISHES THE PLAY OF ONE PLACE
AGAINST THE OTHER.

IF THE TENSION IS ESTABLISHED IN THE PAINTING,
THE FRAME IS UNNECESSARY.

MATTING

A MAT GIVES DIMENSION TO THE WHITE
BY CLOSING IN ON IT.

EDGES

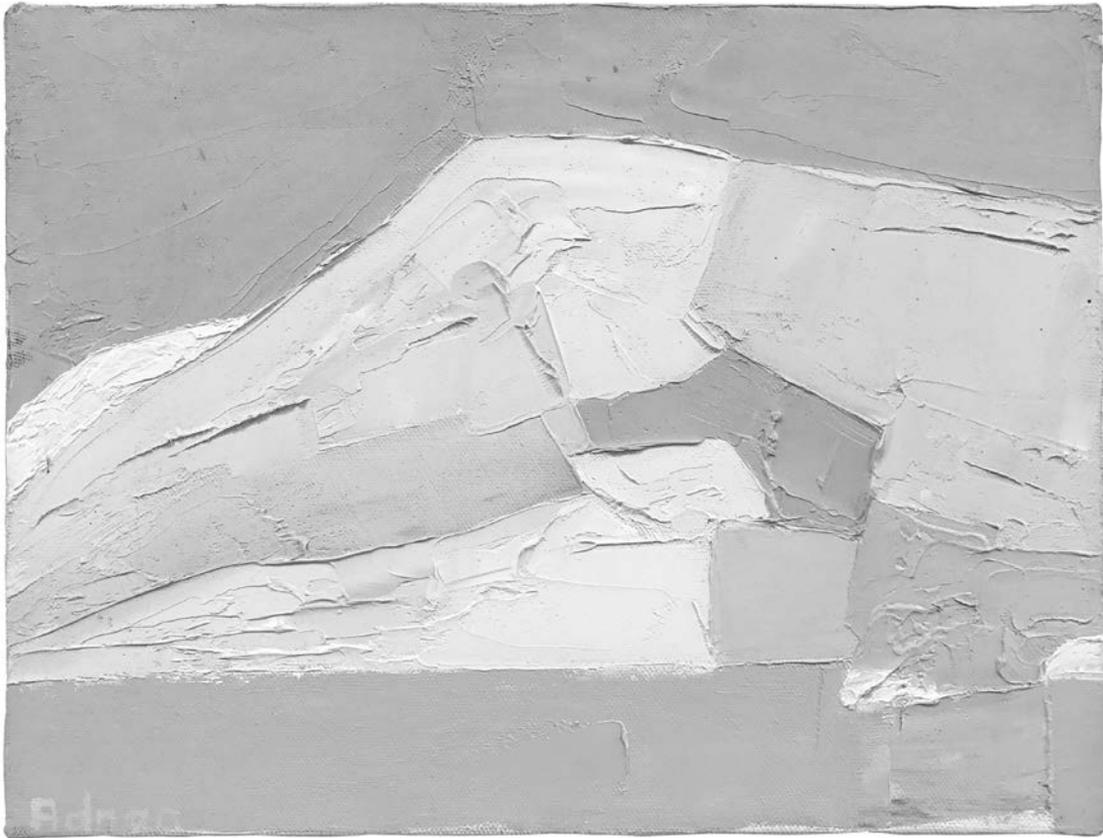
IS A RED EDGE PRIMADONNA-ISH?
OR DOES IT SUPPORT THE ACTION?

A painting is MEANING that has declared itself.



We are the instruments of the given

on LEARNING
FROM OTHERS



IF YOU WANT TO LEARN FROM WORK YOU ADMIRE,

ASK YOURSELF:

“WHAT IS THE VITALITY THAT SPEAKS TO ME?”

– AND THEN MAKE IT YOUR OWN.

GOING TO AN EXHIBITION IS RESEARCH,
RATHER THAN ENTERTAINMENT.

IT IS A QUESTION,
NOT OF LIKE OR DISLIKE,
BUT:

“WHAT IS THERE?”

THE PURPOSE OF LOOKING AT A PAINTING
IS NOT TO RECAPTURE OLD MEMORIES
– STIMULATED BY THE MOOD –
BUT TO
DIG MORE DEEPLY
INTO ITS TOTAL BODY.



IT IS UNREALISTIC TO HAVE A MERE

“LIKE / DON'T LIKE”

EXPERIENCE.

INSTEAD ASK:

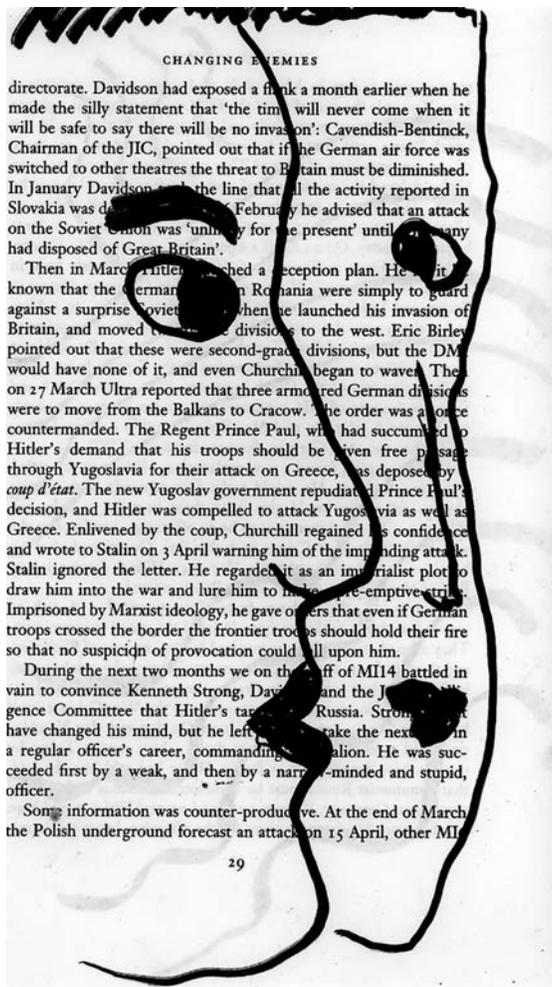
“WHERE DO I LIVE?”

e.g.

Communicative?	or	Evocative?
Forcing one reading		Leaving the spectator free
Picasso / Titian		Turner / Olitski

SHOULD YOU BE ATTRACTED OR REPELLED

SO SOON?



CHANGING ENEMIES

directorate. Davidson had exposed a flunk a month earlier when he made the silly statement that 'the time will never come when it will be safe to say there will be no invasion': Cavendish-Bentinck, Chairman of the JIC, pointed out that if the German air force was switched to other theatres the threat to Britain must be diminished. In January Davidson took the line that all the activity reported in Slovakia was done in February he advised that an attack on the Soviet Union was 'unlikely for the present' until Germany had disposed of Great Britain'.

Then in March Hitler launched a deception plan. He was known that the German troops in Romania were simply to guard against a surprise Soviet attack when he launched his invasion of Britain, and moved two of the divisions to the west. Eric Birley pointed out that these were second-grade divisions, but the DM would have none of it, and even Churchill began to waver. The on 27 March Ultra reported that three armored German divisions were to move from the Balkans to Cracow. The order was at once countermanded. The Regent Prince Paul, who had succumbed to Hitler's demand that his troops should be given free passage through Yugoslavia for their attack on Greece, was deposed by *coup d'état*. The new Yugoslav government repudiated Prince Paul's decision, and Hitler was compelled to attack Yugoslavia as well as Greece. Enlivened by the coup, Churchill regained his confidence and wrote to Stalin on 3 April warning him of the impending attack. Stalin ignored the letter. He regarded it as an imperialist plot to draw him into the war and lure him to make a pre-emptive strike. Imprisoned by Marxist ideology, he gave orders that even if German troops crossed the border the frontier troops should hold their fire so that no suspicion of provocation could fall upon him.

During the next two months we on the staff of MI14 battled in vain to convince Kenneth Strong, Davison and the Intelligence Committee that Hitler's target was Russia. Strong might have changed his mind, but he left it to take the next step in a regular officer's career, commanding a battalion. He was succeeded first by a weak, and then by a narrow-minded and stupid officer.

Some information was counter-productive. At the end of March the Polish underground forecast an attack on 15 April, other MI

WE SHOULD NEVER TRY TO INFLUENCE
MEANING
IN THE OTHER PERSON.
THAT IS AN INVASION
OF THE CREATIVE EXPERIENCE OF THE VIEWER,
LOCKING IN SYMBOLS
WHICH SHOULD BECOME MORE FLEXIBLE.

Putting things in words is like planting cabbages.
You have to put a seed in the ground
and water it
and weed it
and give it time to grow.

You need practice,
and that is work and suffering.

THE NEXT DEVELOPMENT IN MAN

IS TO BE RESPONSIBLY CREATIVE.

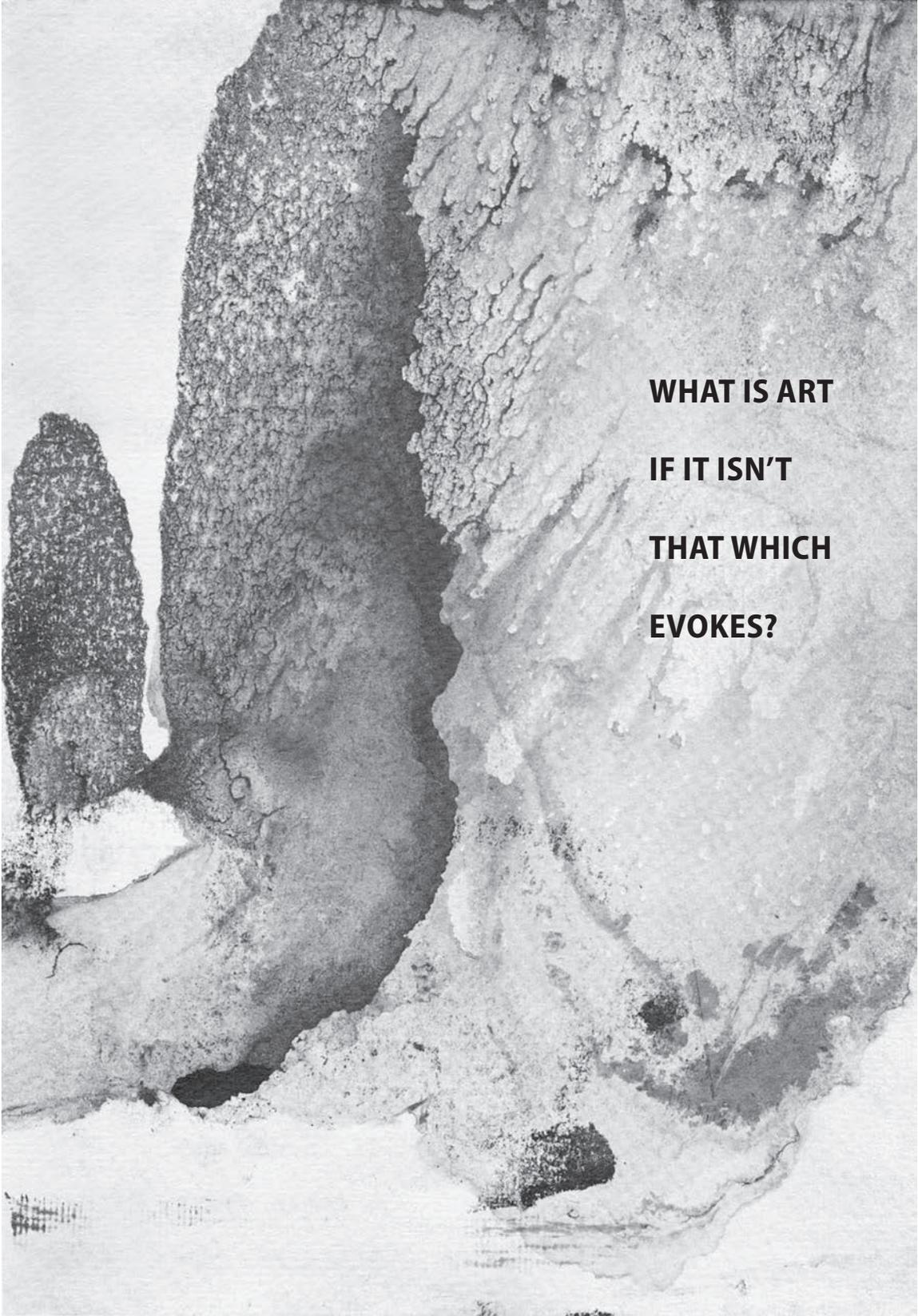
EACH, AT HIS OWN LEVEL,

SHOULD UNDERSTAND WHAT HE IS DOING.



On BECOMING an ARTIST

An area of synthesis
between
earnest creativity and
letting the light
explode out of you...



**WHAT IS ART
IF IT ISN'T
THAT WHICH
EVOKES?**

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO A WORK OF ART

TO CONNECT

WITH THE PSYCHIC CONTENT.

IF THE PSYCHIC CONTENT IS TOO LEAN

THEN THE WORK CANNOT FEED IT

AND REMAINS STUCK

IN APPEARANCE.

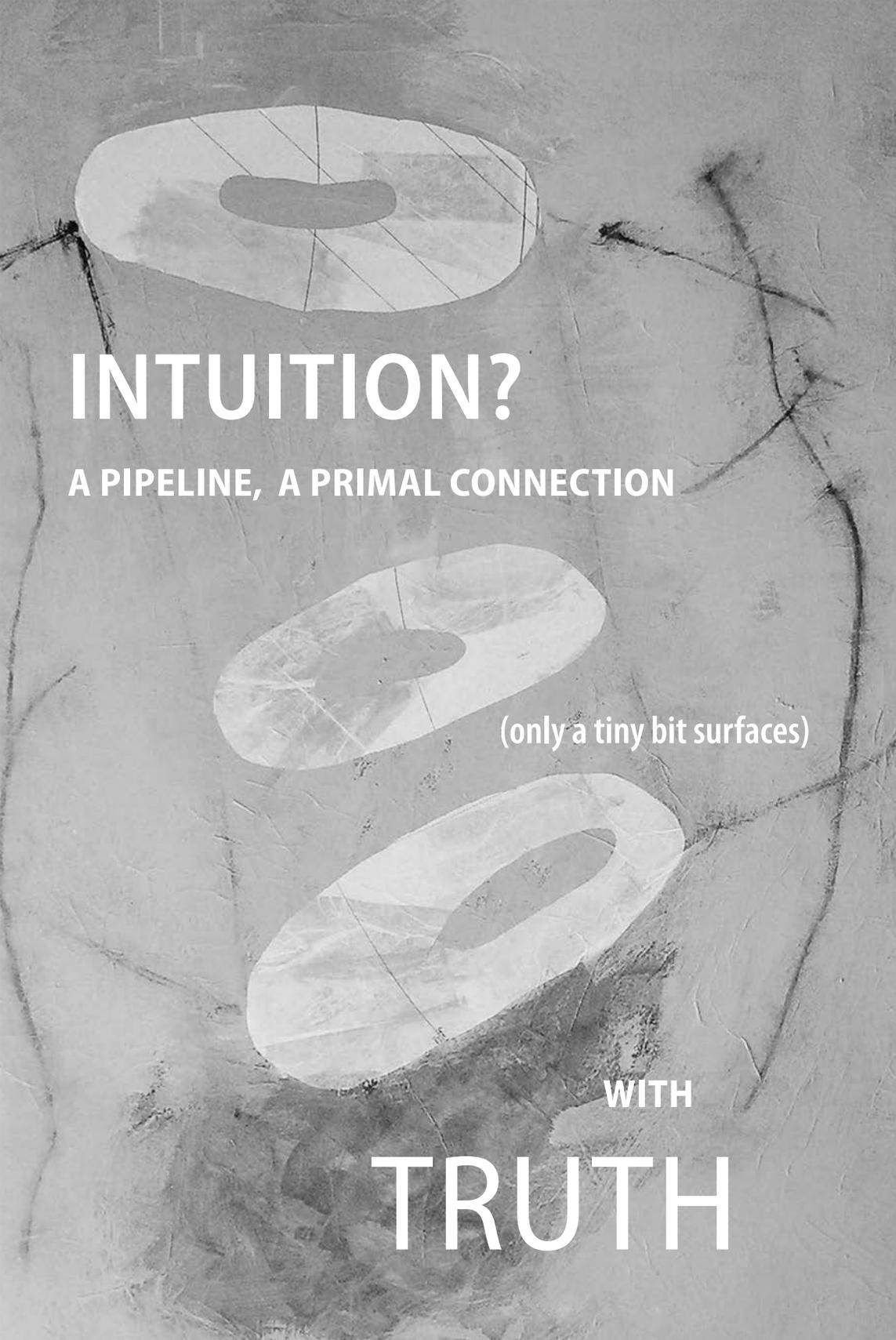
ART IS MISTAKENLY SEEN AS ENTERTAINMENT

INSTEAD OF AS

THE QUALITY OF AROUSING THE INNER

If in our day a white canvas with one printed word on it

stirs you up – then it is effective.



INTUITION?

A PIPELINE, A PRIMAL CONNECTION

(only a tiny bit surfaces)

WITH

TRUTH

WHAT IS USUALLY CALLED "TALENT"

IS THE DESIRE

TO PUSH INTUITION THROUGH

WITHOUT THE NEED FOR FEEDBACK.

THE RECEPTIVITY OF THE FEMALE MAKES HER PRONE TO HURT.

WOMEN MUST NOT JUST SAY:

"I FEEL IT IS RIGHT"

BUT ALSO:

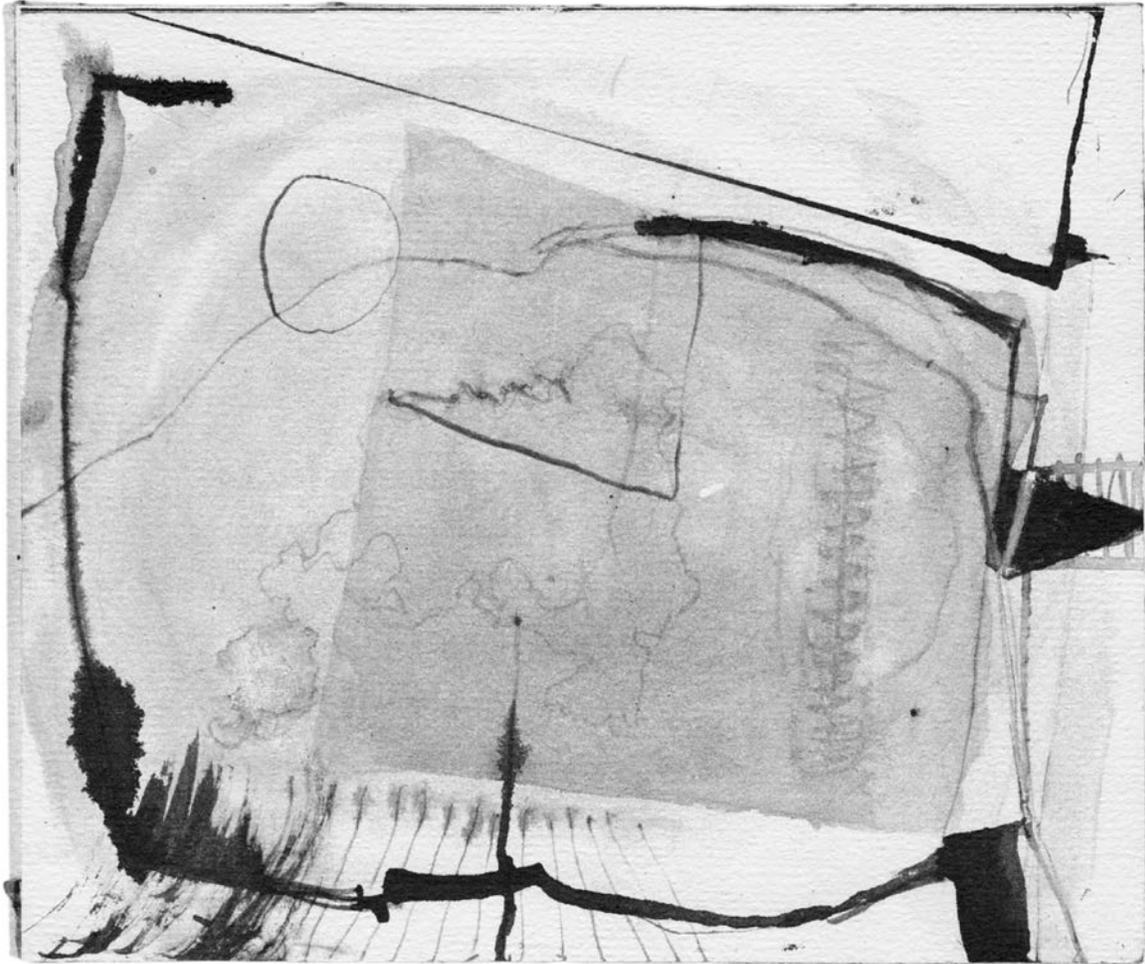
"I KNOW IT IS RIGHT"

e.g. A woman might say apologetically:

"The lack of a frame does not matter."

A man would say:

"Its non-mattering is an important part of the statement."



PIN YOUR OWN FOCUS DOWN –
AND THEN MAKE A TRANSFIGURATION OF
THAT INVOLVEMENT INTO VISUAL STATUS.

MEASURE

AS CONSCIOUSLY AS YOU CAN
THE THINGS THAT TAKE PLACE.

LEARN TO BE DIRECT

RATHER THAN DEVIOUS.

(undoing things is devious)

THE NECESSITY TO MAKE AN OBJECTIVE JUDGEMENT
IS NOT BASED ON MEMORY
BUT ON INNER EXPERIENCE.

It is like a patient's success in controlling his heartbeat through discovering the specific feeling in his chest when his heart is normal, and then trying to maintain that feeling.

THE BODY CORPOREAL OF THE WORK MUST BE THE RIGHT EQUATION
FOR THE PERSON DOING IT.

THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO CHECK ONE'S OWN CREDIBILITY.

ONE MUST ASK:

"AM I TAKING CREDIT FOR SOMETHING I HAVE NOT QUITE MADE?"

I CAN LIKE IT OR NOT LIKE IT

WITHOUT SAYING

THAT ONE IS GOOD AND THE OTHER BAD.

BUT IF I AM THE **ARTIST**,

I HAVE TO ASK MYSELF:

HOW IS THIS **INACCURATE**?

HOW DOES IT **NOT CORRESPOND** TO MY EXPERIENCE?

IT MAY DIVERGE BY BEING RELATED TO MY FUTURE,

AND IN THAT CASE,

I MAY **GROW** TO LIKE IT.



FACILITY

can be a disadvantage

because it makes for conscious control

and for subjection

to habitual attitudes and modes of perception.

What is needed

is an INTENSIFICATION of consciousness

when one paints or sculpts.

Here the worrier is ahead

of the one with native facility,

because he cannot fall into the trap

of superficiality.

That is why De Kooning calls the late baroque *empty*. It was just razzle-dazzle skill.

A WORK OF ART IS ALWAYS FIRST SEEN AS AN OBJECT

but really seeing entails signification.

We can assume that everything
that is done in the name of art
has to be crafted somehow.

One must ask:

“How well is it done?”

But one must also ask:

“How well does the well-doneness bring the meaning through?”

The fragment must be felt in the total.

The total must be felt in the fragment.



A WORK OF ART IS ONLY AS GOOD AS ITS TINIEST PART.

WE LIVE

FROM ONE EXCITEMENT TO THE OTHER

AND TRY TO BLOCK OUT WHAT IS IN BETWEEN.

THIS IS A MISTAKE!

A WORK OF ART

MAKES US CONFRONT

THE FACT THAT

EVERY MOMENT

IS IMPORTANT.

ALL PARTS HAVE TO BE LOVED AND ATTENDED TO.

Grandma Moses does this.

But a learned person is preoccupied with composition.



WE ARE GIVEN THE CAPACITY TO FOCUS DOWN.

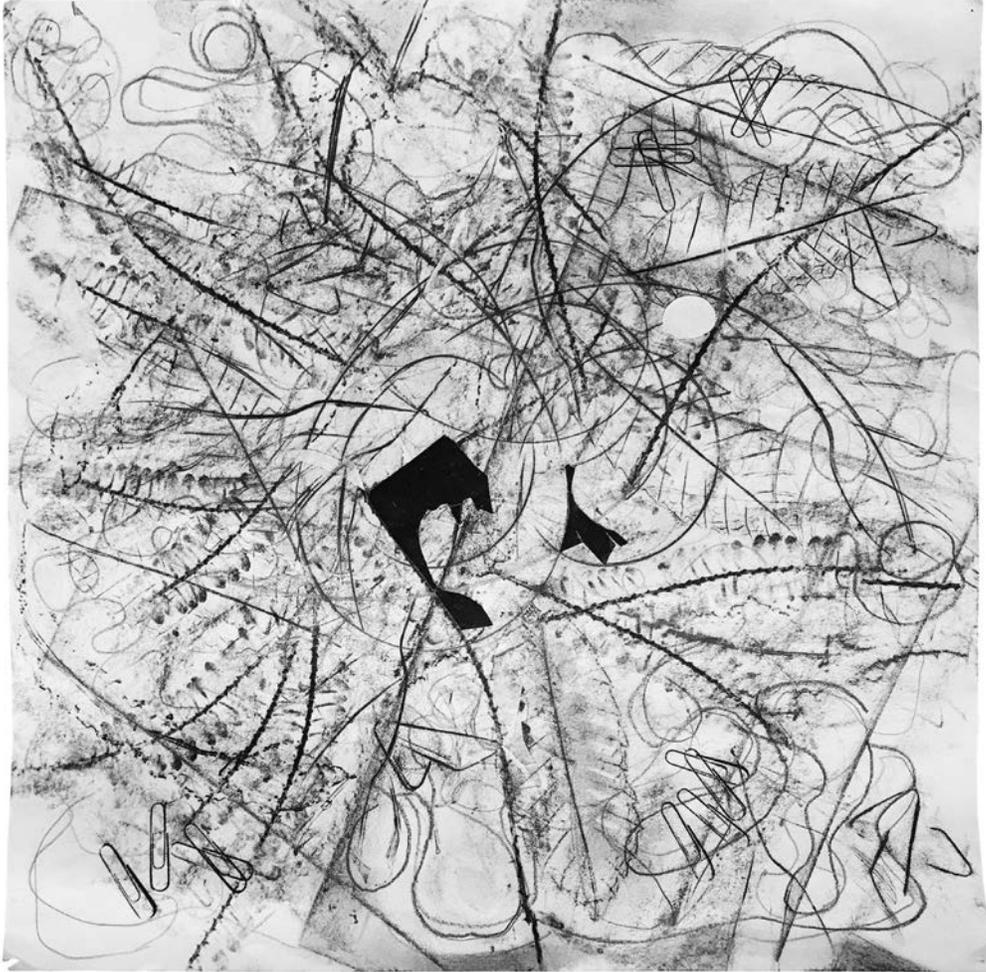
TO LOOK ONLY AT THE WHOLE

IS TO MISS WHAT THAT WHOLE **IS!**

SEARCH OUT ALL THE POSSIBILITIES TILL

YOU **KNOW** WHAT YOU ARE SAYING.

EXPLORING COMES FIRST. DISCOVERY, PERHAPS, LATER.



THIS IS WHAT MAKES A PROFESSIONAL: THE DISCOVERY OF ONE'S OWN WORK.

(You may be doing the same thing all the time
because it is your ultimate statement about the world.)

Bissier: monolingual | Klee: multi-lingual

AN ARTIST'S FEELINGS ARE

the whole
equation

INVOLVING

THE TOTALITY OF RELATIONSHIPS

BETWEEN HIM AND NATURE.

THE WORK OF ART

IS NOT THE BYPRODUCT

OF THE PROCESS OF GAINING HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS.

IT IS ITS QUINTESSENCE.

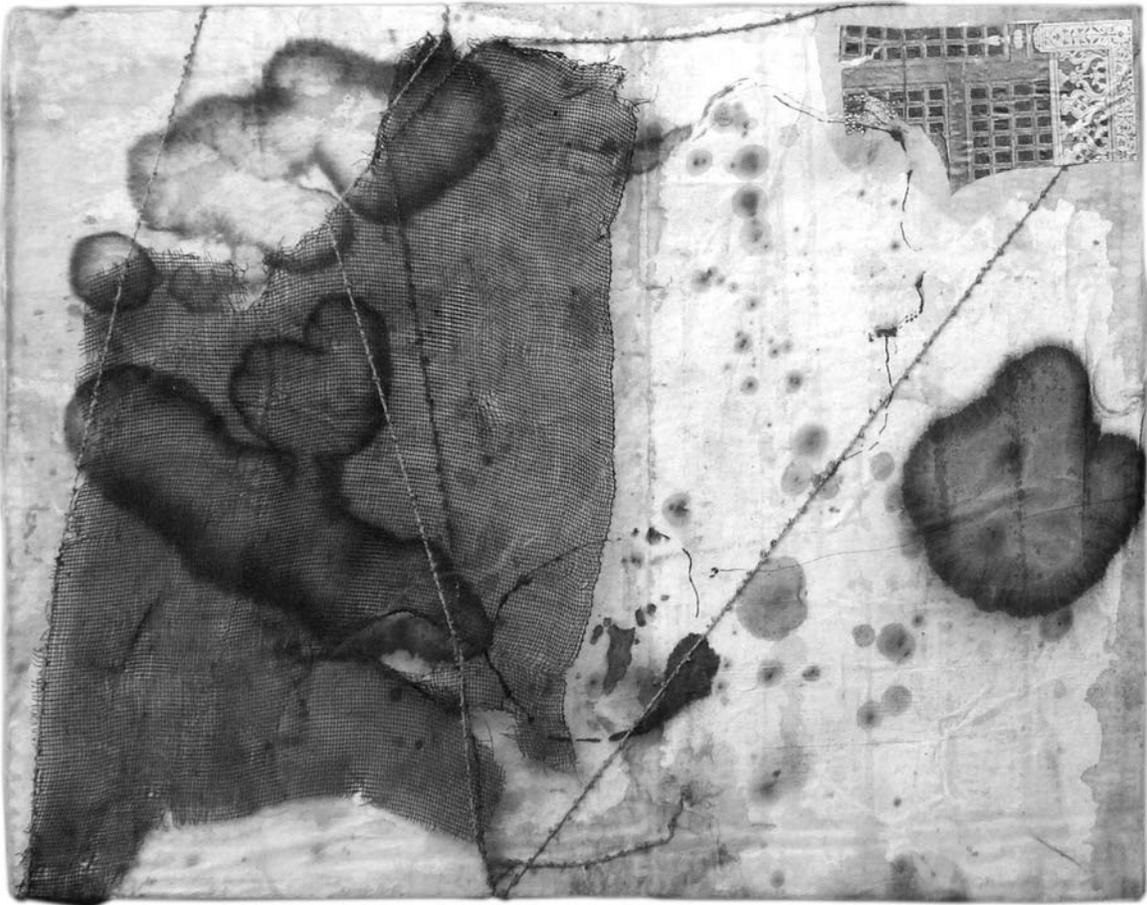
it isn't just self-expression.

ART IS LOGIC:

THE ABILITY TO

CHOOSE THOSE ELEMENTS

THAT ARE QUINTESSENTIAL.



IF YOU ARE CENTERED IN THE HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS

YOU CAN USE

THE INTELLECT.

BUT IF YOU START WITH THE INTELLECT

YOU ARE SUNK.

YOU HAVE TO BE WILLING

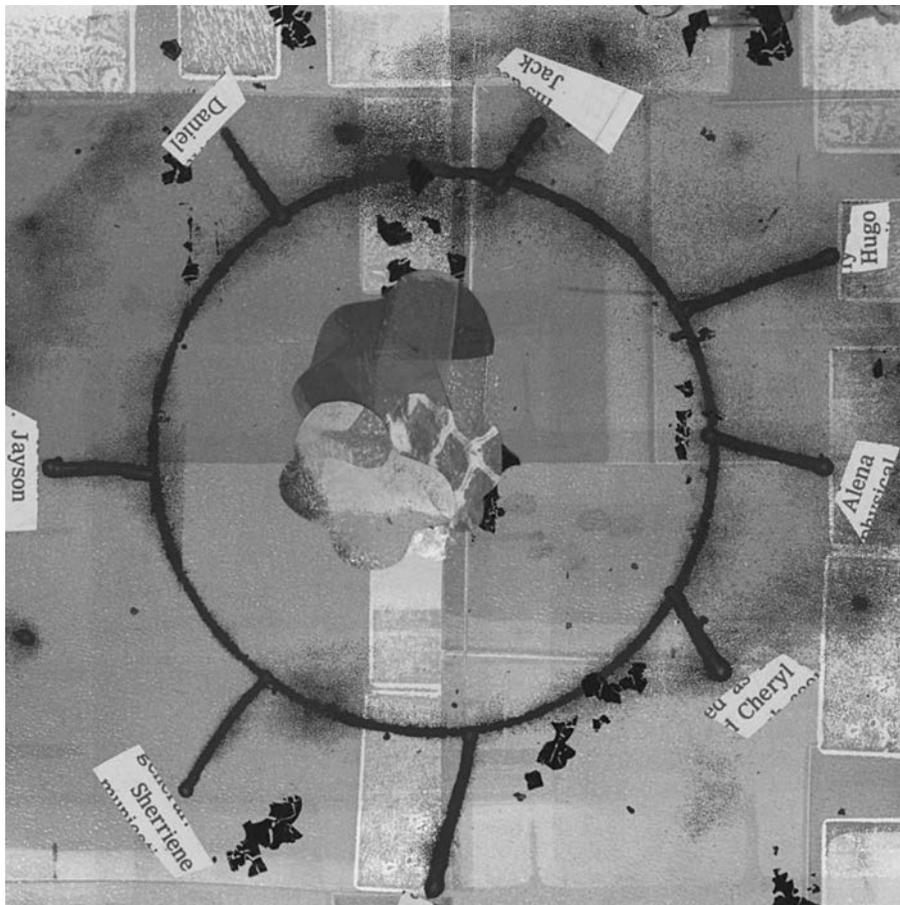
NOT TO HAVE TO KNOW

WHAT YOU HAVE A CONVICTION ABOUT.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO USE IT,

Live IT!

YOU DON'T ANSWER THE QUESTION UNTIL YOU'VE MADE THE ANSWER.



IT IS THE CONFRONTATION WITH DOING
WHICH HELPS US TO ACTUALLY REACH
THIS PHILOSOPHICAL STATE
WHICH WE TALK ABOUT ENDLESSLY



ART IS A VOCATION –

NOT AN AVOCATION, AND NOT A PROFESSION.

IT HAS TO COME OUT OF THE INNOCENCE OF THE NEED.





ART
CANNOT
BE
TAUGHT

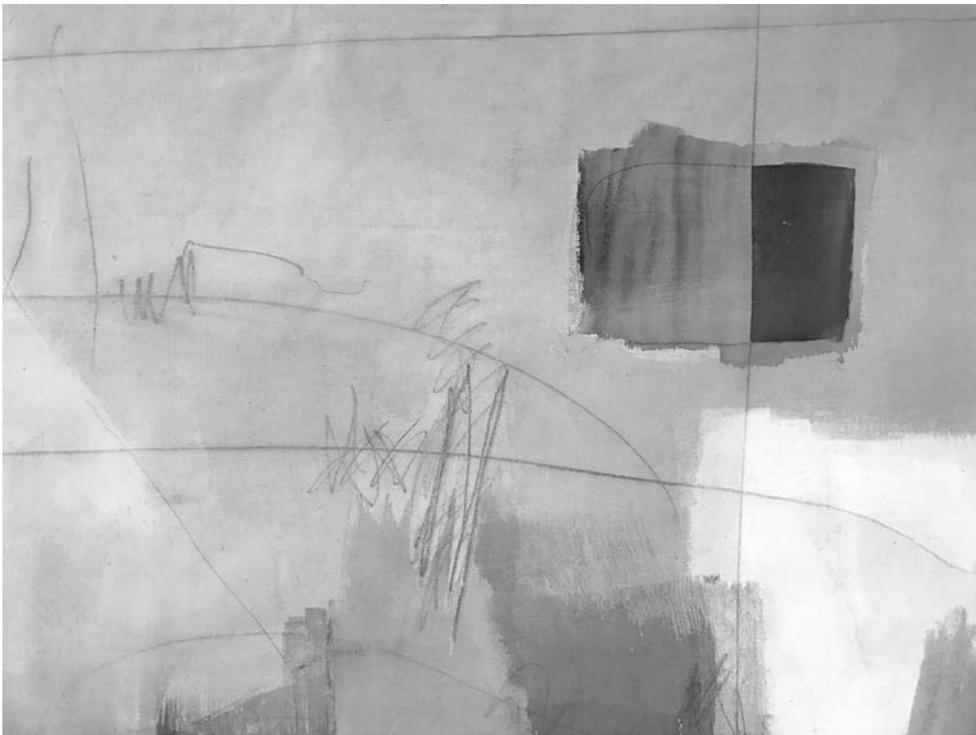
but a guidance

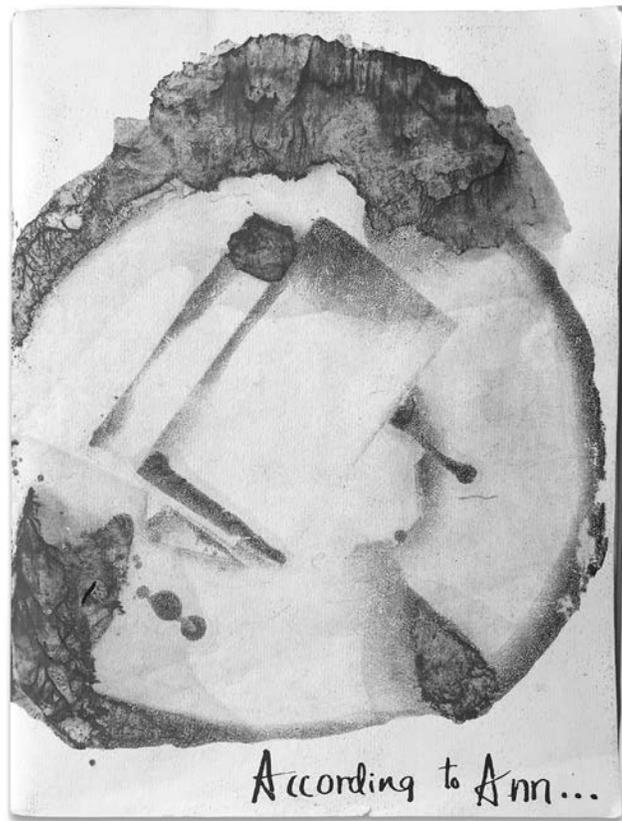
toward

perception

can be made...

CREDITS





O'Hanlon Center for the Arts is greatly indebted to Susi Martin and Elinor Severinghaus for their original version of *According to Ann*. As with any interpretation, it is hoped that the reader will seek out the source material. Their book was first published during the heyday of Ann O'Hanlon's extraordinary workshops at the art center in the 1970s.

Many thanks to the Martin and Severinghaus families for giving their blessing to this venture.

Editors

Jeremy Thornton, graphic design

Cayen Robertson

Carolyn Planakis

Abby Wasserman

Artwork

Art from the original version
of *According to Ann* p. 31,
39, 44, 49, 56, 62, 64, 81, 85

Ann O'Hanlon *Cover*,
7, 17, 88, 91, 104

Abby Wasserman p. 36

Ann Eby p. 37

Brett Hopper p. 26, 27

Carolyn Planakis p. 34, 61, 95

Cayen Robertson p. 23, 30, 83, 99

Cornelia Wattley p. 15, 18, 19, 46, 47,
67, 93

Diana Peters 4, 52, 72

Eileen Cassidy p. 77

Eileen Worthley p. 66

Elaine Nehm p. 43, 34, 35

Elinor Severinghaus p. 97

Etel Adnan p. 74

Glenda Gentry p. 101

J. Ruth Gendler p. 12

Jeremy Thornton p. 33, 69, 109

Joan Sadler p. 60

Kris Gordon p. 22, 28

Larry Stefl p. 25

Luce p. 70

Patricia K. Kelly p. 79

Peller Marion p. 100

Rhonda Dubin p. 75

Susi Martin p. 102

Tom Robertson p. 40, 59

Additional Photography

Kellan Christopher

About Ann O'Hanlon

Find out more about Ann O'Hanlon [here](#).

Re-imagining

A few years ago I heard *Recomposed by Max Richter: Vivaldi - The Four Seasons*. Max Richter, a West German-born British composer, had the nerve to take a very well known piece of music and re-imagine it by combining unchanged sections of Vivaldi's composition with something altogether new. I was inspired by this approach. I heard the Vivaldi throughout but thoroughly enjoyed its 21st-century innovations. Then I went back to the original and it became a new listening experience.

When I joined Sight & Insight, as part of the introduction to the place and its philosophy, I was given a copy of *According to Ann*. It was a book of quotations gathered by Susi Martin and Elinor Severinghaus from Ann O'Hanlon's Visual Perception Workshops.

According to Ann went out of print some time ago. In the early 1970s Susi & Elinor created the book by cutting and pasting, and photo-copying. The pages were taken to a copy shop and printed using ephemeral printing plates, which, unfortunately, were later discarded. A solution might have been to scan the whole book, but it had been printed on cream laid paper and I imagined the process would be problematic. Instead I saw the situation as an opportunity to re-imagine and present the same material to a new generation of O'Hanlon members. Of course it wound up becoming a personal journey, a rediscovery of a book I had perhaps taken for granted. Others were taking videos and recording the dialogues during Ann's workshops, but none had gone further and intelligently edited their content like Susi and Elinor.

Abby Wasserman obtained approval from the Martin and Severinghaus families to proceed with the project. Then I sought out guidance from Cayen Robertson and Carolyn Planakis. They both had attended the original Visual Perception Workshops and have been constant in their belief that Ann O'Hanlon's art philosophy continues to be relevant. Cayen and Carolyn became an essential part of the process and helped me stay on track. We recognized that this was a piece of work that was not always easy to understand. We agreed on the elements that would connect the two versions; the original text presented in the same order along with the mostly all-caps typesetting, the inclusion of some of its

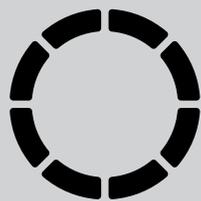
existing images, and the grayscale format. It was to be a book that was inexpensive to print or simply one you could download and print yourself.

The re-imagined version began with just the text. Some pages remained almost the same while others changed. I used typography as a way to comprehend the content as well as indicate space between concepts. With that foundation the next step was to find art and photography by O'Hanlon members past and present that connected or added to Ann's language. Unexpected relationships were made in the process including glints of humor.

There were interruptions along the way, but in a flexible way the book gradually evolved and I think finally found its own identity. (My thanks go to all the artist contributors for permission to use their work especially Cornelia Wattlely, who was a friend and colleague of Susi, Elinor and Ann.)

As we move forward, I think it's important to honor the past without being nostalgic. In essence this is what I have been up to with this book. O'Hanlon Center for the Arts continues to provide an environment for creative exploration. I hope that new generations will discover some of its core philosophy and be encouraged to investigate and re-imagine too — as well as become curious about why one strong woman from Kentucky had such an impact on so many artists with bright minds. Who knows? O'Hanlon Center for the Arts has an archive waiting for someone to dig deeper...there is plenty more to discover.

– Jeremy Thornton, March 2019



O'HANLON
center for the arts
616 THROCKMORTON AVE
MILL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA