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PERSONAL EXPERIMENTATION

IN DRAWING

(TITLE)

BY

BENNIE L. DRAKE, JR.

# **THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

M. A. in Art

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

4/10/78 4/10/78

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE

PERSONAL EXPERIMENTATION IN DRAWING

BY

BENNIE L. DRAKE, JR.

B.S. in Ed., Eastern Illinois University, 1972

# ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Science in Education at the Graduate School of Eastern Illinois University

CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS 1978

# PERSONAL EXPERIMENTATION IN DRAWING

In order to have a true understanding of art there must first be some knowledge of the development as well as of the artist himself. The artist and his work are one but must be looked at from different angles; beginning with the work itself and realizing that the artist creates to satisfy some need or desire which stems from some religious or social beliefs.

When doing comparative resource study, I attemped to combine the drawing skills of extablished artist; such as Walter Campbell, Herbert Railton, Willy Pogany and Aubrey Breadsley in order to improve and express my inner thoughts.

To determine the effects of comparing different styles or techniques of composition, this writer compared different artist and set up standards for line control, perspective and composition of tones.

The illustrations of this writers compositions, included in this paper were originally produced to be examined, analyzed and reflected upon in order for the viewer to understand my thoughts.

By doing a number of drawings with varied subject matters as those previously described and with many variations in techniques I was able to develop certain ideas and transmit these ideas to the viewer through my work. Through experimentation I mastered control in working with pencil and ink while at the same time developed the ability to draw fine lines as well as what line movement to use to obtain a desired effect. I was also able to set up standard of line control,

develop perspective and composition of tones and developed the technique of using matting in order to work with rather than against drawings.

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#### I. INTRODUCTION

#### PERSONAL EXPERIMENTATION IN DRAWING

In order to have a true understanding of art there must first be some knowledge of the development of art as well as the work of the artist. The artist and his work are one, but must be looked at from different angles; beginning with the work itself and realizing that the artist creates to satisfy some need or desire which may stem from some religious or social beliefs.

For centuries artists have examined and compared their work in order to develop a certain technique. As an artist, I have created and compared in order to develop techniques that I could work with comfortably, while at the same time, what I created was very much influenced by my concept of the world around me. In drawing, the central problem is relating your ideas to the observer through the use of two colors, black and white, which are opposites of one another; to me, ink and pencil drawings help create this distinction. For example, white has been interpreted as being a positive reinforcement, while black and other colors are thought to be negative or less equal in value. This same interpretation has been used in the classification of people; blacks, whites, Indians, Spanish, Polish and so on.

When I think about all my experiences as a person, a student, and a teacher and when I take a long in-depth look at my work, I strongly believe that it fits the theory of expressionism, in that my emotions and thoughts are expressed as the central theme.

In the late Middle Ages and Renaissance in Europe, many Great artists emerged. Artists such as Raphael, Durer and Michelangelo were

versatile and well skilled in drawing. In order for them to preserve their drawings, from fading, wear and tear or smears and unforeseen accidents, the use of pen and ink came to be used. The pen was originally a quill, the ink was black or dark brown and usually faded or dissolved into the paper which produced a muted effect.

The traditional quill was nothing more than a goose feather cut off and split at the end. In America this might have been a turkey feather, but mostly the large feathers of any bird were used. These quills, like the Chinese reed, were cut at an angle to make a sharp point and hold ink in the hollow opening. The Chinese also created the ball point pen which has limited use, but is capable of producing unusual linear effects. Since then a more precise pen, a Rapidograph made by German technicians, enables the user to change points and draw continuously for hours without stopping to refill. In comparison to the old pen point and holder one would have to change heads and allow for accidental drops and loss of time. The old points had various degrees of sizes and material make-up. The line size ranged from very fine to wide, while the points were made of materials such as gold, steel, quills, reed, the modern ball point and the wire point. 2

When examining pen and ink drawings I look at line movement and structure. In order to achieve the quality control in perspective, as in other forms of art, such as painting and sculpture, long hours are needed for experimentation. Before most of my work was started a light pencil sketch was done of the subject. In doing this, I was able to determine before hand what line movement would be best to produce whatever subject I had in mind. Since this was a new working field I tried washes and smears, dry point and colored inks.

During this experimenting I was amazed at some of the natural and self-made designs that resulted. For instance, in using washes, the liquid can take many patterns by just pouring, letting it dry and working into the design while wet to get sharp to fading and controlled lines. By using one color over another a perspective in depth of color was achieved.

In using a point on dry paper there was a natural contrast between the black of the ink and the white of the paper. While black is the negative, the problem is getting a rich depth in darkness but still have line movement to keep the picture interesting. This became less of a problem because of the early experimentation in line movement and cross-hatching. While working with ink I found it very difficult to get good clear cross-hatching and found a variation of ink drawing; which is etching.

While experimenting with colored inks I found this to be an exciting medium to work with but difficult to arrange color systems to fit the patterns of the design. Devoting more time to experimenting, I think I could acquire a working equalibrium between color and design. Even though I was dissatisfied with the results in some areas, I received good harmony in comparative contrast when areas were worked closely together. When applying color washes to control the line movement the result was more unity of line and space. This in my opinion no longer was a drawing but was transformed into an ink wash which is opposite the direction that I was interested in taking.

Often in viewing many ink drawings, they seem to be cloudy and lack gradual transition in the media. By transition, I mean drawings that have depth and movement in relationship to space.

Because finer control is needed in line movement and the enriched contrast of light and dark etching became more prominent. Etching is a form of engraving, which is cutting or incising grooves into a metal plate. This method was first discovered in 1425 when someone (unidentified) thought to be a silversmith noted that by placing ink in engraved plates one could get many reproductions. By further development it was noted that more enriched ink prints could be made, thus making the illustration of the subject matter more satisfying and enjoyable. Because ink drawings cannot be reproduced, except by photographic reprints, mistakes are almost always incorrectable. After the last of my experiments in ink I looked toward structural forms, such as architectural forms. The first, entitled The Man's Home, is a form setting of a barn that is pictured in the country. While doing this on a non-geometrical lay-out, I attempted to put emphasis on perception of depth and line movements. Because this was the first drawing of this type I decided to use one average-medium point tip. This would allow for entirely detailed work. This would allow extra dark areas of the entire barn to be compared to the light surrounding landscape. By viewing the landscape we see the impression of images, line form that is drawn in and out. This movement allows the viewer to focus on the entire picture, then allows moving eye contact to each part for detailed inspection. In outside drawing, controlling the direction of light over a long period of time is impossible. Therefore, to get the same effect of shadow I had to work a few hours a day until completion. For the best results I found mornings to be more beneficial in helping to determine my choice of subject matter.

#### II. COMPARATIVE STUDY

When doing comparative resource study, I discovered such greats as Walter Campbell and Herbert Railton. These men, two of many using ink, have acquired complete control of this media. I in turn had attempted to combine not only their drawing skills, or techniques in order to improve, but also to express my inner thoughts. In viewing one drawing of Walter Campbell's, entitled Loggia of S. Andres, Anagni, Italy, we see an exceptionally high quality of controlled detailed craftmanship and line control. His ability to fill a given space with any particular type of line movement has been opposite to the technique which I used. While both Campbell and Railton use line movement to indicate a rough texture or setting, I preferred not to in these particular drawings. Because of this erratic line movement the picture seems to get more involved in some areas, which lead away from the interior of the picture. I had preferred to use extreme cross-hatching that seems more stable and stronger and not likely by appearance to be a mass of confusion in some areas.

In other observations, there seems to have been more of a corresponding working relationship between my drawing and that of Willy Pogany. His style is seemingly realistic with a gentle curvature of lines which gives roundness and form to the subject. In viewing my smaller drawings, entitled <u>Time Versus Freedom</u> and <u>Natural High</u>, they seem to be comparable to the same style of the ink drawings as

Mr. Pogany's. In his drawings of large figures he shows little usuage

of large unworked surfaces to bring these images forth, even though these areas are left untouched to give the feeling of strength and solidness. Although my illustrations are small compared to those of Pogany, in relation to size, I effectively used the same techniques. His compositions are mostly large figures not complicated by conflicting design or arrangements. 5 My drawings were produced to be examined, analyzed and reflected upon in order for the viewer to understand my thoughts. In many ways my art would fall under the general heading of expressionism. I would prefer to classify it as organic-expressionism. The reasoning being that both man-made objects and natural forms are used. The term, abstract or geometric, yields to that of the modern reference of organic and naturalistic. Through this approach the creativity of the inner-mind was advanced. doing so I was able to break down realistic or photographic images and reconstruct my ideas in the form which was mentally free of the original photographic forms. In order to accomplish new ideas I had to, not only place my mind in a positive working state but also physically adjust myself in an ideal environment that was best to bring forth these ideas.

#### III. EFFECTS OF COMPARING STYLES OR TECHNIQUES

What effects do we get by comparing different styles or techniques of composition? In examining different techniques we must compare different artists. Of these artists I have chosen those of recent times. In choosing these I set up standards of line control, perspective and composition of tones. Five techniques are used to illustrate the points of this paper.

First, Aubrey Beardsley; his drawings are very detailed and have good line control with figures or objects suspended in mid-air. An example is, Venus and Tannhauser<sup>6</sup>, which shows darks surrounding a white composition. He does make good use of the whole paper by using black and white in contrast with each other. While his drawing of Saint Rose of Lima produces a reverse technique of tones. While his work shows good variations (dots, lines, movement and contrast) it seems to be rather carefree and pleasing to the eye.

In the work of Beardsley and others that I am using for comparison, the frame or matting does not play an important part in the design. In comparing Aubrey Beardsley to that of John Neill<sup>8</sup>, (The Romancer and The Cobbler), with his style in free flowing but intricate drawing, I have attempted to use figures, perspective, contrast and still life in an expressionist drawing.

These drawings are 8 inches by 10 inches in the frame, I used a fine pointed pen. By single and combined line and cross-hatching the need for depth of perspective was achieved. The matting of these drawings play a particular part in emphasizing the movement and expression of the whole drawing. In my second drawing, entitled World

of Growth, the matting is rectangular surrounding the drawing, leaving space between the picture and frame. I have attempted to keep my drawings confined or small. Even though the area of work is confined I hoped to bring out in these works, contrasts in perspective. In the smaller drawings the matting was cut to fit the design, while the larger drawings move freely with no restrictions or expansions.

Relative to the pencil drawings which are approximately two feet by three feet in size, the problems of pencil technique and subject matter will be considered. The subject matter was first based on drug abuses then slowly involved other symbolic images with the original subject. In using drug abuse as the subject, emphasis was placed on the deteriorating after effects, which cause eventual destruction or death. Death is represented by the bones of the skeleton. There are other symbols such as governmental emblems, religious symbols and others that help to portray my ideas. An attempt was made in using the pencil to get the effect of roundnes by using, as I did in ink, curving lines. There were three types of pencils uses; 4H, 2H and HB. These range from hard to soft leads. Some illustrations are more detailed and more precisely drawn than others because they had stronger points or views to be presented.

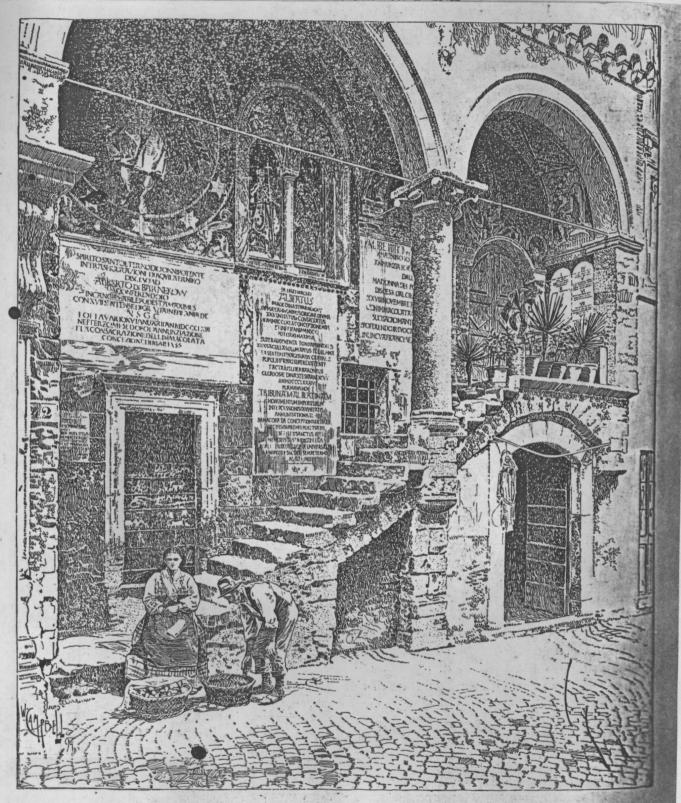
To get a graphite smear it was easier to shave or grind the pencil lead, with sand paper to a fine powder. This would allow for regulated applications and better control of the media. The powder was then applied with a brush in layers. Darker tones needed heavier layers of powder. When I could not reach the darkest tones the heavier leaded pencil was used to add additional depth. The use of these three pencils enabled me to give fine contrast and needed line

control. A lighter shade was added with the curving direction of lines to give added strength and depth in expression. To achieve depth, the light or complete white areas were left negative and the reverse would be true in the teeth of a hair comb.

# IV. PLATE DESCRIPTIONS

Photography by

Gregory Johnson Chicago, Illinois



"LOGGIA OF S. ANDREA, ANAGNI, ITALY," DRAWN BY WALTER CAMPBELL

Fig. 1



FRONTISPIECE. FOR "VENUS AND TANNHÄUSER" 😂



SAINT ROSE OF LIMA



Fig. 4
"THE MAN'S HOME"



Fig. 5
TIME VERSUS FREEDOM



Fig. 6

NATURAL HIGH



Fig. 7
WORLD OF GROWTH

# THE AMERICAN DREAM

The top portion of a skeleton wearing a robe: (similar to a choir robe) the robe front is partially opened displaying the chest or bone cavity. Upon the chest there is a round metal plate attached to a necklace of beads. The metal plate has a facial drawing, portraying a black person with a natural hair style. To the right the three letters of K.K.K. symbolizing the Ku Klux Klan. And, to the far left the official (gold-brass plated) U.S. Army emblem. Moving upward the facial expression of the mouth is somewhat smiling, giving a pleasant feeling to this symbol of death. This is topped with the headpiece of the Pope, which represents religion. The background is a little more elaborately worked. By taking the national symbol of the eagle and shield removing the head and replacing it with a golf ball surrounded by ribbon, the direction which this country has been heading and its obsession with pleasures are expressed. In viewing the entire picture the eagle and shield are rendered with great precision. This was done intentionally to give added attention to the foreground. Because the drawing is large and could be seen very easily from a few feet, fine lines were emphasized to attract and sustain attention.



Fig. 8

THE AMERICAN DREAM

#### THE KAPPA EMBLEM

It has the dimension of a diamond, 12 inches by 12 inches, with added effects, such as emblems and lettering to bring out its personal qualities. Starting from the center of this picture and working outward the concentration of involvement lessens. This picture, unlike the others, has more reflection of metals, the diamond and the inner shield display. With the lighter areas giving the appearance of an offsetting light shining a hazy beam upon it. The inner part of the paper was covered first with a hard lead pencil then over this a darker lead was built up in layers to the desired darkness. By putting lighter layers towards the greater concentration of light a transparent and rounded effect was given to the surface. Also by using the tip of my index finger or something soft, but firm, I could apply lead power without bearing hard or pressing to help achieve this mirror-like finish. I still found that the best results for smooth crisp lines were achieved by having very sharp pencils and a good control over the media. The outer strips and the circle are the results of using this powder effect. While the outer strip has curving lines that flowed upward taking a dip to give the appearance of a frame or matting. By placing extra shading on the right side of the diamond under the hanging part of the circle, perspective and depth were added.

This picture has parallel lines that run upward to bring out the best movement for eye contact. The bottom and top are almost equally filled with movement to get involvement in the whole paper. In some pictures these lines in the background were not needed because they did not suit the subject matter of the composition.



Fig. 9
THE KAPPA EMBLEM

### SELF PORTRAIT

The background uses the same technique as my diamond drawing in closeness of lines and in the direction which they move. The main difference can be seen in tones. These had been made lighter to give more emphasis to the perspective. In viewing this picture the positive and negative spaces have equal amounts of inner-relationship. The facial hair and the outer "afro" are left perfectly white to give the effect of aging or elapsed time. The covering of the face is also in light tones, the lighter side shows the direction in which the light comes. Because this drawing was done as I imagine myself in later years more fullness was added to the facial structure.

The neck piece is a coil of wire, hoping to add self-involvement to the theme (the Highs) in which most of my drawings were done. The lids of the eyes are pointed and elongated. The eyes are staring directly straight ahead as though you could hold eye to eye contact with the picture. Here again, I chose to work in a rectangle and utilized the whole working area.



Fig. 10
SELF PORTRAIT

#### THE BOY

A pictorial view of a boy who has been disappointed and shows a visually grim expression. This drawing displays the unhappiness that he felt at that time. He is pictured leaning over into the side of a table with both hands placed in an odd flat position. His clothing consists of checkered pants, white t-shirt and a knit skull cap with a picture of a dolphin, he also wears a pencil behind his ear. This drawing divides the center of the paper and gives balanced proportion. The arms and facial area have the same basic shading, building up layers to achieve tones. The checkers blend from light to dark depending on the overlapping of the shirt. The shirt was done in parallel lines to get the effect of movement of wrinkles and some shading was added to achieve depth. Here also the shading is darker on the arms, the neck and the edge of the hat because of overlapping forms. I felt that the open white spaces surrounding the figure were better left unworked because it helped to complete this drawing. Like the other drawings this had a border line of about two inches around the entire paper and this became a visible inner working frame.



Fig. 11

THE BOY

### A MATTER OF TIME

The drawing is basically a still life drawing that consists of flowers and pot, books, keys, four glass pebbles, a table and a spider web. This drawing unlike my other drawings displays a full circumference in angles of direction and movement and may be divided by two triangles; the books and flower pot as one and the white space forming the back drop as the second.

An unusual combination of blends in this work resulted in a glossy appearance. Because the light source was dimmed, stronger emphasis was not placed on shadows. The pebbles were made to appear transparent by having opposite directional lines working through lighter areas. This holds true for the spider web as well, some double lines are overlapping one another to give the appearance of projection. The spider has a light floating movement created by the use of short sharp striking of the pencil. Because of the effect of the surrounding white, the spider was made dark to counter balance the top to the bottom. I felt that color was not needed physically but allowed the viewer the desire to visualize color mentally. This would create the perfect photographic still life, which I had not intended to create.



Fig. 12

A MATTER OF TIME

# THE PRICE OF COPPER

The floating disc dial above these pennies represents time. The four points on a clock and the different movements by which we set our time (North, South, East, West), are the bases in which these pennies are divided. The Sun dial would be the best example to express this meaning materially. The penny that is divided to face four directions, displays an appearance which hopes to relay the meaning of dissatisfaction of the general value that has been placed on money, time, drugs and the belief in God and Religion have been brought out. The clouds under the protruding cylinder are a platform for the basic construction to stabilize movement of this picture. The clouds symbolize time, because clouds are an unstable substance that give the appearance of being solid but can disperse at any moment. In relating material matter such as the penny to that of the clouds; the beginning of destruction is shown by splitting parts of the lettering on the lower rim of the left penny. The working area of this drawing has the same measurement as the other drawings. The background lines are more stimulating in giving directional movement to the eye and add more interest to the imagination. There are lighter lines drawn that move in a swirling motion flowing around the outer surface of the forms.



Fig. 13
THE PRICE OF COPPER

## GRAIN FACTORIES

These drawings are emphasized by a strong directional movement which flows from left to right. In examining the structural arrangement of the grain elevators, the background is drawn smaller to achieve variations in depth and perspective. Since lines have been used to indicate forms they are now also used to create an almost three-dimensional appearance. The drawing can be broken down into basic geometric forms and this has created much needed interest in activating the entire working pattern. This has helped to create a union between the free hand sketch and the geometric layouts.

The patterns of line are short and choppy to have better working control for a specific working area. The lines range from the paralleling lines of the shingles to the outer images that appear to form the shapes of trees and grasses.



Fig. 14

GRAIN FACTORIES

### LOOKING AT YOURSELF

This drawing depicts the endless encounter that one may go through when becoming involved in a satisfying or unpleasant experience which one may receive from the use of any type of drug. The spoon holds its own meaning but the cross represents religion and sort of a blessing for protection in case some unforeseen or unknown accident should occur. The spoon is hung on a string of beads which is used in certain religions. The skeleton, like those of the previous drawings had to be done from imagination as far as the blending and positioning of the head and backbone are concerned. The flow or direction of light came from the background or behind the skeleton.

The outer measurements of this drawing as others are the same but more emphasis has been placed on line patterns and thickness.

These line movements break-up the established line direction that form the skeleton. This helps make the drawing more free-flowing and displays an equalibrium between developed and unworked areas.



Fig. 15
LOOKING AT YOURSELF

#### CONFUSION

The drawing of a skull with a free moving tube revolving around the skull represents the freedom by which the mind can be penetrated and subjected to uncontrolled thoughts. The leaves and stems are only symbolic representation of "grass" or drugs that are presented. The nosepiece captures and holds substances which can destroy and pollute the tissues of the mind. The nosepiece covers the face on which a gentle smile flows from behind the mask. The skeleton and tube are placed on a flat surface which allows for added shadowing to achieve depth. The surrounding frame helps to break the pattern of the drawing and seemingly brings more attention to the center of the composition.



Fig. 16

# THE HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET

A simple block layout drawing of a house with a porch.

It displays several windows and the connected shingle roofing with very little emphasis placed on details or elaboration as was used in previous ink drawings. This drawing has left much to imagination by leaving the images in outlined form instead of completing them.

There was not as strong an attempt to emphasize the perception of depth. Most suggestion of depth penetrated the center half of the drawing leaving equal amounts in harmony to please the eye. In this drawing and in my other structural drawings, in order to get completed working areas the unworked space or white area has a tendency to control the development of the composition.



Fig. 17
THE HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET

## A SHOT IN THE ARM

The main subject matter is the skeleton but taken from a different perspective to illustrate a stronger involvement with the drug theme. An attempt is made here to identify the relationships between drugs and the country by representing the flag symbolically being choked off from the main flow of circulation but still allowing the poison to enter into the system. This can be seen by the injection needle which has been widely used in everyday medical treatment.

The body frame is only a representative drawing and has not been drawn to achieve detailed characteristics of a realistic skeleton. The facial expression displays a pleasant sense of eventual satisfaction, holding a fixed grin within his teeth while gripping onto the flag.

The outer frame was done with the same guide lines as the tube and skeleton creation. The effect causes somewhat of an illusion which in turn creates a harmony of perspectives by eye contact from the top of the drawing to the bottom.



Fig. 18

A SHOT IN THE ARM

## SYMPHONY OF MANKIND

When dealing with everyday life in some instances, factory workers and production line laboring people begin to develop a sense of being robots; thus the theme for this drawing evolved. The figure is modern day armor with intercutting patterns of wires and cross connecting overlapping sheets of steel. This is the representation of man. The stone pattern gives a false visual effect of seats, as would be a view of looking from a stage. Therefore, the title, Symphony of Mankind seemed appropriate.

The railroad track gives reference to the express systems which are normally found in large cities. The drawing becomes over elaborated a bit by the placing of the clouds to display a kind of freedom that is enclosed by man-made materials.



Fig. 19
SYMPHONY OF MANKIND

#### V. CONCLUSION

By doing a number of drawings with varied subject matter as those previously described and with many variations in technique, I was able to develop certain ideas and transmit these ideas to the viewer through my work. Through experimentation I mastered control in working with pencil and ink while at the same time developed the ability to draw fine lines as well as determining what line movement to use to obtain a desired effect. I was also able to set up standards of line control, develop perspective, the composition of tones and development of the technique of using the matt to work for rather than against my drawings.

My work has been viewed by many people and left different impressions on each viewer. The least impressed were a group of first graders while adults seemed to be the most impressed.

Elementary students, first through fifth grades, were interested only in subject matter and did not find the detail interesting enough to question. I felt that maybe my drawings were too intricate for them to comprehend because of the lack of color, thereby making it difficult to hold their attention.

Through junior high and high school students I received greater satisfaction because of the expression of understanding they displayed by asking questions. These questions ranged from the basic mechanics of drawing to what my thoughts were when choosing a certain subject. Showing these drawings to this group of students seemed to help them relate to drawing more, making it easier to communicate techniques to them that would improve their own work. Because of this I am led to

•

believe that social expression has a great influence over subject matter.

Observations made by older and more educated groups gave me the most satisfaction. These people took time to examine my work and noticed even the smallest detail. Their reactions, approval as well as their dislikes were very rewarding. This group also questioned my thoughts behind each subject but also were curious about my background. There were those interested in the central theme as well as those interested in the mechanics. Such as one anatomy student who was so impressed by the skeleton drawings he kept repeating how good they were until his friends had to pull him away.

I received personal satisfaction by exploring my mind, and being able to portray through my drawings some of my interpretations of the world around me. That is why I prefer to classify my works as expressionism and am pleased when they are examined, analyzed, reflected upon and somtimes understood.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this paper wishes to express his sincere appreciation to the many persons who provided assistance in the production of this paper. Some of these people being, Lynn Trank, Al Moldroski, Carl Wilen, photographer Greg Johnson, and a very special thanks, for having patience with me and this paper, to my wife, Rosalind.

## **FOOTNOTES**

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- 3. Arthur M. Hind, A History of Engraving and Etching (From the 15th Century to the Year 1914) (N.Y.: Houghton Mifflin Co.), pp 105-117.
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