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HANS HOFMANN:
MASTER TEACHER OF PAINTING

by
Diane S. Newbury

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of Loyola University of Chicago
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November

1979

VITA

Diane S. Newbury was born in Highland Park, Illinois in 1936. She is the daughter of Mortimer and Esther Singer and the wife of Robert M. Newbury. She graduated from Highland Park High School in 1953. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Lake Forest College in 1959 and her Masters of Education from Loyola University of Chicago in 1975.

PREFACE

The following study will present the philosophy and teaching techniques of Hans Hofmann (1880-1966). This dissertation will chronicle Hans Hofmann's life, set forth and analyze his theories of artistic composition, discuss his aesthetic and educational philosophy and relate the reactions of some of Hofmann's students. This paper will not attempt to evaluate Hans Hofmann as an artist, but will concentrate on Hofmann's importance as an art educator. Therefore, primary emphasis will be placed upon the years between 1915 and 1966, during which Hofmann was teaching.

The Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley and the Museum of Modern Art in New York City were the major research sources. Both have extensive archives with documents written by Hofmann and his students. The cooperation of these institutions in making their materials available is gratefully acknowledged.

The energy and creativity of Hans Hofmann as a teacher and artist were the inspiration and motivation for this dissertation. As Hofmann stated:

An artist who is compelled to teach over a long period of his life can do this only on a creative basis, engaging his whole personality, as in the process of creating a work of art. A creative teacher is steadily confronted with psychological raw material which is offered him in the talent of his students.

Talent is common, as are the means for creation, but
. . . only instinct and inner vision can awaken these
into creative utterance.*

*Glen Wessels (Exhibition Catalogue) San Francisco, M.
H. DeYoung Memorial Museum at Golden Gate Park, letter from
Hans Hofmann to Glen Wessels, June 1-28, 1959.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Hans Hofmann (1880-1966) is recognized as having been one of the great artistic geniuses of the world. His paintings are displayed in many major museums. Prior to his fame as a painter, Hofmann was noted for being one of the finest teachers of painting and an articulator of the philosophy of the Abstract Expressionist movement.

Hofmann had his own art schools in Munich, Germany, New York City and Provincetown, Massachusetts. He also taught at the University of California at Berkeley, Thurn School in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and the Art Students' League in New York City.

The Hans Hofmann School was an important center for trained artists wishing to learn about abstract painting. Hofmann articulated his ideas in his lectures, essays and articles. His success as a teacher is suggested by the number of "super-stars" in today's art scene who were his students. To these and his many other students, Hofmann imparted a philosophy and knowledge which were derived from his own analysis and testing of pictorial ideas. This discipline appears to be the result of his total life and being. Calling this his "Search For The Real," Hofmann

commented, "All of my life has been a search for the real in art."¹

Many of Hofmann's ideas and teaching methods were different and sometimes in opposition to the prevailing educational techniques. He developed these systems to encourage the artist to bring his total intellectual powers to the act of painting. The artist's role was to be a reflector of society at a given time in history. For Hofmann, this included achieving through simplicity. Hofmann stated:

A very important thing: I say to my students, you must give with the least the most, not the most, the least. A thousand leaves are still not a tree, a thousand flowers not a bouquet. Greater you should go, simpler you should go. But simplicity should mean pureness, not poorness. People try to go simple but go empty.²

To create paintings that are both simple and compositionally perfect takes a tremendously complicated talent. It implies great intellectual virtuosity for an artist to create within his own, unique style multitudinous works that contain all of the requirements of line, plane, form, balance, rhythm, color, contrast, depth and tension (push and

¹Hans Hofmann, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture (Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 1953), pp. 189-90.

²Frederick S. Wight, Hans Hofmann (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1957), p. 24.

pull). Such repeated works are not accidental. They imply great study and artistic understanding (empathy) on the part of the painter. This is the intellectual faculty that the art teacher must help his students develop. This goes beyond simply teaching application of paint to a canvas.

Hofmann knew that the fine artist needed to be given more than mere methods. He needed help in analyzing what makes a work of art great. These are the tools for approaching a work and criticizing it with validity. For that reason, he developed his own glossary of terms which he taught his students:

Nature: the source of all inspiration.

Whether the artist works directly from nature, from memory, or from fantasy, nature is always the source of his creative impulses.

The Artist: An agent in whose mind nature is transformed into a new creation.

The artist approaches his problems from a metaphysical standpoint. His intuitive faculty of sensing the inherent qualities of things dominates his creative instinct.

Creation: a synthesis, from the artist's standpoint, of matter, space and color.

Creation is not a reproduction of observed fact.

Positive Space: the presence of visible matter.

Negative Space: the configuration, or 'constellation,' of the voids between and around portions of visible matter.

- Color:** in a scientific sense, a particular state of light; in an artistic sense, the perception of plastic and psychological differences in the quality of light.
- Vision:** the stimulus of the optic nerve by light; artistically, the awareness of variations in the nature of this stimulus which enables one to distinguish positive and negative space and color.
- Empathy:** the imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being, or thing. In visual experience, it is the intuitive faculty to sense qualities of formal and spatial relations, or tensions, and to discover the plastic and psychological qualities of form and color.
- Expression Medium:** the material means by which ideas and emotions are given visible form.
- Each expression medium has a nature and life of its own according to which creative impulses are visualized. The artist must not only interpret his experience of nature creatively, but he must be able to translate his feeling for nature into a creative interpretation of the expression medium. To explore the nature of the medium is part of the understanding of nature, as well as part of the process of creation.
- Picture Plane:** the plane, or surface, on which the picture exists.
- The essence of the picture plane is flatness. Flatness is synonymous with two-dimensionality.
- Plasticity:** the transference of three-dimensional experience to two dimensions. A work of art is plastic when its pictorial message is integrated with the picture plane and when nature is embodied in terms of the qualities of the expression medium.

Spirituality: the emotional and intellectual synthesis of relationships perceived in nature, rationally, or intuitively.

Spirituality in an artistic sense should not be confused with religious meaning.

Reality: artistically, an awareness. There are two kinds of reality: physical reality, apprehended by the senses, and spiritual reality created emotionally and intellectually by the conscious or subconscious powers of the mind.³

In reading Hans Hofmann's writings, it becomes evident that he has taken many of the prevalent ideas on art and synthesized them. In his writings, Hofmann methodically explores all aspects of painting and composition. He deals with the artistic use of form, space, color, line, plane, balance and rhythm.

The knowledge that Hofmann presents to his students and readers is also a chronicle of the art movements and artists that influenced him. The first of these influences can be traced to the Impressionists, a group of painters in Paris at the turn of the century. They emphasized color and light, painted from nature, and often utilized the form and space ideas found in Japanese prints. The Impressionist ideas of color and working from nature were adapted by

³Hans Hofmann, Search For the Real and Other Essays, edited by Sara T. Weeks and Bartlett Hayes, Jr. (Andover, Massachusetts: Addison Gallery of American Art, 1948), pp. 70-72.

Hofmann and are present in his writings. Hofmann's paintings in which one square is attached to the edge of the painting appear to echo the form used in Japanese prints.

The concept of two-dimensionality which Hofmann dictates can also be traced to Paris and the Impressionists. A very famous statement was made by the symbolist painter, Maurice Denis. In 1890, Denis wrote that, "It should be remembered that a picture--before being a warhorse, a nude, or an anecdote of some sort--is essentially a flat surface covered with colours assembled in a certain order."⁴

Hofmann's studies in Paris gave him a thorough knowledge of the ideas of Cubism. The formal doctrines of Cubism were published by Gleizes and Metzinger in Paris in 1912. Many of Hofmann's statements on lines and planes creating tensions appear to have been born in the essay, Cubism, which states that: "In short, the science of design consists in instituting relations between straight lines and curves. A picture which contained only straight lines or curves would not express existence."⁵

⁴Encyclopedia Britannica, 157 ed., s.v. "Maurice Denis."

⁵Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, "Cubism," in Modern Artists on Art: Ten Unabridged Essays, ed. Robert L. Herbert (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1964), p. 9.

Hofmann's discussions of color having a range of tones and emotions appear to be clearly related to another statement by Gleizes and Metzinger. They stated:

To illuminate is to reveal; to color is to specify the mode of revelation. Loving color, we refuse to limit it, and sober or dazzling, fresh or muddy, we accept all the possibilities contained between the two extreme points of the spectrum between the cold and the warm tone.⁶

Even Hofmann's famous statement, "All of my life has been a search for the real in art,"⁷ seems to have had its forerunner in another testimony by Gleizes and Metzinger who said, "There is nothing real outside ourselves, there is nothing real except the coincidence of a sensation and an individual mental direction."⁸

The theories which Hofmann presented to his classes in regard to color also appear to have been influenced by the group of artists known for their use of vibrant color, the Fauves (Wild Beasts). The foremost member of this group was Henri Matisse. Many of Hofmann's directives on the use of color are quite similar to Matisse's color volumes.

Other of Hofmann's color theories appear to be related to the "Orphic" Cubism of Hofmann's good friend in Paris,

⁶Ibid., p. 11.

⁷Hofmann, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture, pp. 189-90.

⁸Gleizes and Metzinger, p. 11.

Robert Delaunay. The "Orphic" Cubists utilized prismatic color with simultaneous color contrasts. They were given the name "Orphic" by the writer Appollinaire who found that in their paintings color became both form and subject.

Even Hofmann's theories of "Push and Pull" can be traced to his Parisian studies. Writer Barbara Rose has stated, "His [Hofmann's] understanding of Cezanne's conception of pictorial space was that it required an act of active focusing--of empathy on the part of the spectator--rather than a passive acceptance of depicted flatness."⁹

Hofmann acknowledges these influences in this statement:

There have been two separate revolutions in the visual arts which coincided. A revolution started in the field of the fine arts at the decline of Impressionism, with the birth of Cubism. The Impressionists, who preceded the Cubists, rediscovered the full plastic significance of the picture plane as a two-dimensional entity. The reason for this re-discovery was a search for the entity of light, expressed through color, which resulted in re-establishing the two-dimensionality of the picture plane. Cubism was a revolution in that the artist broke with tradition by changing from a line to a plane concept. The earlier school modeled with color between the outlines of a linear composition. The new school became plane conscious. As already noted, this change occurred as a revolt against the decadent emphasis on taste alone. Having become aware that the revolution in the fine arts carried the key for a vital and unlimited expression, some leaders in the fields of applied art and of architecture discovered that this was also the key for the vitalization of the applied arts. This was the second revolution. With the aware-

⁹Barbara Rose, Arts Magazine, November 1978, p. 14.

ness of the difference between a line concept and a plane concept, the foundation of applied art was newly laid.¹⁰

In Munich in 1911, a group of artists called "Der Blaue Reiter" ("The Blue Rider," named after a Kandinsky painting) were a major force in articulating art theory. One of the leading members of the group, Wassily Kandinsky, published an article, "Concerning the Spiritual in Art." In it, he related artistic theory to the philosophy of Goethe. Kandinsky discusses the idea of a reasoned structure based on nature's color, line and shape, but freed from depicting recognizable objects.

"Der Blaue Reiter" followed the philosophical writings of Wilhelm Worringer. Worringer's art theory stressed the intuitive and the experimental over the scientific. This led to the German Expressionist relationship between abstraction and empathy.

Hofmann was definitely acquainted with the ideas of "Der Blaue Reiter" when he opened his school in Munich in 1915. Incorporating their theories in his teachings, Hofmann frequently discusses the importance of an artist's empathy in creating a painting.

Hofmann's idea of using the "intuitive" seems to be directly related to Kandinsky. In his Reminiscences, which he published in Germany in 1913, Kandinsky stated, "I love

¹⁰Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 46.

every form which necessarily derives from the spirit, which is created from the spirit."¹¹

Another source from German Expressionism of which Hofmann was probably aware would be artist Paul Klee's essay, On Modern Art. In this treatise, Klee takes up expression through color. He delves into the use of color complements in a fashion quite similar to Hofmann's. Klee states, "What tremendous variations from the smallest shading to the glowing symphony of color. What perspectives in the dimension of meaning."¹² In the same article Klee adds, "In color, I have tried all partial methods to which I have been led by my sense of direction in the color circle. As a result, I have worked out methods of painting in colored tone values, in complementary colors, in multicolors and methods of total color painting."¹³

It is interesting that although many of Hofmann's ideas were quite close to those of Klee and Kandinsky, Hofmann never joined the Bauhaus at Dessau. Hofmann explained his feelings about this group:

It was the tragedy of the Bauhaus, that, at the beginning of its existence, it confused the concepts of

¹¹Wassily Kandinsky, "Reminiscences," in Modern Artists on Art, p. 42.

¹²Paul Klee, "On Modern Art," in Modern Artists on Art, p. 86.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 90.

the fine and applied arts. As we have noted, the first must serve the deepest in man. It concerns man's relation to the world as a spiritual being. The second serves only a utilitarian purpose. The Bauhaus, at this time, was primarily concerned with blending art and craftsmanship. The name, Bauhaus, suggested the medieval ideal of the cathedral architect, with whom all the other arts and crafts of the land were not to be sub- but co-ordinated. The Bauhaus, however, soon became aware that its directives had to be adjusted more to the industrial and mechanical needs of our time. From this very moment on, the Bauhaus was on the right track. It understood the revolution which it had started in the field of applied art. The establishment of the Bauhaus in America coincided with this understanding. The conceptive faculty of America's engineering and utilitarian genius was ready to embrace the new ideas in functional design and their eventual standardization.

The new revolution gave an aesthetic foundation to design once again. The aesthetic discoveries of the Bauhaus were mainly directed toward a vital surface animation by abstract design. This does not require plastic empathy--it is only a surface affair, two dimensional and decorative. It requires, however, deep understanding of textural differentiation and pattern contrast and, furthermore, of rhythm and balance in design--these can be sensed in any medium by a sensitive individual.

The idea of the Bauhaus found further expression in so-called Non-Objective art. Klee and Kandinsky are considered to be the leaders of this group. They must not, however, be considered the initiators of the Bauhaus. They gave impetus to its basic idea because the art of each was considered the highest development in pure two-dimensional, plastic perfection.¹⁴

The word "plastic" is very important in Hofmann's work. Hofmann then adds to this statement about the Bauhaus, the name of painter Piet Mondrian and the de Stijl group of artists which flourished in the Netherlands in

¹⁴Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 47.

1917. Hofmann concludes his discussion:

We should differentiate between decorative, in a plastic sense, and decorative in a non-plastic sense. The works of these two artists are diametrically opposed to ornamentation and decorative, abstract design. The fact that any great plastic work is also decorative in its two-dimensional completeness does not mean that any design on a flat surface is a plastic creation. The phenomenon of plastic movement determines whether or not a work belongs in the category of the fine arts or in the category of the applied arts. It is the greatest injustice done to Mondrian that people who are plastically blind see only decorative design instead of the plastic perfection which characterizes his work. The whole Stijl group from which Mondrian's art was derived must be considered a protest against such blindness. This group aimed toward the purest plastic perfection.¹⁵

Clearly, Hofmann had knowledge of Mondrian. Hofmann appears to have had great sympathy for Mondrian's quest for "reality" and "plasticity." Mondrian relates his theories in his essay Plastic and Pure Plastic Art. He states:

Art makes us realize that there are fixed laws which govern and point to the use of the constructive element of the composition and of the inherent inter-relationships between them. These laws may be regarded as subsidiary laws to the fundamental law of equivalence which creates dynamic equilibrium and reveals the true content of reality.¹⁶

Mondrian's life parallels Hofmann's quite closely. He worked in Paris from 1911 to 1914 as Hofmann did. Mondrian then went to the Netherlands. From 1938 to 1944 Mondrian lived in New York near Hofmann. The closeness of their

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 47-48.

¹⁶Piet Mondrian, "Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art," in Modern Artists on Art, p. 119.

residences would make their intellectual exchange inevitable.

Another source for discussion of artistic ideas lay with the Russian "Suprematism" movement. By 1912, this was the major force prevalent in Moscow. Its leader, Kasimir Malevich, articulated his ideas in a manuscript called Suprematism. This manuscript was published in Germany in 1927, so Hofmann probably knew its contents. Malevich's treatment of "plasticity" is quite similar to Hofmann's. Malevich analyzes:

Suprematism has opened up new possibilities to creative art, since by virtue of the abandonment of so-called "practical considerations," a plastic feeling rendered on canvas can be carried over into space. The artist is no longer bound to the canvas (the picture plane) and can transfer his compositions from canvas to space.¹⁷

Thus, the teachings which Hofmann brought his classes became an amalgam of the latest modern art theories in Europe. These ideas Hofmann synthesized into a complete art theory from which he could paint, teach and critique. For his American students this synthesized theory was very important as it brought them into the mainstream of modern art. This was Hofmann's greatest value as a teacher and one of the most important elements that drew students to his classes.

Hofmann spoke of the importance of intellectually

¹⁷Kasimir Malevich, "Suprematism," in Modern Artists on Art, p. 102.

understanding how a work of art must be composed. He also realized the difficulty of being a pioneer in this field.

He stated:

We have spoken of a seemingly dual problem involved in painting. Only a few very great painters in history have understood how to approach or proceed in this seemingly two-fold concept. I emphasize "seemingly" because this double--or to say it more correctly--this multi-problem characterizes the very nature of painting. Painting at its greatest is a synthesis arrived at by mastering its multi-problems. Only painters of the stature of Rembrandt and El Greco have been artists and painters in one, not only because they have understood how to compose with color, but, at the same time, how to express with it the profoundness of man. Throughout his life, Cezanne struggled for a synthesis. Renoir mastered it in a high degree by instinct. Van Gogh and many others have despaired of it. America possesses great potentialities in the search for creative clarification, though she may look back on a generation entirely misunderstood--the tragic generation of the pioneers of Modern Art.¹⁸

Hofmann's influence in the United States on the modern art scene is one of the greatest of any teacher or artist. This is demonstrated by his participation in the founding of the American Abstract Artists Organization in New York in 1936. It was discovered that fifty per cent of the membership in this illustrious organization had been Hofmann students. This fact spotlights the importance of analyzing the teachings, theories and methods which Hans Hofmann gave to the world. Hofmann described his development of his

¹⁸Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 48.

theories on creativity:

This two-way transformation proceeds from metaphysical perceptions, for metaphysics is the search for the essential nature of reality. And so artistic creation is the metamorphosis of the external physical aspects of a thing into a self-sustaining spiritual reality. Such is the magic act which takes place continuously in the development of a work of art. On this and only on this is creation based.¹⁹

¹⁹Ibid., p. 46.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY

Hans Hofmann was born on March 21, 1880 in Weissenburg, Germany, in the Bavarian countryside. His father was an official with the German government. At home, the father was a severe disciplinarian, who was reported as having little contact with his children.

The strongest family influences seem to have come from Hofmann's mother and his maternal grandfather, Frederik Manger. This grandfather was a vintner and brewer in Bavaria. Hofmann credited the time spent with his grandfather in philosophical musings as his introduction to the idea of questioning the nature of reality.

When Hofmann was six years old, the family was transferred to Munich where his father became a government bureaucrat. In Munich, Hans attended the public schools and the Gymnasium. He exhibited excellence in science and mathematics in his studies. He also had lessons in music and developed a talent in piano, organ, and violin. His love of nature was furthered by his vacation visits to his mother's parents' farm on the River Main. It was during this period of his life that he began to draw.

At the age of 16, Hofmann's expansive nature caused him to outgrow the narrow limits of his father's home. He decided to live apart from his parents. His father helped him to get a position as the assistant to the Director of Public Works of the State of Bavaria. He worked here for two years. In this job, he learned about mechanical and technical engineering. The resulting use of the scientific approach and the development of an inventive nature appear in all of his writings and teachings.

One of the highlights of this period of Hofmann's life was his invention of an electromagnetic comptometer. With his mother's signature on the application, since he was underage, he was able to receive a patent on his idea. His father was so impressed that he sent him a thousand marks through an intermediary. The father hoped that Hans would use the money for further research or engineering studies. Instead, Hans used it for tuition at an art school.

During the next few years, Hans Hofmann studied at the various art schools in Munich. The classes covered the basics of figure, landscape and still-life drawing and painting techniques. Here, in 1900, he met Maria (Miz) Wolfegg, who became his companion.

At this time in Munich, there was one major innovative action in the art world. The active Secessionist group was having an impact in Germany. In an interview, Hofmann

stated:

There was an extremely active modern movement in Germany as early as 1893. It was known as the Secessionist Movement and was a development of Impressionism. This group later split and Neo-Secessionism was born; it spread throughout Germany and I exhibited in Berlin with them.¹

Hans stayed with his work in mechanics to earn money for living expenses. He continued his experiments and inventing and created a radiation device to warn ships of dangers. For coal miners, he developed a sensitized electric bulb which would glow while away from its electrical source. For the military, he created a portable food freezer. None of these inventions were manufactured or bought by commercial interests. They are good examples of the searching, inventive, problem solving quality of Hofmann's mind. They remind the historian of the wonderful "inventions" in Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks.

Through his quest for art studies, Hofmann met Willi Schwarz. Schwarz was the most influential of Hofmann's Munich teachers, Michenlow, Aspe, Ferenizi and Grimwald. Schwarz had been to Paris and introduced Hofmann to the ideas of Impressionism. Hofmann was impressed with the idea of observing nature through the impressions of light reflected on objects. This scientific exploration of light

¹"Andover Acquires a Hofmann," Art Digest 21 (April 1, 1947): 17.

and color held a perfect appeal for Hofmann's technically oriented mind.

Also, through the efforts of his teacher, Willi Schwarz, Hans Hofmann met the nephew of Phillip Fruendenberg, a Berlin department store owner and noted art collector. Fruendenberg became Hofmann's patron.

In 1904, Fruendenberg gave Hofmann the promise of continued support. He paid Hofmann's fare for a trip to Paris for further studies. Miz joined him on the trip. The patron continued to support Hofmann for 10 years, until the outbreak of World War I.

Paris in 1904 was the center of all that was "new" in art. The Impressionists were strong. The Fauve movement headed by Matisse and Roualt was underway with its emphasis on brilliant colors. The Cubist movement of Picasso and Braque with its breakdown of objects into basic shapes, lines and planes was just beginning.

The artists of the Parisian world would meet in the cafes and discuss their ideas and theories. For Hofmann, with his orientation toward science and philosophy, this was a perfect schooling. Here, he quickly became friends with the other young artists, Matisse, Braque, Delaunay, Picasso, Juan Gris and Pascin. Hofmann studied at night under Colossi of the Ecole de la Grande Chamniere. Hofmann talked about this time in an interview:

In answer to a query as to when he had first made

his contact with the modern movement in Paris, he replied: "I was in Paris in 1903 when the movement began. I used to spend my evenings at the Ecole de la Grande Chamniere as a member of the sketch class. Matisse was also working there at that time. It was then I became acquainted with the cubist group and first met Braque, Delaunay and Picasso."²

Some of Hofmann's paintings were hung in the New Secession show in Berlin in 1909 and in his first one-man show at Paul Cassirer's Gallery in 1910, also in Berlin. The paintings Hofmann did at this time are no longer available. Many were sent to Phillip Freudenberg, Hofmann's patron, in Berlin, but with the advent of World War I, the canvasses were abandoned or lost.

Hofmann and Miz regularly spent their summers in Germany, while living in Paris. During the summer of 1914, Hofmann's sister, who lived in Germany, became seriously ill, so they extended their visit. The outbreak of World War I then caught them in Munich. Hofmann was kept out of army service by an old lesion of his lung. His patron was unable to continue his support. The sale of his paintings was not bringing enough revenue for living expenses. Therefore, Hofmann decided to open his own school and teach art, and the German government granted permission for the school.

Hofmann's emphasis was to be placed on teaching his

²Ben Wolf, "The Digest Interviews Hans Hofmann," Art Digest 19 (April 1, 1945): 52.

students to make their own search for reality from intensive studies of nature. His stated goal for these students was that he "evolve a personality of his own."³

The school was a great success. After the war, students came from all parts of the world to learn Hofmann's technique and benefit from his philosophy. For his students Hofmann became a father figure. During the summer, he took the students on trips.

Now that he was more solidly established, he and Miz married. Hofmann made many trips to Paris to continue his friendships and keep up with the new ideas of what was the art-center of the world. These ideas were important for the development of his own theories and teachings.

By 1929, political revolution was beginning in Germany. Intellectuals, particularly in the arts, were held suspect by the rising power factions. Hofmann felt himself vulnerable.

For the summer of 1930, Hofmann accepted the invitation of his former students, Professors Worth Ryder and Glen Wessels, to teach at the summer session at the University of California at Berkeley. Finding the United States lacking in its artistic efforts, he decried the emphasis upon material wealth in the United States and called for govern-

³Prospectus from Hans Hofmann's Munich School, 1915.

ment support or aid for the arts and art schools. Without such aid, he felt that there would never be a national, truly American culture.

Hofmann returned to Munich that winter, but stayed only a few months. In the Spring of 1931 he taught at the Chouinard School of Art in Los Angeles. That summer, he again taught at Berkeley. In the Fall, due to the growing unrest in Germany and the rise of Hitler, Hofmann decided to stay in the United States. He closed his Munich school and taught at the Art Students League in New York. He spent the summers of 1933 and 1934 at Thurn School of Art in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

In the Autumn of 1933, he opened the first Hans Hofmann school of Fine Art in the United States. This was located at 444 Madison Avenue in New York City. In the Summer of 1934, he opened his summer school at Provincetown, Massachusetts. He moved his winter school twice. The permanent location, 52 West 8th Street, was achieved in 1938. Hofmann taught here until 1958, at the age of 68 years, when he stopped giving classes.

During these years of establishing his school, Hofmann did little drawing or painting of his own. Once settled, he began to develop his own work, delving into a more abstractionist style. Also with the establishment becoming more permanent, Miz Hofmann was able to join him in the United

States. She left Germany in 1939, just prior to the outbreak of World War II.

In 1941, Hofmann became a United States citizen. From then, until his death in 1966, Hofmann's life in the United States reads as a list of shows, awards, articles and honors. (See Appendix 1)

With Mrs. Hofmann, the studio and their apartment became a center for the modern art world that gathered in Greenwich Village in New York City. The home was a bright and cheerful place where Hofmann enjoyed living with his own works. Here, the walls were kept white, as a backdrop for his large canvasses. The floors and furniture were painted with enamel paint in the vivid colors of his works.

Dore Ashton said of Hofmann:

The existence of his studio school on 8th Street helped to sustain the spirits of many young artists bewildered by the excessive rhetoric of the various politically oriented groups. It brought to America, for the first time, the highly professional, imperturbably art-for-art's-sake urbanity so keenly missed. Hofmann, the very model of a maestro, never for a moment doubted the power of art to survive all temporary digressions, and it was this conviction that buoyed up so many serious young artists. In addition, Hofmann ran a real atelier in which the student found the wide painting culture rarely available elsewhere.⁴

The importance of Hofmann at this time lay in his ability to analyze, articulate, execute and explain the

⁴Dore Ashton, The New York School (New York Viking Press, 1972), p. 157.

"new" art. In 1945, Hofmann replied to the question of where he placed himself as follows:

I have sought my own formation and development and have followed this evolution only in a passive sense, primarily concerned with my own independent expression.⁵

Hofmann and his wife Miz lived this independent life. He continued his New York school and a summer school in Provincetown, Massachusetts. In 1958, he stopped teaching in order to devote his full energy to his painting. In April of 1963, Mrs. Hofmann died.

In 1965, at the age of 85, Hofmann married Renate Schmitz. He painted his last series of large canvasses, which he dedicated to her. Curator, Henry Geldzahler, said of this series, "All of the Renate paintings were done in 1965, his last full year of production, and they may be seen as the final summation of the themes, thoughts and stylistic inventions with which Hofmann was so successfully concerned in the last years of his life."⁶

Hans Hofmann died on February 17, 1966 at the end of a day of working. The man, noted for a vitality which over-

⁵Wolf, "The Digest Interviews Hans Hofmann," p. 52.

⁶Henry Geldzahler, The Renate Series (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1972), p. 11.

flowed in his work, his dynamic personality and his tireless and relentless drive was gone, but not the spirit he had given to the world.

Newspapers and magazines throughout the country eulogized him. Robert W. White stated:

Not only did Mr. Hofmann establish and exert his leadership through his own works, but as a teacher his influence on the oncoming generation of painters, particularly those at the height of the abstract-expressionist movement in the 1940's and 1950's was probably greater than that of any other man in the country.⁷

A similar praise was uttered by Hilton Kramer:

As a teacher and theorist as well as a painter, Mr. Hofmann in a sense codified the esthetics of early 20th century modernism into a pedagogical system, and thereby passed on the modernist heritage to a new generation of artists who might otherwise have regarded it as a closed chapter of history instead of a continuing and still viable tradition.⁸

In a full page obituary, Newsweek magazine summarized his life.

He died last week, at 85, with his latest show on the walls of the Kootz Gallery and his latest paintings on his own life-bright walls. Hans Hofmann was the portrait of the artist as a man. He transcended the anxieties and blind leaps of modern art, turning them into the natural powers and acts of an open, positive human spirit. "I am an optimist, multiplied one

⁷Robert W. White, "Art Leader for 35 Years, Abstract Expressionist Painter, Hans Hofmann," New York Herald Tribune, 3 March 1966.

⁸Hilton Kramer, "Symbol of Change. Hofmann, Teacher, Theorist and Artist, Codified and Passed on Modern Legacy," The New York Times, 18 February 1966.

thousand times," he said. "I do not like Weltschmerz in art. Art should provide enjoyment." And he transcended the vexed questions of realistic vs. Abstract still bandied by dyspeptic souls. Hofmann simply said, in one of the most fatherly utterances ever made: "I bring the landscape home in me."⁹

Hans Hofmann stated in his Search For The Real:

We are connected with our own age, if we recognize ourselves in relation to outside events; and we have grasped its spirit when we influence the future.¹⁰

Hans Hofmann certainly grasped the spirit of the ages of his lifetime as he influenced the future of modern painting through his own paintings and through his teaching. He expressed his belief in the immortality of art as follows:

We have explained that quality, a pure, human value, results from the faculty of empathy, the gift of discerning the mystery of each thing through its own intrinsic life. In this life, an intuitive artist discovers the emotive and vital substance which makes a work of art. In the passage of time, the outward message of a work may lose its initial meaning; the communicative power of its emotive and vital substance, however, will stay alive as long as the work is in existence. The life-giving zeal in a work of art is deeply imbedded in its qualitative substance. The spirit in a work is synonymous with its quality. The real in art never dies, because its nature is predominantly spiritual.¹¹

⁹Newsweek. February 28, 1966.

¹⁰Hans Hofmann, Search For the Real and Other Essays, edited by Sarah T. Weeks and Bartlett Hayes, Jr. (Andover, Massachusetts, Addison Gallery of American Art, 1948), p. 60.

¹¹Ibid., p. 48.

CHAPTER III

AESTHETIC THEORY

Hans Hofmann's greatness as a teacher in the United States has been attributed to many factors. First, it may have been a question of timing. Hofmann began teaching the ideas of abstract art in the United States to a country that had little exposure to the "new art." A second factor was the dynamic personality of the man. But, the most important aspect was Hofmann's ability to analyze and explain what a painting should be. These ideas he formulated and simplified. They were stated repeatedly in his writings and lectures.

Hofmann himself recognized that in teaching art everything depends on the talent and ability of the student. He printed this "motto" in boldface type at the beginning of his notebook, "Selected Writings on Art": "The artist is never the product of a teacher--intuition and greatness of mind cannot be given."¹ He wrote:

A work of art calls, from beginning to end, for inspiration, intuition and conscious feelings. It goes through many stages of pictorial development which can never be rationalized in advance--but in every stage of development it is always a work of art. Its entire

¹Hans Hofmann, "Selected Writings on Art," typescript of essays from 1915-1962, Library of Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York, frontplate.

development depends wholly upon the sensibility and temperament of the artist and the greatness of his mind.²

Hofmann's ultimate goal was to give his students freedom based on knowledge. The rules and practices he set forth in his writings were not intended for confinement in a specific style or direction. This knowledge covered all of the basics of composition and pictorial construction.

Hofmann acknowledged:

My entire teaching has always been based on the awareness that art aspires at perception not at methods and rules, which almost always cut off the living flow of creation to end only in sterilization and mannerism.³

The first problem with which Hofmann deals is how the eye views a work of art. This he calls the "optical experience of nature (Perception)."⁴ He diagrams that appearance is absolutely parallel to the eye axis. What one sees in nature is perceived as moving parallel or diagonally to the eye axis. The problem, therefore, in painting comes from the already horizontal position of the canvas.

That true seeing, the seeing process proper, is a brain process and not exclusively an eye-activity is evi-

²Hans Hofmann, speech delivered at the Inauguration of the Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, November 17, 1962, Hanover, New Hampshire.

³Hofmann, "Selected Writings," p. 3.

⁴Hans Hofmann, "Creation in Form and Color," typescript of a textbook for instruction in art, 1931, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California, p. 4.

denced in that we may rotate or tip the head to all sides. Thus, we change the horizontal position of our eye-axis without losing our sense of the static relations of things, in contrast to the photographic apparatus, which achieves an oblique picture. The horizontal axis of our eyes is then an imaginary, mental axis, which is independent of the movement of our head.⁵

Appearance, as Hofmann taught, is two-dimensional. The real world is three-dimensional and this is how we emotionally experience nature. The foremost problem for the artist is the presentation of a three-dimensional reality and a two-dimensional appearance. He states, "If our visual process were not two-dimensional oriented, we could never take a 'picture,' a painted plane as an illusion of three-dimensionality."⁶

Vision is a creative act of joining together the physical capacity of eyesight and mind:

Pictorial creation is based on:

1. eyesight
2. visual experience
3. plastic interpretation of visual experience
4. pictorial realization of the entire visual experience
5. the awareness of the inherent laws of the picture-surface, the medium employed to create the picture surface.⁷

⁵Ibid., p. 90.

⁶Ibid., p. 43.

⁷Hans Hofmann, "The Painter and His Problems," mimeographed typescript, March 21, 1963, Library of Museum of Modern Art, New York City, p. 4.

For Hofmann, all art begins with "nature." Nature acts as the creative stimulus, both as visual model and through its own continuous creative behavior. Therefore, his classes emphasized working from the model. Having the artist make a photographic imitation of the visual experience was not the goal of this project. As early as 1915, in the prospectus for his Munich School, he stated:

Art does not consist in the objectivized imitation of reality. Without the creative impulse of the artist, even the most perfect imitation of reality is a lifeless form, a photograph, a panopticon. It is true that, in the artistic sense, form receives its impulse from nature, but it is nevertheless not bound to objective reality; rather it depends to a much greater extent on the artistic experience evoked by objective reality and the artist's command of the spiritual means of the fine arts, through which this artistic experience is transformed by him into reality in painting. Creative expression is thus the spiritual translation of inner concepts into form, resulting from the fusion of these institutions with artistic means of expression in a unity of spirit and form, brought about by intuition, which in turn results from the functioning of the entire thought and feeling complex accompanied by vigorous control of the spiritual means. Imitation of objective reality is therefore not creation but dilettantism, or else a purely intellectual performance, scientific and sterile.⁸

This same theme appears throughout most of his writings. In Search For The Real, he said:

One must realize that, apart from considerations of color and form, there are two fundamentally different ways of regarding a medium of expression: one is based on taste only--an approach in which the external physical elements of expression are merely pleasingly arranged. This way results in decoration with no

⁸Ibid., p. 5.

spiritual reaction. Arrangement is not art. The second way is based on the artist's power of empathy, to feel the intrinsic qualities of the medium of expression. Through these qualities the medium comes to life and varies plastically as an idea develops.

The whole field of commercial art and much that comes under the heading of applied art is handled in the first way and is chiefly decorative arrangement. The so called fine arts are handled in the second way to give the total of man's inner self--his spiritual world which he can offer only as an artist in the most profound sense.⁹

Hofmann's greatest appeal as a teacher lay in the intellectual stimulation he could give his students. The work they produced had to be more than a decoration. They had to harmoniously utilize all of the aspects of good painting. Hofmann had articulated the idea that the painter's goal is not to explore nature imitatively nor to explore nature as a scientist. He wanted his students to discover the communicative secrets in which nature affects our sensibility.

Hofmann's interest in nature led to his belief that all painting must serve from life or nature. This idea is stated frequently in his writings:

Every area of the picture surface must serve primarily a plastic fixation, but all areas on the picture surface must finally be brought into an overall relation. . . .

⁹Hans Hofmann, Search For the Real and Other Essays, edited by Sara T. Weeks and Bartlett Hayes, Jr. (Andover, Massachusetts: Addison Gallery of American Art, 1948), p. 46.

In nature, space is charged with a whirlwind of inner disturbance and so it shall be with the picture.¹⁰

The impulse of nature, fused through the personality of the artist by laws arising from the particular nature of the medium, produces the rhythm and the personal expression of a work. Then the life of the composition becomes a spiritual unity.¹¹

Every act of pictorial creation has, therefore, a dual conceptual approach.

The origin of creation is, therefore, a reflection of nature on a creative mind:

We are nature
 What surrounds us is nature
 Our creative means are nature
 Nothing, however, will happen without the creative faculties of our conscious-and-unconscious mind.¹²

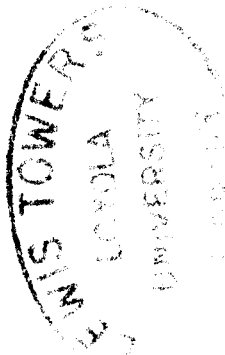
In Hofmann's analysis, the artist's job is to depict the "surreal" in his own medium of expression. Artistic creation in painting is giving the external physical world a spiritual reality through its relationship and interaction with other objects.

When we "see" an object, we know that it has a front, a back, top and bottom. We know that it has space around it. This is an intuition or empathy which we utilize in our viewing. This empathy or intuition must be represented on the two-dimensional canvas.

¹⁰Hofmann, "The Painter and His Problems," p. 35.

¹¹Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 58.

¹²Hans Hofmann, It Is no. 3 (Winter-Spring, 1959), p. 10.



For generations, artists struggled with this problem. The Renaissance artists developed the theory of perspective drawing. Hofmann found this system as violating the picture plane's two-dimensionality. He suggests that it is a technique which is valid only for architectural drawing. Therefore, Hofmann developed his own theories which would utilize all of the dynamics of modern art. The theories begin with the use of the line.

The canvas, as Hofmann explains, has four sides which constitute a plane. Once a line is placed on it, the surface is brought to life and a relationship between the line and the edges of the plane is begun. If another line is added, more relationships and movements occur. "It is this multiplex of a particular thought with respect to an overall idea that finally lifts an artistic expression into the realm of magic."¹³

Hofmann details this magic as the painting's spiritual life through which it becomes a work of art. In his Search For The Real he expresses the possibilities created by just two lines on a piece of paper.

Your two lines carry multi-meanings:
 They move in relation to each other.
 They have tension in themselves.
 They express active mutual forces.
 This makes them into a living unit.

¹³Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 41.

The position of this unit bears a definite relation to the entire paper.

This in turn creates tensions of a still higher order.

Visual and spiritual movements are simultaneously expressed in these tensions.

They change the meaning of your paper as it defines and embodies space.

Space must be vital and active--a force--impelled pictorial space, presented as a spiritual and unified entity with a life of its own.

This entity must have a life of the spirit without which no art is possible--the life of a creative mind in a sensitive relation to the outer world.

The work of art is firmly established as an independent object; this makes it a picture. Outside of it is the outer world.

Inside of it, the world of an artist.¹⁴

This magic created by lines can also occur in another way. Hofmann suggests placing a line on the paper, and then dividing it. This creates a relation of proportions, or a new idea for the viewer, which is a third proportion.

Hofmann states,

In this manner all proportions permit of mental combination and thus the mental purpose of the presentation comes to be expressed as super-real effect. All super-real effects arise from the mystery of mental formation, which is consummated on the basis of the artist's sensitivity for relations and connections upon one hand, and on the basis of feeling for oppositions and contrasts on the other.¹⁵

Throughout this creation, the two-dimensional surface of the canvas must preserve the picture plane. The artist must not "poke holes" in the surface. To keep this under

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 42-43.

¹⁵Hofmann, "Creation in Form and Color," p. 139.

control, the artist must understand that a line concept alone cannot control pictorial space.

Hofmann explains,

A line concept cannot control pictorial space absolutely. A line may flow freely in and out of space, but cannot independently create the phenomenon of push and pull necessary to plastic creation. Push and pull are expanding and contracting forces which are activated by carriers in visual motion. Planes are the most important carriers, lines and points less so.¹⁶

"Push and Pull" are Hofmann's colloquial expression which he applied to movement in nature. These are translated on the picture surface to show the counterplay of movement in and out of depth.

Push and pull are a visual sensation created by the mind either through the experience of tensions in nature or through the creation of tensions on the picture-surface, which in retroactive expression produce again the sensation of push and pull. Thereby a vivid tension-controlled and force-impelled sensation of suggested movement 'in and out' of depth is created, without affecting the two-dimensionality of the picture-surface destructively.

In other words, push and pull control the surface in a two-dimensional way, and simultaneously produce in this two-dimensional projection the desired three-dimensional effect of controlled depth.¹⁷

To this idea of "push and pull," Hofmann later added the notion of "shifting." The sense of movement on a flat surface occurs only through a shifting left and right or up and down. Thus, plastic depth is never static, but, like

¹⁶Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 44.

¹⁷Hans Hofmann, "Hopkins Center Speech."

nature itself, is always active. From this the artist creates a sense of animation on the picture plane. A work of art is alive when forces work in relationship with something else. Only the tension between planes really count. The stronger the opposition of planes, the more powerful the work. In his lectures Hofmann explains the use of planes.

In reality we cannot draw in lines, we can only draw in planes, since a line in itself is a part of the plane, as the plane is a part of the volume. . . . You have to use line, every line should create a plane. At the moment your planes stop on the object, you see planes in the object, itself, but you do not see the plane related to the whole unity which you experience outside, or you see the planes more or less arbitrarily. The planes have no significance in relation to the special experience which you should have. To experience space in planes means that you experience the tension between the planes. It is not only sufficient that you work with planes, but you must keep them all the time relating to one another. You need your spacial feeling, your feeling for depth, how planes move in space, how planes are related through tensions to one another. The tension is the expression of the powers in space which you experience, more or less.¹⁸

The relationship between the lines and the spaces between them create tensions. These tensions give movement, force and action to the work of art and are created by the interplay of forms and lines. A tension is also created in the distance between two planes. It can be experienced only through the feeling of depth. This distance varies in rela-

¹⁸ (Lecture Series) Delivered by Hans Hofmann at his school on 8th Street 1938-1939, Archives of American Art Microfilm, Washington, D.C., Lecture no. 7, Page 22.

tion to the position of the planes. This is what is experienced when viewing a work of art. When the distance between two planes becomes greater, then the tension is felt to be greater. Tension means that powers in Nature are being felt. Nature, Hofmann often stated, is rich in forces and we experience these forces through tensions.

Hofmann felt that it was not sufficient to merely see one plane or another. He wanted the paintings to express them as an emotional experience. The strongest emotional make-up of the artist would lead to the strongest content in work.

Inherent in the problem of movement is space. Space exists in movement. Space is a force-filled field, according to Hans Hofmann. Negative space, accordingly, is not a void. It is the space surrounding a volume and has its own tensions. The negative spaces act against the positive ones, giving counter-movement to the tensions.

Hofmann explains the action of space in a painting in his Search For The Real:

Form exists through space and space through form. Form should not exist for itself since it represents only part of space. Space, through the existence of objects, becomes tripartite. We differentiate between the space in front of an object, the space within an object, and the space in back of an object. Space within an object is limited. Space in front of and behind an object suggest infinity.

Space discloses itself to us through volumes. "Objects" are positive space. Negative space results from the relation of objects. Negative space is as concrete to the artist as is objective-positive space, and

possesses an equal three dimensional effectiveness. Both supplement each other, both resolve into a unity of space.¹⁹

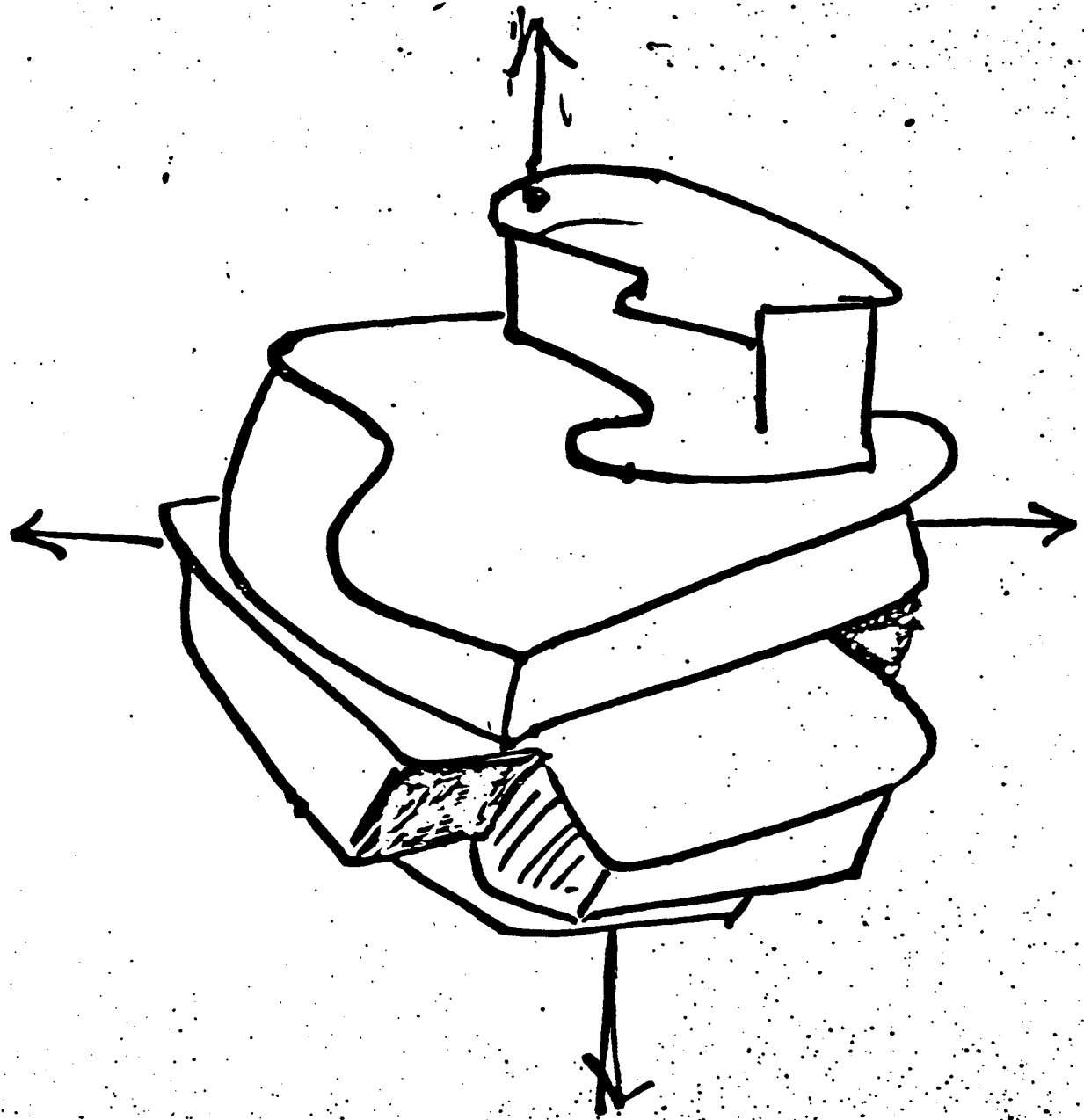
Therefore, it becomes necessary to deal with what Hofmann called the "First Law of Creation." This is the problem of expression through volumes. The organization of planes and lines result in the creation of volume. Hofmann reduced volume to the most basic forms in nature, the square, cube, cylinder and sphere. He then diagrammed how these objects or volumes are surrounded by unfilled or "negative space."

A volume must lack no element of form and the volume should give no evidence of hypertrophy at the expense of surrounding space for, according to the law of balance, one thing changes at the cost of another. If the positive configuration is exaggerated, then the negative form suffers, and vice versa. If the positive shape is too meager then it becomes compressed by the negative shape which has not been included in the concept of the artist. The negative shape belongs to the positive shape as the shadow to the body.²⁰

Hofmann's emphasis on developing the whole canvas lead to a series of demonstrations on how a volume may be represented on a canvas. In this he showed how the most complicated volume possesses only one imaginary horizontal and one vertical direction axis.

¹⁹Hans Hofmann, "Plastic Creation," The League 5 (Winter 1950, originally written 1932-1933): 2.

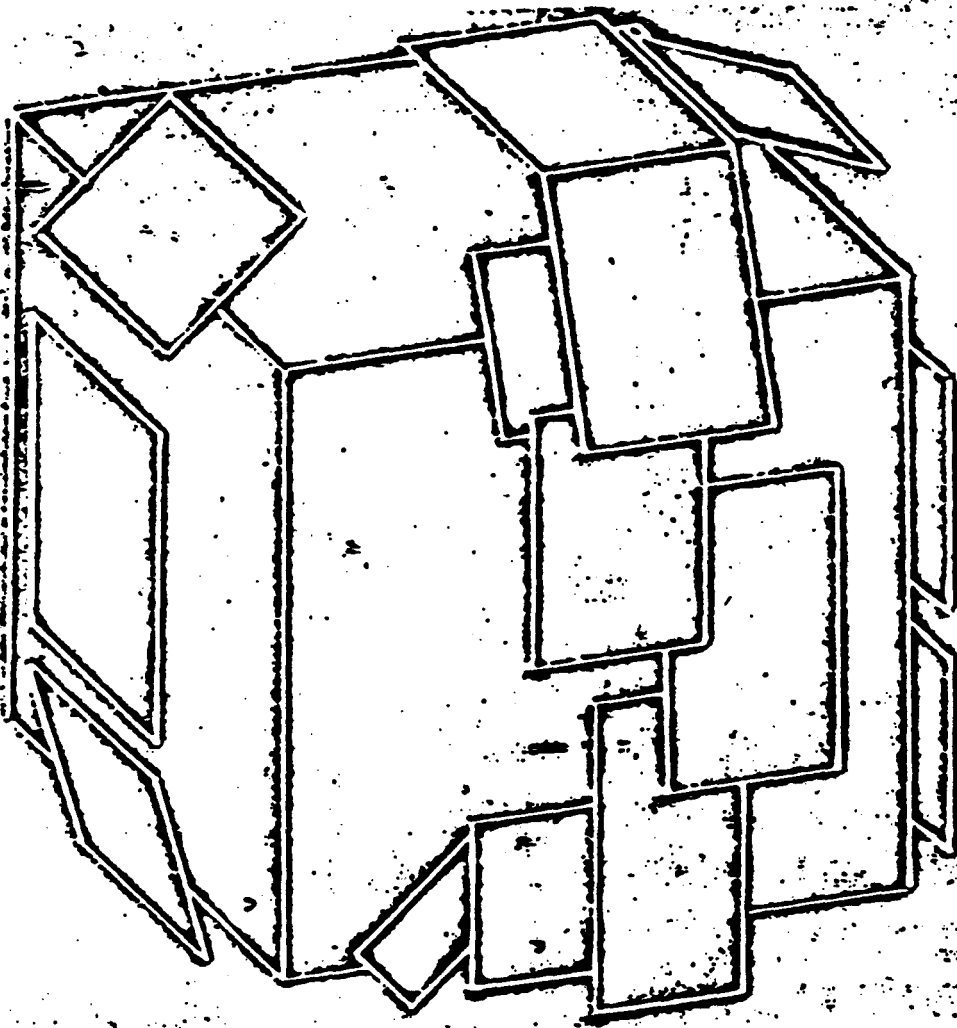
²⁰Hofmann, Creation in Form and Color, p. 61.



(Diagram showing one horizontal and one vertical axis²¹)

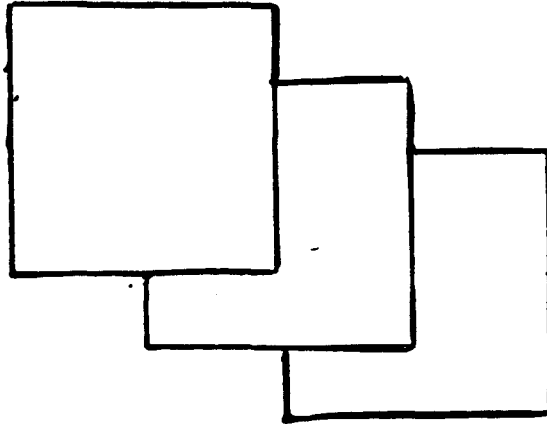
²¹Ibid., p. 95.

In another of his famous diagrams he demonstrated how planes can circle around a cube and thus achieve a spherical form.²²

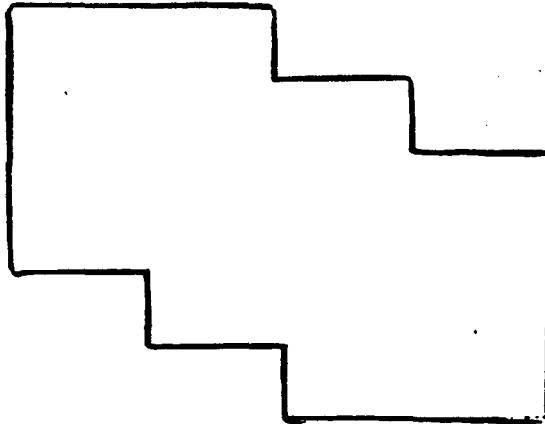


²²Ibid., p. 99.

One of the most important devices stressed by Hofmann in his classes was the creation of movement by means of overlapping. In an interview Hofmann was asked just what it was he taught. Hofmann made his diagram of overlapping planes as he said, "First I do this":



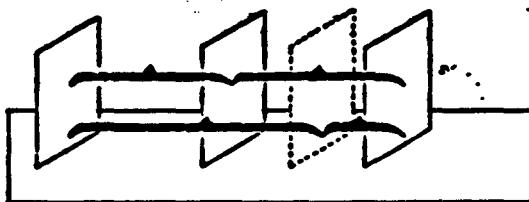
Then, he erased the corners of the first two planes and said, "Then I do this":²³



²³Erle Loran, Hans Hofmann and His Work (Exhibition Catalogue, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1964), p. 18.

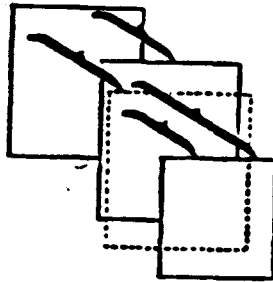
The plastic principles in the first diagram is a three-dimensional effect through planes which overlap. The modified second diagram is two-dimensional and based on shifting planes.

This diagram shows the possible transformation of spatial tensions as they exist in nature into pictorial relationships achieved through what Hofmann called "the act of shifting." The dotted lines indicate the forward movement. The brackets indicate the space.²⁴



²⁴William Seitz, Hans Hofmann (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1975), p. 30.

The second diagram shows this relationship as it would appear on a canvas. The lines demonstrate that the shift in position of a fragment of a millimeter on the canvas is equal to a great distance forward or backward in nature. This can make a tremendous difference in a painting's presentation of space and depth as well as upon the total tensions in the picture.²⁵



The forces and balance of the picture are also influenced by the use of color. Hofmann treated color relationships as an independent system which must be coordinated by the artist with the other formal aspects of composition. In distinguishing between "tonal painting," such as in the art of the Renaissance, and "pure painting," Hofmann commented:

The creative possibilities of color are not limited to plastic expression. Although the composition and function of color are two of the most important factors in determining the qualitative content of a painting, the reciprocal relation of color to color produces a phenomenon of a more mysterious order. This new phenomenon is psychological. A high sensitivity is necessary in order to expand color into the sphere of the surreal without losing creative ground. Color stimulates certain moods in us. It awakens joy or fear

²⁵Ibid.

in accordance with its configuration. In fact, the whole world, as we experience it visually, comes to us through the mystic realm of color. Our entire being is nourished by it. This mystic quality of color should likewise find expression in a work of art.²⁶

In art, the use of color has always been a subject of great debate. For Hofmann, it was a subject filled with tremendous meaning because he knew that, when an artist properly employs color, he can create a wide range of psychological responses in the viewer. Over the years, he often returned to his analysis of the "color problem."

Color is an agent to give the highest esthetic enjoyment. The emotion-releasing faculty of the color related to the formal aspect of the work becomes a means to awaken in us feelings to which the medium of expression responds analogically when we attempt to realize our experiences creatively.²⁷

In his manual, "The Painter and His Problems," Hofmann discusses the effects which can be made through simultaneous contrasts between neighboring colors. The colors, he says, react in "intervals." These color intervals are the same in meaning as the tensions between planes.

Hofmann explains how color appears differently and creates intervals. He lectures that on the same plane, black or white, would appear different in size. This can be controlled very easily when painting with color. Taking a number of squares of the same size and filled, each with a

²⁶Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 42.

²⁷Hofmann, "The Painter and His Problems," p. 18.

different color, every square, when it has a different color in it, will appear a different size. This also occurs when taking a number of squares and looking at them in different lights. The experience is that they appear very different in size. Therefore, Hofmann suggests that the artist must learn the different type of appearances of colors and how to utilize this in building compositions.

For Hofmann, color has many characteristics and qualities. Light is expressed through color. Color has a psychological content. It has a sense of value. It gives an aura of cold or warmth. Color works as a unity with forms to create a picture. Color has a plastic quality which lies in the saturation of the color. It has an intensity which expresses the light of the color. All of these effects of color must be carefully balanced and counter-balanced. Colors should develop through scales or tints. One color scale should lead as a bridge to another. Inherent in color is texture.

Hofmann also points out the use of complementary colors. He shows how judicious placement of one color next to its complement (the color directly opposite on the color wheel) makes each seem brighter. Thus, red seems more vivid when next to green; blue more intense when alongside orange; and purple reacts to yellow.

Color functions in interaction with plane, line, and texture to create volume and depth. The luminosity of

painterly use of color creates the greatest voluminosity.

We have light complexy and color complexy and volume and the simplification of these. The light should not stop, the color should not stop, the flow should not stop. Everything should flow. There should be a continuation in your work and so we have the possibility to create duo color and form and light--the same feeling which Nature creates in us. A feeling for freedom, a cosmic feeling. All our work can be, in the end, so free that it expresses our cosmic feeling. Then, in reality, space is nothing else but the continuation of forms in infinity.²⁸

The mystic quality Hofmann found in color results from his view of nature. "In nature," he stated, "light creates color; in the picture, color creates light. Every color shade emanates a very characteristic light--no substitute is possible."²⁹ In a magazine article he said, "In the act of predominance and assimilation, colors love or hate each other, thereby helping to make the creative intention of the artist possible."³⁰ He made a similar statement at Hopkins Center in a speech. "Color functions as a plastic means of first magnitude to produce depth and light emanation. They relate to each other in intervals which, in visual experience, are also tensions."³¹

²⁸Hofmann, "Lecture Series," p. 11.

²⁹Hans Hofmann, "The Color Problem in Pure Painting, Its Creative Origin" (Kootz Gallery Catalogue, New York, 1955), p. 2.

³⁰Hofmann, It Is, p. 10.

³¹Hofmann, "Hopkins Center Speech."

Hofmann wrote an article, "The Color Problem In Pure Painting - Its Creative Origin," which was published in a catalogue for an exhibition of his works at the Kootz Gallery on November 7, 1955. In it he summarized his ideas:

1) Color, in its over-all function upon the picture surface, becomes, in the development of the picture, subject to an ever-changing multi-interpretation.

2) Color must sustain its own development: it is, per se, a color-development problem.

3) It is the color development that determines the form. Color has, besides its own development, a formal function. It places itself (as a consequence of its own development) in plastic relation to the picture plane. This formal back-and-forth in the composition produces a painterly equivalent which adapts itself in the reverse direction (in the sense of compensation). Color attains in this way an active part in that magic phenomenon of push and pull which creates the pulsating quality of pictorial life.

4) The color development explained in the foregoing process determines also the neighborhood function in which two color shades meet each other in a neighborly relation, not in the sense of tonal transition but in the sense of simultaneous contrast. Their meeting is the consequence of the color and the form development of the work. Both go hand in hand, but form and color (the latter in a multiple sense) operate each in its own sovereign rhythm.³²

The combination of form, space and color properly synthesized by the artist is "creation." The person creating such a work is an "artist." When the pictorial message and nature are correctly integrated with the picture plane

³²Hofmann, "Color Problem in Pure Painting," pp. 4-5.

it is given Hofmann's greatest compliment, it is "plastic."

The word "plastic" has, in more recent years, received a bad connotation. In Hofmann's terminology, "plasticity" means that the total picture has been thoughtfully and soundly constructed. Hofmann said, "Every work of art is a failure when not executed on a 'plastic' basis."³³

The final quality Hofmann wished achieved in a work of art was the faculty of attraction and repulsion, sympathy and antipathy. This is the psychological effect of the painting on the viewer.

In the final statement in his 1941 speech at Riverside Museum, Hofmann summarized his teaching as if he was speaking to a classroom:

Every creative artist works continually to penetrate the mysteries of creation.

There are not established standards or rules which could help him --

he must avoid borrowing from other artists --

he must always further develop his sensibilities --

he must doubt his best results that he may not be handicapped from such results or from outside admiration --

³³Hans Hofmann, "Speech Delivered at Riverside Museum at the Symposium on Abstract Art" (February 16, 1941, New York City), p. 1.

he must work and always work on himself and his craft . . . that he may develop to the point where he can say what he has to say, and that he says this in his own language.³⁴

³⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL THEORY

Hans Hofmann had a distinctive view of the role of the teacher of art. He worked at that role with an unfailing dedication. He even limited his own painting so that he could give his energy to his students. In an interview he stated:

Being an artist and being a teacher are two conflicting things. When I paint, I improvise, speculate, and my work manifests the unexpected and unique. I deny theory and method and rely only on empathy or feeling into In teaching, it is just the opposite. I must account for every line, shape, and color. One is forced to give an explanation for the inexplicable. . . .¹

In a conversation with museum curator, Katherine Kuh, he was asked, "How do you feel about teaching art?" He answered,

I don't think my long years of teaching have hurt my work too much. They have only taken up my time. I taught for so long--too long. You can teach art but you can't make an artist. People talk about academic training. I can only say that the word "academic" has had very little meaning in my artistic life.²

It must be understood that those people Hofmann taught were already artists. For the most part, they had some

¹Dorothy Seckler, "Can Painting Be Taught?" Art News, March 1951, pp. 40-41.

²Katherine Kuh, The Artist's Voice (New York: Harper Row, 1960), p. 125.

artistic training. They sought the further education of study with a master. Hofmann recognized that not everyone could or should become a painter.

It is generally accepted that one cannot make an artist, but that one can teach art; that every art is ruled by a conception of order--a harmony and counterpoint, which has in practice arisen out of the nature of the art itself.³

Later he added:

The great majority of people have the means of approach to plastic beauty as part of their natural equipment. The teacher can develop this natural endowment as Necessity, the greatest teacher, has developed speech.

Teachers are those who, by enforced discipline, shorten the road to understanding, but they can work only by developing natural endowment.⁴

The important quality which Hofmann gave to his students lay in the articulation of his carefully plotted ideas as to how a painting worked. He felt that although not everyone should be an artist, everyone could be educated to be better consumers.

The general misunderstanding of a work of art is often due to the fact that the key to its spiritual content and technical means is missed. Unless the observer is trained to a certain degree in the artistic idiom, he is apt to search for things which have little to do with the aesthetic content of a picture.⁵

³Hans Hofmann, Search For the Real and Other Essays, edited by Sara T. Weeks and Bartlett Hayes, Jr. (Andover, Massachusetts: Addison Gallery of American Art, 1948), p. 54.

⁴Ibid., p. 58.

⁵Ibid., pp. 56-57.

Hofmann again echoes the philosophical problem of evaluation when he speaks of the difference between the layman or critic and the artist. He says, ". . . The layman, or the critic, out of receptive experience, shares passively what the artist, out of productive experience, feels and creates."⁶ When he talks about the hidden laws for evaluation of aesthetic enjoyment, he adds: "The aim of art is always to provide such joy for us in every form of expression. The faculty to enjoy rests with the observer."⁷

The faculty to create a work of art is, in Hofmann's view, something born in the artist. The true artist must create; it is the center of his life. The teacher aids the growth of this inborn talent. Hofmann illustrates this belief in many statements.

The artist is born, and art is the expression of his overflowing soul. Because his soul is rich, he cares comparatively little about the superficial necessities of the material world; he sublimates the pressure of material affairs in an artistic experience.⁸

A work of art is a world in itself reflecting senses and emotions of the artist's world.⁹

The child is really an artist, and the artist should be like a child, but he should not stay a child. He must become an artist. That means he cannot permit

⁶Ibid., p. 55.

⁷Ibid., p. 68.

⁸Ibid., p. 56.

⁹Ibid., p. 59.

himself to become sentimental or something like that. He must know what he is doing.¹⁰

Man is at the center of the creative universe and his task as an artist is to find inspiration in the creative activity of relationships and forces.¹¹

In an early manuscript, developed between 1915 and 1930, Hofmann stated:

All true productivity finds realization simultaneously upon an artistic and scientific basis. For that reason, in the end, creative science is art and creative art is science.

With the recognition of the Theory of Relativity by Einstein, the fourth dimension has come into natural science. The first and second dimension include the world of appearance, the third holds reality within it, the fourth dimension is the realm of the spirit and imagination, and thus of feeling and sensibility.

All cultural interests are, in their final analysis, filled with the urge to give content and substance to life. All profound content in life originates from the highest phenomenon of the soul; that is, from intuition.

Intuition infers the fourth dimension. Art realizes this dimension with the help of the other dimensions.¹²

While emphasizing the role of talent in the learning of an art form, Hofmann never negates the role of the tea-

¹⁰Hans Hofmann, "The Painter and His Problems," typescript, March 21, 1963, Library of Museum of Modern Art, New York City, p. 10.

¹¹Hans Hofmann, "Selected Writings on Art," mimeographed typescript of essays from 1915-1962 (Library of Museum of Modern Art, New York City, New York), p. 63.

¹²Hans Hofmann, "Creation in Form and Color," typescript of a textbook for instruction in art, 1931 (Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California), p. 210.

cher. He feels the teacher of art must do more than instruct the methodology of the media. Hofmann sees the role of the art teacher as having a greater meaning which affects society as a whole. Hofmann relates, "The problem of art teaching is not limited to the problem of artistic development itself, but includes the problems of how to produce artists, comprehending teachers, art understanding in general, and art enjoyment in particular."¹³

In another statement, Hofmann wrote:

As a teacher I became aware that talent is everywhere. It does not make the artist. It often is a handicap, because it invites cleverness, which always chooses the easier solution. Simply because ignorance, mediocrity and unlimited egotism produce only the Master Amateur, it is paramount to the artist that his search and his efforts are constantly weighted by doubt and modesty. Andre Malraux says: "Only sensitivity achieves creativeness." I feel inclined to expand this by saying only conscious sensitivity achieves great art. Quality must be conquered. I mean by quality that value which carries a message. In painting it must be a plastic message. True quality always remained veiled as the result of a mystic relationship. It must be struggled for, it often means despair. It demands character. I do not believe that any political or religious stand has anything to do with art, either directly or indirectly. Any ideology that has dominated the human mind in the past has always produced both good and bad art. Only quality conveys and convinces. The beliefs of the society to which he belongs will certainly leave their mark upon the artist. This mark will be deeply imbedded in his art not in the sense of propaganda, but in the sense of his awareness of his cultural mission.¹⁴

¹³Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 56.

¹⁴Hans Hofmann, "Reply to Questionnaire and Comments on a Recent Exhibition," Arts and Architecture (November 1949), p. 45.

In an interview, Hofmann spoke glowingly of his role as a teacher.

It's a tremendous experience, teaching I think there is not another man in this world who has the experience as a teacher that I have. So as a result of my long, long period of teaching, I have come to the conclusion that you cannot actually teach art; you cannot. You can let everyone paint, let him have his enjoyment, but you cannot teach him the sixth sense. You cannot. Everyone, more or less, has talent, a little bit. It then depends on the teacher how the talent is developed. It must develop through work, not through a teacher, not through influences from the outside. You cannot help it, you belong to a certain time. You are yourself the result of this time. You are also the creator of this time. That all goes hand in hand to make your work significant.¹⁵

In an earlier statement, Hofmann had said:

As an artist I know that Art cannot be taught. Nobody can make a person musical unless the person is born musical. In the same way, no one is able to make a person plastic-sensitive unless the person is plastic-sensitive in the first place. The Artist is always the mystery.

An artist is forced constantly to master his own particular problems, which he is able to resolve only in a prolonged and profound artistic development. Training facilities and conceptual guidance are of course a necessity. Our times would indeed be culturally very poor without art education.¹⁶

The problem of art education in America was of great concern to Hans Hofmann. He found the prevailing methods of art education to be too academic. He felt very strongly

¹⁵Irma Jaffe, "Conversation with Hans Hofmann," Art Forms 9 (January 1971): 35.

¹⁶"Hans Hofmann on Art," Art Journal 22 (Spring 1963): 180.

that a country without its own art would be a failure. In "Painting and Culture" he developed this idea:

Art teaching has a meaning for America, and should be more general and more significant. The problem of civilizing this enormous country is not finished. The teaching of art must be directed toward the enrichment of the student's life. The teacher must be a guiding personality for the student, and develop his sensibility and his power for "feeling into" animate, or inanimate things, with sympathy.¹⁷

Hofmann viewed art as a reflection or mirror of the time in which it was produced. Therefore, the artist had an important role as a truthful, honest commentator. The art viewer also had the responsibility of using an educated intelligence. Hofmann stated:

Artistic expression and appreciation is necessary to a complete, balanced life, and must be an integral part of any enduring national or racial culture.

When America adds a developed culture to its economic richness it will be one of the happiest countries in the world. Providing leadership by teachers and support of developing artists is a national duty, an insurance of spiritual solidarity. What we do for art, we do for ourselves and for our children and the future.¹⁸

In an article which Hofmann wrote for Art Digest in 1930, he observed:

Artistic efforts have always been more difficult in America than in other countries. The motherland gives but little attention to the artist's heroic pioneering. Interest is directed toward material wealth. Despite the fact that this land is so rich in

¹⁷Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 56.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 58.

material it is poor in ideal goods. It is quite conceivable that the contemporary time will be sunk in the flow of the centuries without a trace, even as was the dream of the expired Indian culture, which left behind it comparatively few cultural monuments. . . . Here the government could help. . . . It should also develop its art in intelligently directed art schools under its patronage or direction, something as are the state directed and supported art schools in Europe. California possesses a School of Fine Arts within the structure of the University. This, however, should and can be developed into an Academy of Fine Arts under its present excellent direction.

American cultural development at present seems like a process of reaction from the influences of all parts of the world. And, as with a chemical reaction, this process needs time to produce a specific American spiritual life having its expression, later, in a specific American style.¹⁹

In his 1936 prospectus for the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts in New York, Hofmann told of the problems of the young artists in America. He was concerned that the artistic ideas and methods which were so prevalent in Europe had not crossed the ocean to the United States. He found that

. . . they face the chief difficulty met with by young American artists who in spite of so called opportunity to observe the results of modern art have no contact with those who have formed and developed these results or with the spirit from which these have been evolved.²⁰

For these reasons, Hofmann felt it was important for a school of fine arts to be developed in the United States for the purpose of teaching the "modern art." The ultimate

¹⁹"Art in America," Art Digest 4 (August 1930): 27.

²⁰Hans Hofmann, Prospectus for Hans Hofmann School (New York City, New York, 1936).

principle of his school was to be freedom based on knowledge. The school was to bring American art into the mainstream of what was happening in the European art world. This, he hoped, would help American artists to reflect truly their own culture.

Every work of art represents a new Reality which exists nowhere else outside of its one existence. It is always a 'spiritual' reality, and as such it represents another--a new--pearl in the string of human cultural documentation. It comes into existence by growth like everything in nature. A work of art is documented by a common denominator. This common denominator is the personality of the artist--his soul and his mind, his sensibility and his temperament. Through it 'experience' is summarized into pictorial language--that is to say, into a pictorial message. This message is of deepest concern to the artist. It will be a pictorial formulation of his ethical and esthetical creeds with which to participate, as an artist, on the cultural justification of this time.²¹

In his Munich School of Fine Arts, Hofmann had first developed a strong philosophy and method of teaching. He articulated his ideas in the 1915 prospectus for the Munich School:

A work of art is, in spirit and in form, a self-contained whole, whose spiritual and structural relationships permit no individual parts, despite the multiplicity of depicted objects. Every independent element works against the spiritual context, and makes for patchwork, reducing the total spiritual value. The artist must therefore learn the spiritual media of the fine arts which constitute its form and fundamentals. The artist must create his particular view of nature, i.e., his own experience, be it from nature or indepen-

²¹Hans Hofmann, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1952), p. 200.

dent of it. Through these realizations the assignments of the scholastic years will be clearly understood, insuring the further development of the artist, who must then detach himself entirely from schools and directions and evolve a personality of his own.²²

In the 1947 prospectus for his New York School, Hofmann simplified this idea to, "Although emphasis is laid on fine art, the knowledge and understanding of the basic principles in pictorial creation should furnish the student the conceptual foundation to master the problems in any field of the commercial or fine arts which he may choose to enter."²³

Hofmann believed that the teacher of painting must function as a giver of freedom for creativity. He cannot be a director, trainer or indoctrinator. The teaching of painting appears to be for him closer to what is technically called instructing. Instructing involves a kind of conversation, the object of which is to give reasons, weigh evidence, justify, conclude and explain. This is the type of activity which Hans Hofmann felt the teacher of painting should accomplish. He felt that this was the job he had done when he said:

America is at present in a state of cultural blossoming. I am supposed to have contributed my share

²²Hans Hofmann, Prospectus for Hans Hofmann School (Munich, Germany, 1915).

²³Hans Hofmann, Prospectus for Hans Hofmann School (New York City, New York, 1947).

as teacher and artist by the offering of a multiple awareness. This awareness I consider to constitute a visual experience and a pictorial creation.²⁴

Pictorial creation, as always, was the essence of his teaching. He summarized his belief.

The work of art bases upon a system of relations and movements--the before-mentioned "extraordinarily complicated emission of feeling and sensations raised to the level of consciousness"--which arises in part from a greater or lesser development of the feeling for Nature and in part from the greater or lesser development of pictorial feeling.

The relation and movement system withdraws further from the possibility of scientific proof, however, the more it is intuitively mastered, and the more completely it is merged with the rhythm of the artist's ecstasy.²⁵

The magic of painting, however, can never be fully, rationally explained. It is this harmony of heart and mind in the capacity of feeling into things that plays the instrument. The instrument answers the throb of the heart in every instance. Painting is always intuitively conditioned. Theoretically it is a process of metabolism, whereby color transubstantiates into vital forces that become the real sources of painterly life. These sources are not of a physical but rather of a hyperphysical nature--the product of a sensitive mind. . . .²⁶

In a profile about Hofmann, Art Digest stated, in 1951:

His genius as a teacher must derive, first from his rational thinking and respect for the laws of art,

²⁴Hans Hofmann, It Is, no. 3 (Winter-Spring, 1959), p. 10.

²⁵Hofmann, "Creation in Form and Color," p. 219.

²⁶Hans Hofmann, "The Color Problem in Pure Painting - Its Creative Origin," Hans Hofmann (Exhibition Catalogue, Kootz Gallery, New York City, November 7 - December 3, 1955), p. 14.

and secondly from his ability to demonstrate, passionately and clearly, all that he says about art.²⁷

This genius is what drew thousands of students to his doors during the twenty-five years he taught in New York. Hofmann carried this as his own philosophy of teaching:

It is essential that the teacher himself have the power of quick sympathy and understanding of the unsure student. Such power should be developed like every other human attribute. The problem of art teaching is not limited to the problem of artistic development itself, but includes the problems of how to produce artists, comprehending teachers, art understanding in general, and art enjoyment in particular.²⁸

This sympathy and understanding, coupled with his tremendous knowledge, created a fantastic learning center for the young artist. Yet, in 1951, when asked if he had considered giving up his school, he answered, "If I were to give up teaching, I would miss it, but I would like to miss it."²⁹

In 1958 Hans Hofmann closed his school. In 1959 he published the following summation to his years of teaching.

Teaching art still culminates today in an artless, objective imitation of nature, and is only in the rarest cases creatively approached on a purely aesthetic basis that attempts to unfold and develop the conceptual and creative capacity of the student in response to his sensibility and his temperament. Imitation should not be permitted to have even the slightest

²⁷Paul Bird, "Hofmann Profile," Art Digest 25 (May 15, 1951): 6.

²⁸Hofmann, Search For the Real, p. 56.

²⁹Seckler, "Can Painting Be Taught?" p. 41.

part in the creative process. It can only lead to an objectively bound, sterile formalism which is the mark of any academic method and acts rather as a brake for an unrestricted, creative unfolding of a natural talent. It is the creative urge that dominates any gifted person; that enforces the first creative attempt.

Talent is quite common and is in no way extraordinary. It is always sensed and experienced as a mystery within oneself. Art education can either unfold or kill the creative urge. But the killing is of no consequence because a real, original talent will always come back to itself. It will unfold, undisturbed, without any official schooling.

My professional integrity as a teacher allows me to say that I have killed the false ambitions of thousands of amateurs, not by denying them the awareness of the manifold problems involved in the creative process, but in spite of it. This attitude was for the good of all of them. The allowing of unlimited freedom in art education will either bring out the real talent or it will kill all mediocrity and all false mystification of one's real nature. I must, however, admit that the allowing of unlimited freedom in art education can be as bad for a half talent as it is good for a real, original talent. It depends on the individual involved and on the other qualities he offers as a human being. For the half talent, there are still many ways open that can lead him finally into a useful, creative occupation, but he may also be held for a long time under the spell of self-mystification. A talent that flares up too rapidly will not endure. Only professional integrity, rigorous self discipline and complete knowledge of one's self will form the master.³⁰

³⁰Hans Hofmann, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture (Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, March 1 - April 5, 1959), p. 226.

CHAPTER V

THE HOFMANN SCHOOLS

According to Professor Glen Wessels, the first Hans Hofmann School was begun in Munich, Germany as a treatment center for shell shocked soldiers of the First World War.¹ Hofmann had been studying and painting in Paris at the outbreak of the war, but was in Germany in 1914.

The Hans Hofmann School was begun with permission of the German government. In this school he utilized the arts of drawing and painting as therapy. He developed a theory that the act of creation enabled a disturbed personality to rebuild itself. The school and its professor were discovered by others who were seeking art classes. His knowledge of the developments in modern art in Paris made his school interesting to aspiring artists.

It was fortunate for the field of art education that Hans Hofmann found himself trapped in Munich in 1914 by the outbreak of World War I. This Hans Hofmann "Schule für

¹Glenn Wessels, "Glenn Wessels' Education of an Artist," interview by Suzanne B. Reiss (Berkeley, California, Bancroft Library, University of California, 1967), p. 121.

Moderne Kunst," which he established in the artists' district of Schwabing, became the focus from which he developed the style and theory that carried through all of his teaching.

Expatriate study of art by Americans was very popular in the early 1900's. The major reason for European study was the more advanced artistic development in Europe. European styles were more modern than the United States. The second and very prominent reason that many chose Germany was that the American dollar was in a state of high valuation and the German mark depressed. Therefore, life in Munich for a student with American money was inexpensive.

The only problem for Americans desiring to stay in Germany was in gaining permission from the police for a long visit. The easiest solution to that problem was obtained by enrolling in a school. For artists, the most well known was the Munich Academy. A brief description of the Munich Academy is useful since it served as a model for Hofmann's school at Schwabing.

In his memoirs, artist-teacher Vaclav Vytlacil described the Munich Academy as a very large, three-story structure standing in a block-square park. The spacious studio rooms for regular students were on the first two floors. The top floor was filled with a series of special

studios for the master-students.²

The status of master-student was very coveted. The Academy student was granted an enrollment for seven years. If he attained the rank of master-student, he not only received the use of the special studio, but he also gained permission to extend his studies beyond the seven year term. The master-student also had the right to select any professor of the Academy for personal visit and critique.

The Munich Academy's tuition² was very low. Foreign students were given the same privileges as the native citizens.

Vaclav Vytlacil's description of his classes with prominent art professor Herr Kaspar at the Munich Academy describes the the German art classroom:

The Kaspar painting studio was very spacious, high ceiling, and a large floor space. We had roughly around 45 students. There were complaints, many of them, about the overcrowding. So much so, that one time I felt compelled to ask, what was it then like before the war, since everyone seems to be bemoaning the loss of the good old days. The answer was certainly a surprise. In this room there would have been no more than 5 or 10 students. Twelve students would have been considered as crowding the room. This was beyond my understanding, so I asked for further explanations. I was told that every student had a large easel, and a definite number of square meters of floor space in all directions belonged to this easel. Each student could

²Vaclav Vytlacil, "Memoir on Hans Hofmann and Students" (Berkeley, California, Bancroft Library, University of California, n.d.), p. 4.

keep whatever private belongings he wished on this floor space and no one ever disturbed these belongings but the owner. Hence, at the close of the working day, each student simply washed his brushes and left. His attendance was at his own disposition. It was hard for me to understand such conditions and must have showed my amazement, because I was quickly asked how is it with you in America. When I described the conditions in New York I was not believed.³

The school which Hans Hofmann began in Munich was loosely based on this Academy. It was just a few blocks from the Munich Academy that he opened his studio. In the beginning he could not afford a very large space. He opened with one large studio and added others later.

Mostly, he utilized the professor plus monitor system that prevailed at the Munich Academy. There, the professor attended once a week, giving one hour to each class. One class would be for painting and one for drawing. The Academy classes were very large, having about forty or forty-five students. Therefore, the most their students received during Herr Professor's hour was a few words. In spite of this limitation, the Munich Academy was the major atelier of the art students in that city.

In an act against the non-German students, the Ministry of Culture published an edict prohibiting all students over thirty-five years of age from attending the Academy.

³Ibid., pp. 4-5.

This helped the new Hofmann School, which was situated two blocks from the Academy, as many of the older students enrolled in Hofmann's Schule at 40 Georgen Strasse.

Vaclav Vytlacil and Glen Wessels both describe the great value of study at the Hofmann Munich school as being the exposure to the theory involved in the "new" or "modern" art that was being produced. Hofmann's friendships in Paris with artists Pascin, Delaunay, Picasso, Braque, Roualt, Picabia and Matisse, coupled with his knowledge and appreciation of German Expressionism, became the foundation for his teaching.

The class hours in the Munich school were from 9:00 - 12:00 a.m. (Life and Head Studies); 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. (Head and Costume Studies); evenings 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. (Life Classes, with single models and groups). The emphasis was to be as follows:

Drawing from nature:

Mastery of 2 and 3 dimensional form, silhouette, planes and volume, movement and counter-movement, 2 and 3 dimensional rhythmic, dynamics of mass, formal tension and function: the problem of space, spatial tension and spatial mass, function in space, the creation of vital aesthetic form in relation to the form and spirit of the whole--i.e. composition.

Painting from nature:

Mastery of 2 dimensional surfaces, color values and contrasts, equilibrium, 3 dimensional operations, quality and transparency, pure color, abstraction, transposition, intervals and accentuation, simultaneity and formulation, dematerialized, spiritualized color.

Composition:

In 2 and 3 dimensional concentric operation (free and from Nature).⁴

The studios were not glamorous. They were large rooms, with no furniture. The floor slanted so that students in the rear could see the models. The only furnishings were the model stand and a pot-bellied stove. Fuel was rationed, and the stove was used only when needed to keep the model warm.

As time went on, Hofmann's reputation became greater. Even the government of Germany recognized his authority. Glen Wessels related that when the liberals gained control in Germany, they appointed Hofmann as head of the Munich Academy. This appointment showed that he had won status as a teacher and theoretician that was above that of the other Munich artists. His tenure as head of the Munich Academy lasted only two or three weeks, as another putsch occurred and the conservative government returned.⁵ At Hofmann's school, the classes contained approximately thirty students with many nationalities represented. Classes consisted, even then, of a figure-drawing class with a live model and a still-life painting class.

⁴Hans Hofmann, Prospectus for Hans Hofmann School (Munich, Germany, 1915).

⁵Glenn Wessels, p. 122.

In the Munich school, Hofmann developed his own style of teaching. He did more than verbally criticize a work. Professor Glen Wessels described Hofmann as seeing teaching as a kind of mission.

It was in his Munich school that Hofmann began demonstrating by making diagrams for his students. At this time, the diagrams would be cubist in nature. They would show the students how they could make the main parts of their work fit together better, and thus achieve a richer visual experience. To do this with every student's work was both energy and time consuming, but was an extremely innovative method for its time.

Wessels tells of having seven different sketches made by Hofmann relating to one of Wessel's drawings of a model sitting on a podium with drapes in the background. After testing the different approaches, Hofmann circled the one he thought best.⁶

This type of personalized evaluation was the key to Hofmann's teaching. Each student was treated as an individual in his critique session. The lectures dealt with the general theories and problems of art. A second idea of Hofmann's, that of a separate setting for summer sessions, also evolved during the Munich years. In 1922 they were

⁶Ibid., pp. 122-123.

held in Tegerve See, Bavaria, in 1924 Rugusa, and in the summers of 1926-1927 Hofmann held his summer school in Capri. St. Tropez was the setting for the summers of 1928 and 1929. During the time of his New York School, the summers were in Provincetown, Massachusetts.

Professor John Haley of the University of California, Berkeley, described the 1927 summer session as mostly landscape work. Every morning the students would draw. Every afternoon they would paint. The class would meet in Hofmann's hotel room where Hofmann would discuss the students' work. Frequently, Haley pointed out, he would take a piece of charcoal and draw all over a student's work.⁷ Usually, the summer sessions were of a much looser structure than the winter school.

The summer sessions in Provincetown, Massachusetts were similar to those Hofmann had conducted in Europe. They were much less formal and structured. Students in the summer classes had a different impression of Hofmann's style of teaching than the students in his city school.

At the summer school, students came from all over the world. Some stayed for one week, some stayed for two weeks, and some stayed for the whole summer. There were many teachers on their summer vacations. A number of students

⁷John Haley, Conversation to Diane S. Newbury (Berkeley, California, September 1, 1978).

returned to the Provincetown school year after year.

The setting in Provincetown was more informal. In his school's brochure, Hofmann describes the beautiful setting and many entertainments and athletic "activities" available there. "All of it offers constant enjoyment, continued diversion and inspiration for work."⁸ This is quite a contrast to his very stern statements about the winter and spring classes.

An article in Art News in 1946 described the Hofmann summer school in Provincetown as unique. "Where this school is unique is not so much in the ideas of abstraction or of plastic theory, but rather in Hofmann's conception of education. He works less on the student than on the school, creates a group spirit which itself becomes the educating force."⁹

The evolution of the Hofmann art school in America began with Hofmann's summer sessions in the United States. He accepted the invitation to teach at Berkeley in 1930 as a means of determining whether he would like the United States. Since he was fifty years old and spoke very little English, this was a daring move, but quite in keeping with his personality.

⁸Hans Hofmann, Prospectus for Hans Hofmann School (New York City, New York, 1947).

⁹"Three at Provincetown," Art News, June 1946, p. 12.

Glen Wessels illustrated this attitude with the following anecdote:

The first thing he did when he got over here--he had always wanted to own an automobile and he could not drive--was to buy an old, blue Buick. This was the second summer that he came over here, and he began to have a little money. He bought this big old blue Buick, and he was determined that he was going to be modern and drive, and he had never driven a car. He came up here from Los Angeles. He had been teaching at the Chouinard art school, and he had with him Harry Bowden, who had been his assistant at Chouinard. He had learned to drive after a fashion, and I would underline that! I was supposed to meet him and go for a ride in his monster. He picked me up over here someplace, and we went over here onto Bancroft, and before you could say "Scat" we were down at the Bay. He had no regard for Stop signs, speed signals, or anything else. He just stepped on the pedal and said, "Whoopee," and away we went. I was frozen with horror, but I did not say anything. He was just in a seventh heaven; he was just having himself a ball! I think he was rather, what shall I say, the kind of a man that will say, "Well, here goes nothing; I am going to try it." I think it is much in that same spirit that he came to America.¹⁰

According to Wessels, who accompanied Hofmann on the boat to America, Hofmann was a researcher and innovator. He liked to try new things to see if they would work. He was upset by the rise of Nazism and Hitler. He felt that Europe was sick, and hoped that America would be healthy. When he found it was, he decided to stay.

Wessels spoke of Hofmann saying on that first trip, "Ein reichesland: a rich land, a rich country. You have everything. In Europe we have exhausted everything. A rich land, a place where things can grow, and

¹⁰Glenn Wessels, p. 140.

will grow. A place where there is place to put down roots for art." He kept saying that you should build a great art here because there is a place for art to put down roots. In Europe the soil is already full of old roots. He said, "I don't want to build a dogma, but I want to build a school." Even then he began to say that this might be the place where one could build a school without all the interference of older ideas and so on. So, he reacted to America as a new land, as a virgin territory, artistically speaking.¹¹

Hofmann's methodology of teaching painting developed further with the opening of his own school at 444 Madison Avenue in 1933 in New York City. The school moved twice and then was established at 52 West Eighth Street in 1938. This was the studio classroom in which Hofmann was to become the most recognized art teacher in the United States.

The class that Hofmann conducted in the New York school was comprised of students who were very serious and were devoting their lives to becoming artists. It was not a transient class. He conducted his classes either five mornings a week, consecutively; five afternoons a week, consecutively; or five evenings. There were three separate classes every day. Hofmann appeared at the classes on Tuesdays and Fridays for criticism.

Class started on Monday mornings from nine until twelve o'clock with a new project. As in Munich, there was a monitor and a live model. Utilizing Hofmann's directions, the monitor would position the model, which would be main-

¹¹Ibid., p. 141.

tained five mornings a week. Hofmann would come in Tuesdays and Fridays for criticism. The same thing happened with the afternoon class from one until four. There was another model, another monitor and another group. There was a class in the evening from seven until ten. Each one of the classes was different because Hofmann had a great deal of spontaneous feelings. Since he strongly believed that students are individuals, he sought to answer individual needs. But, primarily, his points of view were always what he believed and stressed.

As to choice of media in his classes, Hofmann strongly believed in drawing. For this reason, he carefully arranged the model or still life for the class. The class was to draw or paint not only the figure, but the figure in relation to the surrounding objects. The lighting and shadows were also carefully arranged to create an interesting and valuable compositional problem.

Glen Wessels described Hofmann preparing the studio for a class:

He arranged the objects in the room with great care. For instance, all the light came from one side in the room, and that cast deep shadows in certain areas. I can remember Hofmann before class-time going around with huge sheets of bright colored paper and illuminating the shadows so that one could look into them and see something, then killing the glare of white walls by darkening them with sheets of paper and so forth. So, when you looked around the room, you got an alternation of dark and light that was kind of alive. Nothing was dead. He said, "the human mind only thinks when there are contrasts." He felt that the whole studio should be conducive to the way that the person

worked so that, from whatever view you got the model, you got a background of something there, something you could compose with and work with in relation to the figure.¹²

This was an approach that was probably original with Hofmann. The traditional art class simply placed the model on a platform for the student to draw as a single form. Hofmann's method of relating the figure to its surroundings was unique. His theory was that form only existed in relation to other forms, and to have his students create viable works, the original models must demonstrate this.

When the student approached the blank canvas, he had to know exactly where he was before he began. He had to know his relationship or position to the object. The first lines he put down were to describe that space and the artist's relationship to it. Then, every stroke which followed had to continue with this artistic theory of relativity.

In setting up the New York school, Hofmann utilized a course of study for his students similar to the one he used in Germany. Personal critiques by the master were to be very important. It was his personal touch and artistic philosophy that made the school great.

Art writer and critic, Harold Rosenberg, described the curriculum in the school as conservative. He talked of

¹²Ibid., p. 134.

Hofmann's methods of teaching:

He took up in sequence the usual art-school subjects, such as the picture plane, space, movement, light and color, but he transformed all these ingredients of painting through his concept of a universal creative energy.

Another part of his teaching was that when he did his weekly criticism, he would go from one student to another and look at what each had done. Then he would try to look at the model from the student's point of view--what did that particular student see in that model, as a result of having been in the classroom--rather than from the point of view of those generalizations which he had been teaching. He would then begin to sketch on top of the student's drawing, trying to work out in terms of the student's own perception what the next step could be. The result of this, again, was to develop in each student a sense that he was seeing the model and the world in his own way, although he was being guided in what he was seeing, as far as art was concerned, by Hofmann's ideas of space and color, line, and so on.¹³

Carl Holty, in his response to the Hofmann Students Questionnaire replied with this description of the Hofmann classes:

In Hofmann's school we drew from the nude model in the afternoons. Hofmann corrected the drawings of each student twice daily and his method was clear and exact. The portrait models were selected at random and the majority of them appeared commonplace and uninteresting. There were no "types," no old men with beards, bald heads or big noses, no old wrinkled women in peasant garb, just the men and women one might see on the street. This choice of models was by design. Hofmann demonstrated ably enough that any human head in all its "plastic" complexity was interesting and remarkable and his likeness drawings were always clear, telling and exact.

¹³Harold Rosenberg, "Teaching of Hans Hofmann," Arts 45 (December 1970): 19.

In an advanced class in painting and composition the painters would work from still life mostly and they were made to adjust the color tensions by pinning little spots of colored papers onto their canvas. The idea was that once the colors were adjusted, the bits of paper could be unpinned and oil paint matching the papers would be painted into the vacant spot. Actually there were so many bits of paper pinned into the canvas that the reverse side resembled the flattened out hide of a porcupine. What the students usually did was to paint a new study using not only the "models" but earlier papered canvas as well for guides. Thus, the creative process was put into very slow motion and many chafed under the delays, but the method akin to pointillism, was a good way to study and develop the sensibilities by recognizing the powerful effect of the tiniest detail.¹⁴

One of Hofmann's lectures would show how one brush stroke in a Cezanne related to the total, and that if you moved that brush stroke, the whole picture would have to be recomposed. He would do a similar demonstration by moving a head in an El Greco painting to a new position, thus destroying the composition. In these demonstrations he showed that the basics of good composition applied to all art, not just the modern movements.

Often, Hofmann would take a student's palette and squeeze very large mounds of paint from the student's tubes. This would include the expensive reds and yellows. Such an act could ruin the student's budget by using up his allowance for the week. But, Hofmann would aver, "Poverty of

¹⁴Carl Holty, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier," compiled by Dr. William Seitz (New York City, New York, Museum of Modern Art Library, 1963).

means is poverty of expression."¹⁵

The beginnings of the Hofmann school in New York were closely linked to the problems of a country experiencing an economic depression. Art and artists were suffering the plight of all fields not directly involved in the problems of daily survival. In spite of some aid from the WPA, artists found little market for their work.

It was very bold of Hofmann to begin his school at this time. Still bolder on Hofmann's part was his attempt at keeping his school free from bearing the banner of any social or political forces. The school's foundations were based on teaching the best ideas for producing contemporary art.

The school itself became an even more serious place after World War II. The "G.I. Bill" enabled many new students to enroll. This brought prosperity to the school. The ex-G.I.'s were a serious group who had lived through a desperate war. They were anxious to put their lives in order. Hofmann, as a teacher, appreciated this fact.

The most important factor was the emotional stimulus and stability which Hofmann was able to give his students. In his 1947 brochure he claimed to teach the conceptual, not

¹⁵Vicci Sperry, conversation with Diane S. Newbury (Chicago, Illinois, October 6, 1977).

visual approach to painting. He stated,

The modern artist recognizes the limitations of his medium, the flat surface of the picture plane and the restrictions of his palette. His concept may select elements of nature, which he transforms in the idea of the medium; the idea being realized in terms of the intrinsic life and the inherent qualities of the medium. Such a pictorial reality is created when the artist is intuitive and possesses the gift of imagination.¹⁶

This word, "intuitive," was a favorite expression in Hofmann's teaching. He would say, over and over, "Without intuition [there] is nothing."¹⁷ Intuition for Hofmann was the opposite of using a mental approach.

A Hofmann student related that Hofmann was a strong man with a big voice. He would become very emotional when viewing a student's work. She remembers that when a student became very mental in work, he would be upset. One student had his work torn to bits when Hofmann saw that it was not intuitive, but based on "method." Hofmann felt there was no method, only talent.

The principles which Hofmann offered were to aid the students to discover a personal approach and style. Hofmann wanted to teach a science of creation. He was careful to never show the students his own work for fear they might think the "correct" approach was his, and imitate rather

¹⁶Hans Hofmann, Prospectus for New York School, 1947.

¹⁷Erle Loran, conversation with Diane S. Newbury (Berkeley, California, September 1, 1978).

than understand the principles behind them. For this reason, Hofmann kept his private studio separate from the school in New York.

Hofmann always feared being too caught up in his own painting career and having this detract from his ability as a teacher. He claimed to have once been hurt by a teacher who was indifferent to his students because he was preoccupied with his own work. Therefore, Hofmann carefully separated Hofmann the artist from Hofmann the teacher.

In the New York school, Hofmann continued using the "direct" approach in his critiques. He was known for adding "corrections" to a student's work. He would even rip a student's work in pieces, and demonstrate a better organization of the parts by reassembling it on another page.

Up to the last years of the school, Hofmann continued this method. The noted art critic and historian, Harold Rosenberg, remembered:

I watched him in one of the last years of the School in Provincetown go from easel to easel and literally hurl himself into the drawing of each student, no matter how mediocre, as if through his own concentration he could snatch out of it some perception which, though barely on the border of consciousness, might, once grasped, set that plodder on the road to a developing vision. The teacher emerged from the session dripping and exhausted like a Channel swimmer, while the students, most of them, stood with their mouths open and with perhaps some of the old resentment

at having their sketches "spoiled" by this omnivorous master.¹⁸

The market for Hofmann's "new art" in the United States had been very limited. First, the depression and then World War II had stifled most of the buying public. Second, the public's eye for modern art had not been educated to accept and understand the work being produced. Therefore, Hofmann was very dependent upon the income he received from his school.

In the 1950's public acceptance of modern art changed. Dealers and galleries began selling the "American" or "New York School" works. The United States became the center for modern art. Many of the greatest European artists had immigrated to the United States during the war and had stayed. The American artists found no advantages in being expatriates to Europe. The United States was definitely the center for contemporary art. Art collectors began purchasing American art in American galleries.

Hofmann was selected by Samuel Kootz of the Kootz Gallery in 1947. Kootz began holding shows of Hofmann's paintings, and selling them. By the mid-1950's Hofmann discovered that he could live very well off the income from his art. He decided to close his school and dedicate his remaining years to his own painting.

¹⁸Harold Rosenberg, The Anxious Object, Art Today and Its Audience (New York: Horizon, 1964), p. 151.

CHAPTER VI

HOFMANN VIEWED BY HIS STUDENTS

The roster of Hofmann students reads like a listing from Who's Who. It includes most of the famous of the contemporary art scene. Some of the luminaries are: Lillian Abrams, Robert Beauchamp, Nell Blaine, Cameron Booth, Harry Brown, Fritz Bultman, Nicolas Carone, Giorgio Cavallon, Robert De Niro, Perle Fine, Quentin Fiore, Jean Follett, Miles Forst, Mary Frank, Helen Frankenthaler, William Freed, Jane Freilicher, Paul Georges, Michael Goldberg, Robert Goodnough, John Grillo, Red Grooms, John Haley, Paul Harris, Julius Hatofsky, Dorothy Heller, Carl Holty, Harry Holtzman, Harry Jackson, Alfred Jensen, Wolf Kahn, Allan Kaprow, Karl Kasten, Albert Kotin, Lee Krasner, Linda Lindeberg, Michael Loew, Erle Loran, Mercedes Matter, George McNeil, Marisol, Seung Moy, Jan Muller, Louise Nevelson, George Ortman, Stephen Pace, Felix Pasilis, Robert Richtenburg, Larry Rivers, Ludwig Sander, Vicci Sperry, Richard Stankiewicz, Joseph Stefanelli, Myron Stout, Alberto Swinden, Anne Tabachnick, Vaclav Vytlacil, Glenn Wessels and Wilfred Zogbaum.

Add to this list the names of major art commentators who had contact with Hofmann and were influenced by him, such as Barbara Rose, Clement Greenberg, William Seitz,

Harold Rosenberg and Dore Ashton. The impact of the teachings of Hofmann was inarguably a major force in art of this century.

The first-hand reactions of these artists and writers to Hofmann's teaching is interesting. Most of them praise his unfailing ability to give of himself. Robert Goodnough said, "Hofmann was important to me as a teacher perhaps more than anything because of his warmth and sincerity as an artist."¹ Joseph Stefanelli felt "It was the atmosphere that Hofmann had created, however, that was so wonderful. He was the core of it."² Allen Kaprow spoke of him as miraculous: "It very clearly demonstrates," Kaprow said, "in a time which is hostile to any instruction, that if there is a great man who has the kindness to give of himself, much can be learned and many will come to learn something."³

Other facets of Hofmann's personality enhanced his teaching. "Hofmann always had a strong personality and the power to inspire his students with purpose and enthusiasm,"⁴

¹Robert Goodnough, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier," compiled by Dr. William Seitz, New York City, New York, Museum of Modern Art Library, 1963, unpaginated typescript.

²Joseph Stefanelli, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

³Allan Kaprow, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

⁴Wilfred Zogbaum, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

was the observation of Wilfred Zogbaum. Alfred Jensen felt, "As a teacher, Hans Hofmann's personality was almost too strong for me to absorb."⁵ Dorothy Heller remembers that, "At school, he was very much the 'Master,'"⁶ although Richard Stankiewicz felt it was worth noting, "He could read his individual students profoundly and with some of them establish a rapport without in any way diminishing his imposing stature or authority."⁷ Still, Wolf Kahn claims, "He didn't allow argument. You accepted him as a teacher or you got out."⁸

In contrast to the preceding statement is this anecdote told by Dorothy Heller:

One day, while painting, I consciously deviated from his "unprofessed" method and introduced a different set of forms. He saw my canvas from a distance, charged over to it like a mad bull, and exclaimed that if I wanted to leave I could do so. He then picked up the brush, dipped it in paint, and was about to "attack" the canvas when I asked him not to touch it. He surprisingly complied with my wishes and later that day, when I met him out walking, he said, in discussing the incident, that I could go on with my own vision and he would try to respect it.⁹

Hofmann's respect for the student was what Anne

⁵Alfred Jensen, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

⁶Dorothy Heller, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

⁷Richard Stankiewicz, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

⁸Wolf Kahn, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

⁹Dorothy Heller, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

Tabachnick also found important. "He had a great gift for seeing what each one of his students could see, and forcing us to go a little further, each day in our own direction . . ."10

These very positive statements about studying with Hofmann are echoed by another famous artist, Marisol:

I used to go to his class and he didn't hear. He would take off his hearing aid, and there was never any communication. I would go into class and I was very intimidated. I think I was one of the youngest people in the class. He would come up, and when we were drawing in charcoal, he would erase it and draw on your drawing again and erase it. That's the way he would teach--without saying anything. All was visual. He was very enthusiastic about his school and the students. The atmosphere was very encouraging.11

Painter Wilfred Zogbaum claims that "His special brand of English was a language that had to be learned before one could understand what he was saying."12 In a like statement, art critic Dore Ashton also refers to Hofmann's language barrier as a part of the teacher's style:

Those lessons were always delivered in the quaint, utterly idiosyncratic language Hofmann developed to overcome his poor ear for English. Sometimes students memorized his phrases without ever knowing exactly what he meant (years later certain of his favorite axioms were decoded by means of teamwork on the part of his former pupils. Nonetheless, with exuberant gesture,

¹⁰Anne Tabachnik, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

¹¹Cindy Nemser, Art Talk, Conversations with Twelve Women Artists (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1975), p. 180.

¹²Zogbaum, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

consistent enthusiasm, practical demonstration, and unceasing verbalization, Hofmann did manage to purvey the principles of modern European art, and he was probably the only teacher in America who could have done so.¹³

Ann Tabachnik, who studied with Hofmann for four and a half years, reiterates the important role that Hofmann played in bringing the European ideas to America. She suggests, "We can understand a lot about Hofmann if we can think of him as a German who loved modern French painting and submitted himself to its discipline for many years. Only after he came to America did he feel that he owned what he had learned, and could teach it with the inside knowledge of what the learning process was like for a foreigner. He turned on a whole nation of painters."¹⁴

Carl Holty, who studied with Hofmann in Munich from 1926-1927, also refers to the more classical roots of Hofmann's teaching.

While I was in the school Hofmann concentrated his teaching and thinking on a description of the plastic structure of the object, using the head as a model. In later years Hofmann spoke of this as the "overemphasis of the plastic." The German Gothic Masters, Durer, Cranach, Holbein, etc., Cezanne, Picasso (in his Cubist drawings) and Matisse were held up to us as model drawers.¹⁵

¹³Dore Ashton, The New York School, a Cultural Reckoning (New York, Viking Press, 1972), p. 89.

¹⁴Tabachnik, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

¹⁵Carl Holty, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

Vaclar Vytlacil relates his impressions of 1921:

If one were asked to explain our enthusiasm and admiration for Hofmann the answer is easily made. Both Ernest Thurn and I had become convinced very early in our associations with Hofmann that what we both really wanted above everything else from Europe was someone to explain to us the values and the meaning of the Post-Cezanne Parisian development. Hofmann had an uncanny ability, we thought, to do this. So we stayed.¹⁶

The same reasons were reiterated by Hofmann's students, Ernest Thurn and Cameron Booth. Both had studied with Hofmann in Europe and lent their names as endorsements for Hofmann's teaching. The prospectus for the New York School carries the following quotation from art teacher Ernest Thurn:

In the summer sessions of that year again in 1931 he held classes in the department of art where his influence upon the students has been phenomenal. The stimulation of his teaching has given an impetus forward to the art of California. With the works of Paul Klee, Matisse, Kandinsky and others the position of Hofmann's paintings and drawings can be evaluated only in the future. Certainly they are among the great works of contemporary art.¹⁷

A similar testimony, this one from Cameron Booth from the Minneapolis Journal is also included in the prospectus:

It seems to me that Hans Hofmann has a better grasp than any other artist-teacher upon the problem of plastic formal organization, which lie at the heart of modern painting. In so far as training and personal

¹⁶Vaclav Vytlacil, "Memoirs on Hans Hofmann and Students," Berkeley, California: Bancroft Library, University of California (n.d.), typescript.

¹⁷Hans Hofmann, Prospectus for Hans Hofmann School (New York City, New York, 1936).

contact can make students into painters, Hans Hofmann offers more than anyone I know and his school in New York should become a creative center unsurpassed in Europe or America.¹⁸

Wilfred Zogbaum studied with Hofmann from June 1935 to June 1937. He relates that "Hofmann's approach to art at that time was a synthesis of German Expressionism and French Post-Impressionism and Cubism."¹⁹ Dorothy Heller studied with Hofmann four years later from 1941 to 1942. She testifies that "What Hofmann had to say about the modern movement was a complete revelation to us . . . "²⁰

This idea of Hofmann bringing the "new" or modern art to his American students continued throughout his career. Erle Loran was a Hofmann student in 1955. He holds total enthusiasm for the experience of studying with Hofmann.

Thus began the long American career of the artist who has been called the greatest teacher of painting since the Renaissance. For the first time since Leonardo Da Vinci laid out a plan for the study of art in his treatise on painting, Hans Hofmann was formulating a new aesthetic that goes far beyond the artistic conception of the Renaissance.²¹

This is why students sought out Hofmann. Student William Freed has aptly stated the reasons. "This new experience

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Zogbaum, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

²⁰Heller, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

²¹Erle Loran, Hans Hofmann and His Work, Exhibition Catalogue (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1955), p. 11.

and awareness changed my entire attitude towards art."²²

Artist Mercedes Matter, another Hofmann student, wrote an article about Hofmann which appeared in Art and Architecture in 1946. In it she reviewed his painting and the personality which he brought to his students. She stated, "Characterizing his work one finds the words life, movement, plastic, vitality. It is alive . . . with a quality of great expansion and a singing violence of pure color expressive of the great and robust joy in nature which is his."²³

Hofmann had always believed that nature was the best approach to art and had made this statement regarding it. "When I paint a sunset, I paint actually thousands of sunsets of which I was a part when I did enjoy them through all of my life. I am . . . and whatever I do is . . . part of nature with the added unconciliatory difference that I allow myself never to renounce the aesthetical demands of creation."²⁴ The article by Mercedes Matter revealed Hofmann's personal conception of creation.

Not all of the student comments about Hofmann are complimentary. In an interview with Cindy Nemser, sculptor

²²William Freed, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

²³Mercedes Matter, "Hans Hofmann," Arts and Architecture, Vol. 63 (May 1946), p. 48.

²⁴Hans Hofmann, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1963), p. 86.

Louise Nevelson related her story:

I studied with him in Germany and I never cared for the man. He was a good teacher, but that isn't the point. Every student that came to him said "Herr Doctor." He never looked at them. They were all Americans and they came there. I never saw him. He had already been in Berkeley that summer and the next year he came to America. That was in 1931, and he came to America in 1932, so I saw what was going on. He was kissing the asses of the rich ones and that made me mad. He had come to America and was a little frightened and he was playing up to them. I didn't cross the ocean to go to his school to see it and that always offends me anyway. So I wouldn't let him touch first base with me. I just couldn't stand it.²⁵

Western style artist Harry Jackson found his studies with Hans Hofmann during 1946 to be less than rewarding. "Hofmann," he says, "was a miserable, despotic old bastard."²⁶ Imagist artist Red Grooms also found his time with Hofmann not as pleasant as he had hoped. Hofmann is said to have called Groom's works "children's toys."²⁷

Painter Lee Krasner studied with Hofmann for three years. He was very encouraging to her. She points to Hofmann's language barrier as the major problem in his classroom. She stated: "He would come up to me, look at my work, and do a critique half in English and half in German, but certainly nothing I could understand. When he left the

²⁵Nemser, Art Talk, p. 72.

²⁶Janet Wilson, "Celebrating the American West with Harry Jackson," Art News, December 1978, p. 60.

²⁷Red Grooms, Chicago Public Library exhibit of Red Grooms' Chicago (Chicago, Illinois: Winter 1979).

room I would call George McNeil, who was then the monitor, over and I would ask, 'What did this man say to me?' So I really had George McNeil's version of what he thought Hofmann had said to me. Hofmann was teaching Cubism and that was pretty exciting."²⁸ She later told of an incident that would suggest that Hofmann was a chauvinist in his attitude toward women.

I became a member of the American Abstract Artists, a group that was formed for the sole purpose of exhibiting, although we did meet to have discussions on art as well. One winter during the period that I was a member, Mondrian and Leger were invited to participate in our exhibitions and they accepted. Mondrian asked me to accompany him to one of these exhibitions in which each artist was represented by three or four paintings. We started to go around the gallery and I had to identify the work of each artist for him and he made a short comment as we moved from one to another. When we got to the Leger, he walked by with no comment. Pretty soon my paintings were coming up and I was getting plenty nervous. Then there we were and I had to say, "These are mine." His comment was, "You have a very strong inner rhythm. You must never lose it." Then we moved on. Mondrian had said something quite beautiful to me. Hofmann was also excited and enthusiastic about what I was doing at this time but his comment was, "This is so good that you would not know it was done by a woman."²⁹

This accusation of Hofmann being a chauvinist appears in other interviews by author Cindy Nemser with female artists. The most illustrative was told by painter/sculptor Lila Katzen, who had the impression that Hofmann felt that

²⁸Nemser, Art Talk, p. 85.

²⁹Ibid.

"women were just not there." She describes the undercurrents of his classroom:

In the studio he seemed quite interested in my work and would hover over me and discuss it. At that time I was doing hard-edged drawing in which geometrical, carefully balanced color forms were being placed in different arrangements. Most of the other students were working more expressionistically. I seemed to have Hofmann's respect and interest during the school time. I don't think that he slighted me or anyone in the class. What made him a great teacher was being able to take any student on any level and deal with him or her. After all his class was a mixed-up situation: diletantes and curious young idealists, old timers and teachers who were there to open themselves up, and so on. But as I got to know him more, I think the more serious he felt I was getting, the more irritated he became. I had that feeling. . . . Oh yes. I invited him to dinner one night with some of his German friends. I thought it would be a nice, friendly evening. We were all feeling pretty good and I think we had a bit to drink. Then Hans got up and made some kind of a toast and said, "To art" or something to that effect, and "Only the men have the wings." Of course I was outraged. I told him that if those were his sentiments he could take them and himself elsewhere.³⁰

The impression that Hofmann reacted with chauvinist behavior was quickly refuted by his student and friend, Pauline Donelley. She explained that Hofmann was merely reflecting the attitude of the times. Early in the Twentieth Century it was unusual for a woman to pursue a career as a professional artist.³¹ Another female artist, Jane Freilicher, had no criticism of Hofmann and concluded, "I cannot imagine what it would be like not to have studied with

³⁰Ibid., pp. 238-9.

³¹Pauline Donnelley, conversation with Diane S. Newbury (Chicago, Illinois: May 22, 1979).

him."³²

A very important aspect of being a teacher is being interested in your students. For Hofmann, this interest did not end in the classroom. Julius Hatowsky reported, "He seemed to care about a student once he went out in the world."³³ Dorothy Heller said, "He had a strange way of understanding his pupils through their work and on many occasions offered personal advice to them."³⁴

Larry Rivers was particularly enthusiastic about the way in which Hofmann could inspire his students. He remembers:

When he came around to look at the work he was relaxed enough to beef up the timid hearts and pompous blustering and ego-center enough to make every fibre of the delusions of grandeur huff and puff and puff up until you saw clearly your name in the long line from Michelangelo to Matisse (who Hofmann influenced) through to Hofmann himself.³⁵

Glen Wessels' complimentary view of Hofmann was, "Hofmann did not teach himself. He taught art philosophy and painting. He opened a world of possibilities for his students through his demonstrations and theories."³⁶

³²Jane Freilicher, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

³³Julius Hatosky, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

³⁴Heller, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

³⁵Larry Rivers, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

³⁶Glen Wessels, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

These demonstrations and theories have been studied and utilized by art teachers the world over. Joseph Stefanelli points out: "I consider Hofmann one of the most important influences to contemporary painting . . . and certainly his school germinated other schools and universities to a new way of instruction."³⁷

A similar idea is also stated by Wilfred Zogbaum:

Nowadays his methods of instruction have a widespread application in what can only be called the modern academy. Though this may be lamentable in one sense, it indicates perhaps as much as anything else the importance of what Hofmann said to his students and the example he set as a productive artist and as a human being, generous in the largest sense.³⁸

Artist Wolf Kahn had the same conclusion: "He had favorite teaching devices which are now probably used in art departments all over the country."³⁹

Associate Curator of Painting at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, William Seitz, said, "Hofmann may well be the most experienced and successful teacher of painting of this century. The demanding and explicit standards he sets for the artist should therefore be regarded thoughtfully."⁴⁰

³⁷Stefanelli, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

³⁸Zogbaum, "Hans Hofmann Student's Dossier."

³⁹Kahn, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

⁴⁰William Seitz, Hans Hofmann, Exhibition Catalogue (New York City, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1963), p. 15.

The multitude of Hofmann students want the world to know of his importance. They are never shy in their words. Allan Kaprow makes the best summary of this attitude.

If Gustave Moreau's place as the great "guru" of the nineties is assured because of his pupils Matisse, Rouault and the other fauves, then Hofmann's record is even more impressive. The sheer number and wide stylistic range of his former students is astonishing. That so many of them have achieved international distinction, some of them to the point of positively changing the course of art, is more than miraculous; it is sobering.⁴¹

To assess the extent of Hofmann's accomplishments as a teacher is an endless task as it covers a multitude of areas. Art writer and lecturer Harold Rosenberg saw Hofmann's greatness as his ability to reach his students. He found that "Hofmann communicated the glamour of the artist as an aspect of his teaching. It was a question of making students realize that they were entering into this new order, living and not simply acquiring some new skills."⁴²

This thought was also framed by John H. Baur when he stated:

His work is inimitable, as many of his students have discovered, yet Hofmann has been a great teacher to those who catch fire from his enthusiasm but reserve the strength to find their own way. As both teacher and artist, he has been a perilous and a liberating power in our twentieth-century art--perilous because

⁴¹Kaprow, "Hans Hofmann Students' Dossier."

⁴²Harold Rosenberg, "Teaching of Hans Hofmann," Arts 45 (December 1970): 17.

his illusion of unleashed force has sometimes been mistaken for a gospel of emotional license, liberating because the true strength of his art lies in an iron self-discipline, which alone justifies the extravagance of his experiments.⁴³

These experiments were important in Hofmann's teaching. They were the means by which he developed his methods and philosophy. From this Hofmann helped artists to develop their skills and mental outlook to become conscientious professionals. Hofmann believed "an artist's concept is basically given in his whole outlook to the world, and in the consciousness of his professional responsibilities."⁴⁴ This was his goal, and judging from his students' responses, he achieved it.

⁴³Frederick S. Wight, Hans Hofmann, Exhibition Catalogue (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1957), p. 10.

⁴⁴Hans Hofmann, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1953), pp. 189-190.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters have dealt in depth with the life, theories and teaching career of Hans Hofmann. This dissertation has analyzed the importance of Hans Hofmann to the world of art education.

Chapter One sets forth a background of the art ideas and movements which directly preceded or were contemporary to Hans Hofmann. This chapter establishes the possible sources from which Hofmann derived his theories, and demonstrates Hofmann's synthesis of the existing artistic philosophies. Chapter Two relates Hans Hofmann's biography from his birth to his closing of the Hans Hofmann School, chronicling his life with emphasis upon those elements which most influenced his later work.

The third chapter examines Hans Hofmann's aesthetic and compositional theories. Chapter Four examines more closely the Hofmann School and classroom, his philosophy about art, artists and art education. Chapter Five discusses the Hofmann schools and the application of his teaching theories and methods. The next chapter relates comments about Hofmann made by his students. These statements help to evaluate Hofmann's impact as a teacher of painting.

For further research on this matter, a more complete biography of Hofmann could be prepared. At that point, an analysis of Hofmann's own paintings in relation to his teaching should throw further light on his teaching philosophies.

From the foregoing chapters, Hans Hofmann's teaching methods and philosophy can be evaluated. His importance to the art world becomes more valued when viewed in this fashion. The impact Hans Hofmann has had on the art world are in a direct ratio to the total dedication of Hofmann as a teacher, philosopher and painter. He gave completely of himself to art, and his influences upon the contemporary scene are limitless.

Hans Hofmann's teaching career lasted for over fifty years. During that time, he worked with thousands of students. His aim never was to create "little Hofmanns," but was to meet each individual's needs, aptitudes and talents. He had averred, "art teaching was not like soap manufacture!"¹ In art education there cannot be mass production. Greatness requires that an artist have a unique invention or style.

Throughout history, the greatest artists have been

¹Hans Hofmann, "On the Aims of Art," translated by Ernest Stolz and Glen Wessels, Fortnightly Review 1 (February 26, 1932): 7.

innovators. The personal style of each "superstar" is easily identifiable. Hofmann understood this fact. He felt it was important that he allow each student to work in his own manner, as long as it was artistically valid. Most of the negative comments came from students Hofmann had attacked on the basis of artistic honesty. In Hofmann's view, artists were to present a documentation of the contemporary scene with contemporary use of the media.

Hofmann revealed the importance of this idea in a statement in 1954. "Art--glorification of the human spirit--cultural documentation of the time in which it is produced. The deeper sense of all art is obviously to hold the human spirit in a state of rejuvenescence."²

For a good number of his students, Hofmann was able to help achieve this "deeper sense" of art. He recognized that an inborn native talent is a necessary possession for an artist. He felt that if a person has this potential, then the teacher could work with it. Hofmann achieved this goal in his school. Art critic Harold Rosenberg reviewed Hofmann's work.

Sequestered from time to time, the School was teaching art as a tradition; not any one aspect of it, or school, or individual master, but the quintessence present in all, their assumptions concerning space, their investigations of the relation of nature and art,

²Hans Hofmann (Exhibition Catalogue, Baltimore, Maryland: Baltimore Museum, 1954).

their experiments with the suggestive powers of paint, their ideal of the artist as remolder of visual perception and of his own personality.³

The many other positive statements of Hofmann students extol his willingness to give of himself. This he did through his many scholarships and through his giving of time. His helpfulness was both financial, emotional and intellectual.

Hofmann was noted for his strong personality. This was tempered by an exuberant warmth and sincerity. He truly respected his students and enjoyed them as individuals. Although he was frequently disabled in his communications through his lack of English and his deafness, he overcame this problem with his highly visual demonstrations. These demonstrations always were done in the style of the student. Hofmann encouraged independent direction, originality and artistic experimentation.

The drive for artistic individuality is the cornerstone for art education. Hofmann's emphasis on each student's uniqueness is one of the most important which he brought to academic art education.

The vocabulary and synthesized analysis of art is another very important Hofmann contribution. Without Hof-

³Harold Rosenberg, The Anxious Object, Art Today and Its Audience (New York: Horizon, 1964), p. 134.

mann's verbal contribution and his school which served as his pulpit, the United States might not have become the leader in twentieth century art. In 1932 Hofmann had stated, "My coming to America [1930] made me aware that the American art student needed more than everything basic clarification in his dealings with the visual arts."⁴

Hofmann's teachings achieved his desire to lead American art out of academic complacency and formalism and into the world of abstraction. The effects of his teaching had far-reaching results. Many of his students later used Hofmann's teaching methods and vocabulary of abstract expressionism. The change that occurred in the School of the Art Institute was recently described:

. . . a new attitude, arising out of the spirit of abstract expressionism, declared that modern artists should ignore the past and throw off the excess baggage of formal styles and ideal forms. This was rebellion against established tastes, with "Experimentation" and "Individuality" the battle cries. A new freedom was injected into the pedagogy, and one visiting artist at the Institute defined the modern system as "loosey-goosey." Art schools all around the country went through numerous curriculum changes, but those schools associated with museums found themselves in particularly tense circumstances. For as long as student work seemed to flow from the tradition of museum masterpieces, most trustees and administrators and even the public could justify the existence of the school and fantasize that the museum was helping to prepare the artists of tomorrow. The aesthetic coherence was smashed in the 1950's as students began dripping paint

⁴Hans Hofmann, "Selected Writings on Art," typescript of essays from 1915-1962 (New York City, New York: Library of the Museum of Modern Art).

on canvases or re-examining the basic, abstract elements of line and color.⁵

Finally, Hofmann's own belief in the glamour of art and artists sustained several generations of artists. Hofmann's recognition of the lasting effect of a painting as a memorial of the artist gave importance and hope to the struggling members of his classes. Hofmann wrote:

What is an artist? I don't know what an artist is, but I do know what makes an artist. I said that I do know that only the man equipped with creative instincts and a searching mind is destined to become an artist. And as an artist I do further know that only the highest exaltation of the soul empowers the artist to transform the deepest and the weightiest experiences into the new dimension of the spirit that is art. Creation is a mystery and so is the artist in the act of creation. Every great work of art is a new reality, but it is only the entire life's work of an artist that creates this new dimension of the spirit. The life work of an artist is "the work of art." It includes the whole behavior of the man, his ethical convictions and his awareness of creative responsibilities."⁶

Hans Hofmann was very aware of his creative responsibilities. He fulfilled his beliefs through his teaching and through his own paintings. He believed in art and artists. His paintings, writings and teachings remain as a legacy to future generations of artists and art lovers.

⁵Peter Marzino, "The School of the Art Institute," Chicago History 8 (Chicago, Illinois: Spring, 1979): 46.

⁶Hans Hofmann, Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, November 1949), pp. 27 and 45.

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APPENDIX I

- 1944 March 7-31: Art of This Century, New York (first exhibition in New York - abstract oils, gouaches, drawings - arranged by Peggy Guggenheim).
- November 3-25: Arts Club of Chicago (34 paintings, 1941-44).
- November 25 - December 30: Mortimer Brandt Gallery, New York, "Abstract and Surrealist Art in America" (arranged by Sidney Janis).
- 1945 April: Howard Putzel's 67 Gallery, New York.
- November: Whitney Museum of American Art, "Contemporary American Painting" (included in all subsequent Whitney Museum painting annuals).
- 1946 March 18-30: Mortimer Brandt Gallery, New York (arranged by Betty Parsons).
- May: American Contemporary Gallery, Hollywood, California.
- 1947 March 24 - April 12: Betty Parsons Gallery, New York.
- November 6 - January 11: Art Institute of Chicago, "Abstract Surrealist American Art."
- November 23 - December 13: Kootz Gallery, New York (subsequent shows annually, except 1948 and 1956).
- December: Pittsburgh Arts and Crafts Center and Abstract Group of Pittsburgh.
- 1948 January 2 - February 9: Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts (a large retrospective exhibition; publication by Addison Gallery of American Art of his book, Search for the Real and Other Essays).
- 1949 January: Glaerie Maeght, Paris (arranged by Kootz Gallery), trip to Paris; visits studios of Braque, Brancusi and Picasso.

- 1950 February 26 - April 2: University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, "Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture," Purchase Award, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois (Hofmann was also included in this exhibition in 1948, and in all subsequent shows).
- October 3-23: Kootz Gallery, New York, "The Muralist and the Modern Architect."
- 1951 January 23 - March 25: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, "Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America."
- 1952 February 2 - March 22: Wildenstein Gallery, New York, "70 American Paintings 1900-1952."
- May 7 - June 8: Art Institute of Chicago, "12th Annual Exhibition of The Society for Contemporary American Art, Chicago," Purchase Prize.
- October 16 - December 14: Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, "Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting."
- December: Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, "American Vanguard Art for Paris" (to be shown later at Galerie de France, Paris).
- Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, T. Henry Schiedt Prize.
- 1953 February: Galerie de France, Paris, "Regard sur la peinture americaine" (arranged by Sidney Janis).
- April 27 - May 20: Kootz Gallery, New York (first showing of landscapes created from 1936-1939).
- 1954 January 4-23: Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, "Nine Americans."
- January: Boris Mirski Gallery, Boston.
- January 24 - February 28: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, "149th Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture," T. Henry Schiedt Memorial Prize.
- October 5 - November 21: Baltimore Museum of Art.

- 1955 May: Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont (small retrospective selected by Clement Greenberg).
- 1956 March: The Art Alliance, Philadelphia (retrospective).
- April-May: Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey; designs mosaic mural for lobby of William Kaufmann Building, 711 3rd Avenue, New York (William Lescaze, architect).
- 1957 April 24 - June 16: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (retrospective exhibition organized in association with the Art Galleries of the University of California, Los Angeles; subsequently shown at the following participating institutions in this order:
- Des Moines Art Center
 San Francisco Museum of Art
 Art Galleries of the University of California, Los Angeles
 Seattle Art Museum
 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
 Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica
 Baltimore Museum of Art
- June 3-20: Poindexter Gallery, New York, "The 30's - Painting in N.Y."
- 1958 January 14 - March 16: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "Nature in Abstraction" (with the close of his New York school in the spring and the Provincetown school on August 30, gives up teaching to devote full time to painting; moves his studio to the school quarters at 52 West 8th Street).
- December 15 - February 8, 1959: Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, "Pittsburgh Bicentennial International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture."
- 1959 January: Kootz Gallery, New York, January 6-17, Paintings of 1958.
- January 20-31: "Early Paintings" (selected by Clement Greenburg).

July 11 - October 11: Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany, "Documenta II."

December 2 - January 31, 1960: Art Institute of Chicago, "63rd Annual American Exhibition," Flora Mayer Witkowsky Prize of \$1,500.

1960 Dartmouth College, Honorary Degree.

March: Frankische Galerie am Marienort, Nuremberg (large retrospective exhibition, subsequently shown at Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne; Kongresshalle, Berlin); Neuen Galerie im Kunstlerhaus, Rolf Becker, Munich (oils on paper, 1961).

June - October: XXX Biennale, Venice, U.S. representation, with Philip Guston, Franz Kline and Theodore Roszac.

September: Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno, Palacio de las Bellas Artes, Mexico City, II Bienal Interamericana, Honorable Mention.

1961 January 4 - February 12: Art Institute of Chicago, "64th Annual American Exhibition," Ada S. Garrett Prize.

October - December: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, "American Abstract-Expressionists and Imagists."

1963 January 11 - February 10: Art Institute of Chicago, "66th Annual American Exhibition," Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Logan Art Institute Medal and Prize of \$2,000.

February 1-24: Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

April 23 - May 18: La Galerie Anderson-Mayer, Paris (oils on paper).

May 6-27: International House, Denver, Colorado, "Hans Hofmann and His Students" (an exhibition circulated by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, in the United States and Canada, 1963-64).

1964 University of California, Berkeley, California, Honorary Degree; Muses de Art Moderno, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Muses de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela; Rosi Art Museum, Brandeis University; Issac Delgado Museum, New Orleans, Louisiana;

University of California, Berkeley, show; Kootz Gallery, New York; Hunter Gallery, Chattanooga, Tennessee; Portland Art Museum, Portland, Maine; National Institute Arts & Letters, membership.

- 1965 University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Kootz Gallery, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Galleria Curica d'Arte Moderna, Turin, Italy; Wurtem Vergerishcher Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany; Amerika Haus, Hamburg, Germany; Statischer Kunsthaus, Bielfeld, Germany, Corcoran Biennial.
- 1966 Stanford Museum, Stanford University; California Museum of Modern Art, travelling show to Tokyo, India, Australia, Kootz Gallery, New York.

APPENDIX II

AN APPRECIATION

Hans

Hofmann

is one of the few contemporary painters who have actually taken a step forward in a significant direction. Many others are what is called "advanced" but instead of actually advancing they have made various little private excursions leaving tracks like those of field-mice in a thin sheet of snow. I do not mean that Hofmann has made a solitary advance but that he walks abreast of the few who have likewise contributed to what progress has been made. His step is in logical sequence to the historical advance of such a painter as Van Gogh who infused the ideas of the Impressionists with a revolutionary vision, and if Vincent were alive today I think he would see in Hans Hofmann a logical inheritor of his passion for seeing more deeply.

The

forward

step is easily distinguishable from the lateral excursions. It has the authority of pure vision. Van Gogh had that. Picasso has it although he does not exercise it in all of his work. And Hans Hofmann also has a place with those giants who move straight into the light without being blinded by it.

It

is

a relief to turn from the reasonably competent and even gifted painters who paint as if their inspiration were drawn from Esmeralda's Dream-book to this bold and clear-headed man who paints as if he understood Euclid, Galileo and Einstein, and as if his vision included the constellation of Hercules toward which our sun drifts. In his work there is understanding of fundamental concepts of space and matter and of the dynamic forces, identified but not explained by science, from which matter springs. He is a painter of physical laws with

a spiritual intuition; his art is a system of coordinates in which is suggested the infinite and a causality beyond the operation of chance.

Now

at

the beginning of an age of demented mechanics, all plastic art is created under a threat of material destruction, for even at the base of pigment are the explosive elements of the atom. Hans Hofmann paints as if he could look into those infinitesimal particles of violence that could split the earth like an orange. He shows us the vitality of matter, its creation and its destruction, its angels of dark and of light. Philosophically his work belongs to this age of terrifying imminence, for it contains a thunder of light from the source of matter. Pure light, pure color, the pure design of pure vision may alone be philosophically indestructible enough to retain our faith, no matter what else falls in ruin, even our honor and endurance, until the time when truth can come out of exile and it is no longer dangerous to show compassion and the world is once more habitable by men of reason.*

*Tennessee Williams, "An Appreciation," Kootz Gallery Exhibition Catalogue, "A Collaboration of Artists and Writers" (New York City, New York: Samuel M. Kootz, 1948).

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Diane S. Newbury has been read and approved by the following committee:

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Professor, Foundations of Education and
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Dr. John Wozniak,
Professor, Foundations of Education, Loyola

Dr. Rosemary Donatelli,
Associate Professor, Foundations of Education, Loyola

Mr. Ralph M. Arnold,
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

November 28, 1979
Date

Gerald J. Gutek
Director's Signature