

3 Seeing the New

THINKING ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY

Shortly before going to China I had been told to leave the house I was renting in California because the owners wanted to sell it. I decided to buy it. I had recently sold my house in London and with that money I bought the house in California – it cost about the same, I think. Once I had bought it, I decided I would stay there permanently. It was the first property I'd owned in America – I'd always lived in rented places. The first thing I did to the house I now owned was to start painting it. I had it painted red and blue, the colours of my designs for the Ravel *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* – and the green was the green of nature outside the house.

In 1980, in New York, I had met Ian Falconer. He was about nineteen or twenty when we met, and we became friends. When we were doing *Parade* in 1981 he was around and I showed him the Met, the theatre and everything. He had been studying art history in New York but kept drawing a bit. He then asked if he could come to California, and would I teach him things, and I said, Yes, after I got back from England where I was going to spend Christmas with my family and have a week in London. In London, for some reason, I started painting. I painted a picture of the house in California from memory. I just painted it to cheer myself up in grey London; I happened to have three canvases, and the picture was a kind of triptych. I shipped it unfinished back to California and finished it there.

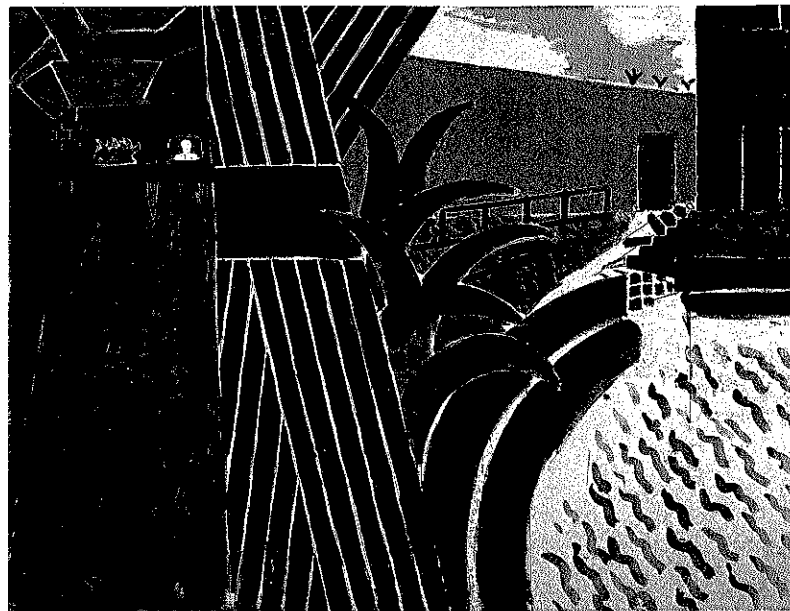
Ian came to live with me in January 1982 when I got back from London. It was then that I had the outside of the house painted. You can't see it from the road.



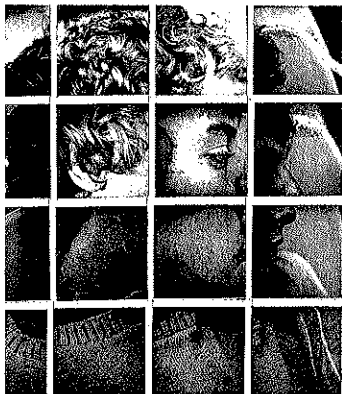
86 Portrait of Ian, 1981

I met Ian in 1980 in New York, where he was studying art history. He came to live with me in California in January 1982. Soon after he arrived I had the outside of the house painted in very bright colours. I was inspired to do this partly from having seen the De Stijl exhibition at the Walker Art Center and partly by the memory of the yellow Monet used on the outside of his Giverny house.

37 Hollywood Hills House, 1981–82



88 Terrace Hollywood Hills House with Banana Tree, 1982



92 Gregory, Los Angeles, March 31st
1982

If it could be seen from the road I wouldn't have had it painted like that. Ian, Gregory and I lived together in the house for quite a long time. We all got on. There was Ian and me upstairs and Gregory downstairs. Ian was studying at the Otis Parsons and he would go off to school while I was supposed to be painting. I did do some paintings; I started some big gouaches.

Then somebody came to visit me from the Centre Pompidou [Beaubourg] in Paris to organize a show of my photographs. They had asked me before but I'd never been that interested. Then they insisted so much I said to Alain Sayag, who was organizing the show, Why don't you come here and look through my albums? There are hundreds of them, thousands; I think you should choose them; I don't think I could; I don't know what difference there is between them. So he came for a week and every night we discussed photography, theoretical aspects of photography: I'd tell him what I thought, he'd tell me what he thought. I had all my prints in order, but I hadn't got all the negatives in order, I had just stuck them in boxes; I didn't even know where they were. He was rather horrified that I'd been that slack with them. He decided he needed a record of the pictures he'd chosen from the albums, so I bought a whole carton of Polaroid film, and made two sets of each of the pictures from the albums, one for Alain and one for me.

David Graves, who then worked for Petersburg Press in London, also spent a lot of time working in California with me. (He had assisted us, too, on the Stravinsky triple bill in New York.) David sorted out the negatives of the pictures the Beaubourg were interested in. After Alain Sayag went back to Paris, I started some paintings, but there was all this Polaroid film lying around.

CAMERA DRAWINGS

In the summer of 1981 I had done the show 'The Artist's Eye' for the National Gallery, London. The catalogue essay, which I wrote, had a lot to do with photography. So I had been thinking about photography for some time, and now I started to play with the Polaroid camera and began making collages. Within a week, very quickly, I made them quite complex. This intrigued me and I became obsessed with it. I made about 150 collages with Polaroids. I went on until I felt I had exhausted the idea, which was in about May. We showed them in New York in June in an exhibition we called 'Drawing with a Camera'. This very strongly rekindled my interest in Cubism, and in Picasso's ideas, so that in a sense it was photography that got me into thinking again about the Cubist ways of seeing.



**The
artist's
eye**

David Hockney
Looking at Pictures in a Book

93 Looking at Pictures on a Screen,
1977, cover of 'The Artist's Eye'
exhibition catalogue, Looking at
Pictures in a Book, 1981

84-105 Overleaf and following pages:
From 'The Artist's Eye' exhibition
catalogue

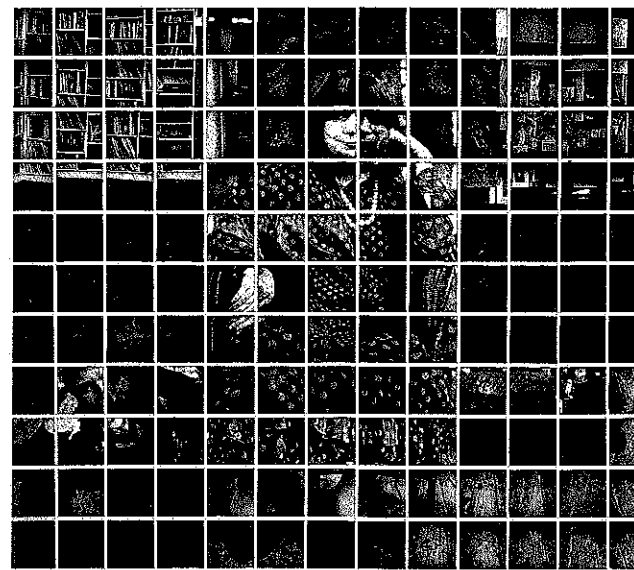
106 David, Celia, Stephen, and Ian,
London, 1982



108 That summer I went to Europe with Ian for the photography show at the Beaubourg. We spent quite some time in Paris and I did a bit of painting. I made a painting consisting of four different portraits, twisting the bodies round, putting different heads in and so on, trying to take and use the ideas from the Polaroids. The first efforts were simple, quite simple, but I could begin to see what to do in painting and it was exciting. But I wasn't sure. What I didn't realize, of course, was that I hadn't finished with the photography.

When I came back to California in autumn 1982, David Graves and Ann Upton came with us and we drove to the Grand Canyon and Zion Canyon. I took a little Pentax camera and while we were there I tried different experiments, shooting many, many pictures of the Grand Canyon in order to show the space. When I got back I began to glue them together and I realized there was a whole new area I could explore, also using memory. I had thought that it would be more difficult using an ordinary camera, because you would have to remember what you'd done, rather than seeing the image immediately, as with a Polaroid. I got drawn into it very much and I also started developing the idea in different ways, working on it until Christmas. And then I thought I'd stop.

But when my mother came that Christmas, I did some pictures of her, and then, just before she left, I decided to push the idea still further. My mother is keen on



107 Ann & Byron Upton, Pembroke
Studios, London, May 6th 1982

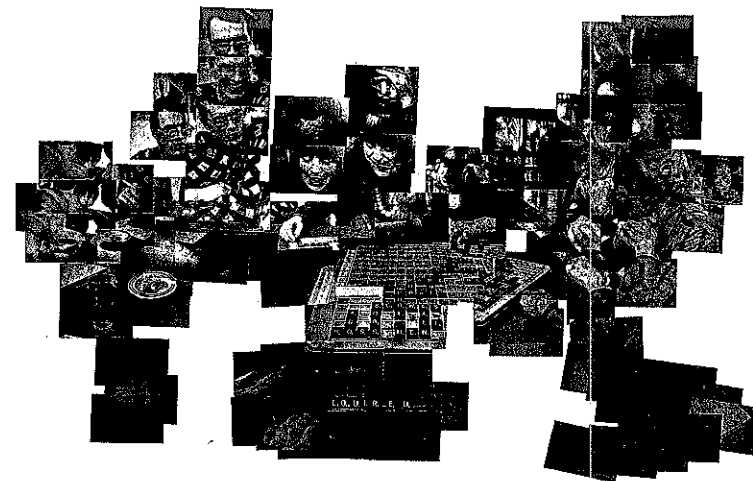
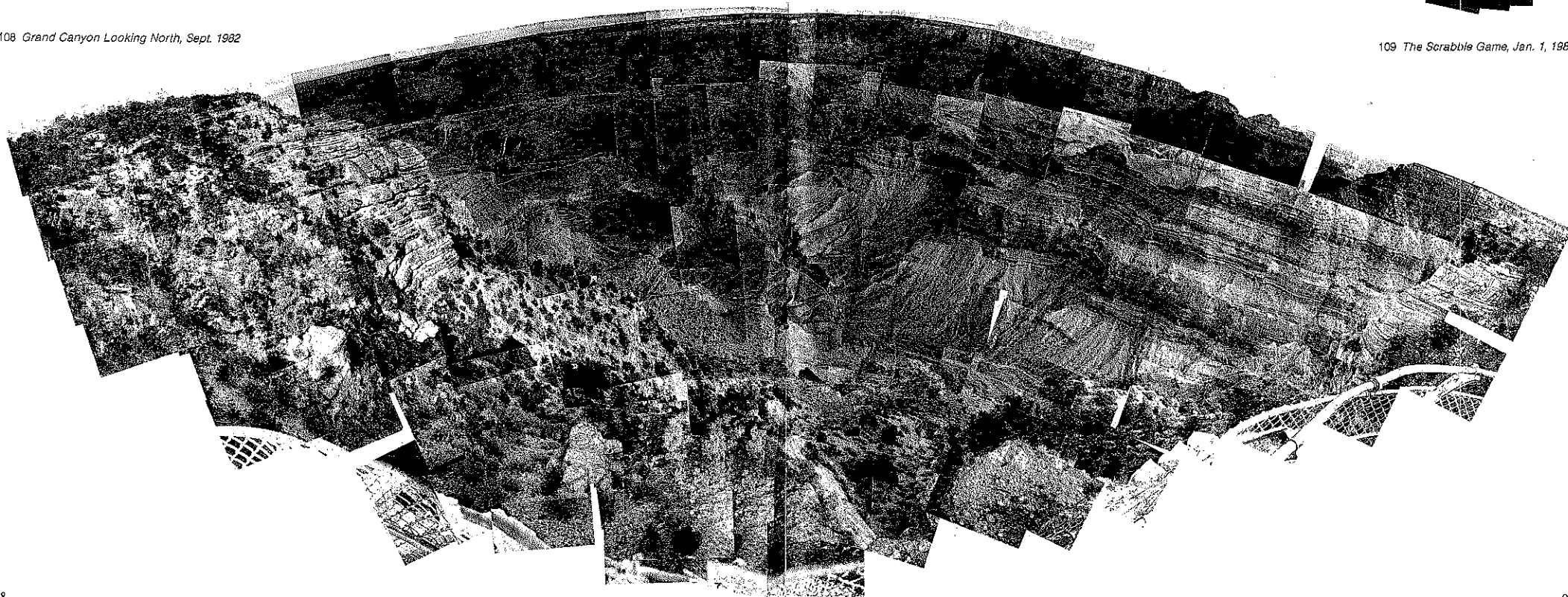
Scrabble and I decided to use that as an action around which to set up a photograph. I deliberately set up an action, as it were, to use as a subject. I thought a game of Scrabble would be good because Scrabble is itself a bit like a collage: it is a crossword puzzle, putting letters together to make words. It was a real game we played – it had to be, although I wasn't fully concentrating because I was taking the pictures and planning this piece. And when I pieced the pictures together I took off again because I realized I was opening up something else, that here was a marvellous narrative; what I was doing became clearer: I was using narrative for the first time, using a new dimension of time.

I rushed back to London when Ann Upton's son Byron was killed; that was about November 1982. David Graves, with whom Ann was living, was going to come to California for a while because we were going to make some editions of these photographs – we thought that as I was using an ordinary camera we could make editions of three or four. When I got to London I suggested to Ann that she should return with me to California; I thought it would help her, rather than staying in London – different surroundings would help her forget the worst, anyway. So David and Ann came back after Christmas. They stayed with me for about a month, at the beginning of 1983, and then found a house up in Beachwood Canyon which they rented.

I took a lot of pictures of the Grand Canyon when I went there in the autumn of 1982 with David Graves and Ann Upton. I used a little Pentax camera. When we got back I began to put them all together and I realized that this was a whole new area to explore. Because I hadn't seen the image immediately — as I would have done if I'd used a Polaroid — I had to remember what I had done. Memory became an important part of the process.

I got quite excited and began developing the idea. The *Scrabble Game* (opposite) was done when my mother was visiting at Christmas. Ann Upton, David Graves and my mother played. I joined in too, though I couldn't concentrate much on the game because I was taking the pictures. It was while I was doing this piece that I saw that I was using narrative for the first time, using a new dimension of time.

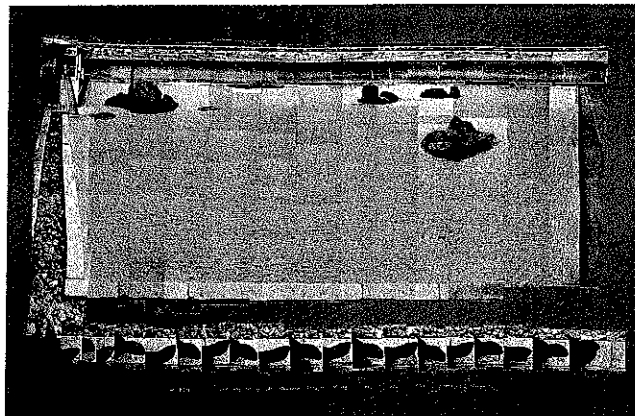
108 Grand Canyon Looking North, Sept. 1982



109 The Scrabble Game, Jan. 1, 1983

110 *Walking in the Zen Garden at the Ryoanji Temple, Kyoto, Feb. 21, 1983*

I went to Japan with Gregory in February 1983 to give a lecture at a conference on the uses of paper in art. While we were there I took a number of pictures, keeping notes for very complex photo-pieces, which I put together when we got back. For *Walking in the Zen Garden*, I took more than 160 photographs. When I first pieced them together I thought I had made a photograph without perspective.



REVERSE PERSPECTIVES

Then in February 1983 I went to Japan for a paper conference; they had invited me and Robert Rauschenberg to speak about using paper as a medium. I'd been to Japan once before, in 1971. Gregory came with me and we were mostly based in Kyoto. I was still deeply into the photographic idea, so I brought a camera and took quite a lot of pictures, though I didn't develop them there. I methodically kept notes every time I took photographs for one of those complex photo-pieces, I made diagrams of how I would lay them out. When I got back I spent quite a while piecing them together. What really excited me was when I pieced together the Zen Garden in Kyoto — the second version with my feet at the bottom. It was then and really only then that I began to realize that one of the areas I was really examining was perspective, that this was what you could alter in photography. I had not realized this until then, not fully — just as I didn't fully realize the implications of the ideas in *Kerby (After Hogarth) Useful Knowledge* (1975) until about nine years later, when I began to make and use reverse perspective quite seriously. To do it in photography was, in a sense, quite an achievement because photography is the picture-making process totally dominated by perspective. Most photographers think that the rules of perspective are built into the very nature of photography, that it is not possible to change it at all. For me, it was a long process realizing that this does not have to be the case.

In the late seventies, when I didn't do that many paintings, I worked a lot in the theatre. Now the theatre, or the kind of theatre I was working in, the opera, is Italian theatre, that is, it is deeply connected with perspective, it is illusionistic theatre beyond a plane, it is a box: there's a proscenium and that proscenium

represents a plane. Beyond that plane is an illusion. In front of the plane is you, the audience, and, in a sense, there's a separation between you and it. There is, of course, another kind of theatre, very well known in England: the Shakespearean theatre, which is quite different. The Shakespearean theatre is Cubist theatre in a way, in the sense that it is not an illusion behind a proscenium. The stage juts out into the audience and occupies the same space as the audience, so different people see completely different angles. Shakespeare did not need illusionistic settings. I think perhaps that's why Shakespeare never fully works on television, because television, being a box, belongs to the Italian conception of theatre. Beyond the screen is an illusion and, of course, the box. These illusions involve perspective.

In 1979, when I was in Italy doing *The Rake's Progress* at La Scala, Milan, I went to visit Vicenza, where I hadn't been for sixteen years. In the famous Palladian Teatro Olimpico, with its permanent set by Scamozzi, the town of Vicenza itself is put on the stage. The people of the city saw themselves and their city beyond the stage. And although the stage is not curved, the auditorium is, so that when you look up on the stage you always get a street disappearing into the distance. It is a beautiful theatre and you're very conscious of this depiction of space in real space, an illusion of space in a real space, which is of course different from the illusion of space on a flat surface.

As I described before, after *The Rake's Progress* the next stage work I did was *The Magic Flute* and in it, especially in the second act, I played with the space, using perspective ideas a great deal, linear perspective, one-point perspective. At Glyndebourne it never totally worked to my satisfaction because, as I said earlier, we had to squeeze the drops up. They had told me that I could use the thirty-five drops in the theatre, but they had made a mistake: I couldn't because *Don Giovanni* was up there as well and it had spiky sets that kept ripping our *Magic Flute*. I used to like *Don Giovanni* as an opera but at Glyndebourne I grew to hate it. When *The Magic Flute* was redone at La Scala in 1983 on a much bigger scale, the perspective, the spatial games in it, were much more interesting because you could space out the drops better. Working in the theatre certainly makes you think about illusions, illusions of space within space.

PICASSO'S REALISM

My dissatisfaction with naturalism and the depiction of naturalist fixed-point perspective space, and my work in the theatre, led me to an increasing admiration for Picasso, especially since his death in 1973. I had always had a great interest in Picasso, but I never quite knew how to deal with it — like most artists. He seemed too big and his forms were too idiosyncratic. How do you learn? How do you use them? But you have to learn. One of the most important things, one of the most

difficult things, is to learn not to be intimidated, not to be afraid of working through even his forms to find your own way of doing it. It took me a long time, for instance, to realize fully that, contrary to what some people may think, there is no actual distortion in Picasso. What he does may appear distorted only if you think of one particular way of seeing, which is always from a distance and always in a kind of stopped, frozen time. The moment you realize what Picasso is doing, how he is using time as well – and that is why you could see round the back of the body as well as the front – once you begin to realize this, it becomes a very profound experience, because you begin to see that what he is doing is not a distortion, and slowly it then begins to look more and more real. In fact it is naturalism that begins to look less and less real. And that, of course, leads you into thinking about the nature of realism and what it is and what it isn't. You become aware, perhaps more than ever before, that there are different forms of realism and that some are more real than others.

I became aware that Picasso's way was far more real than anything else, and I also began to understand why it was more vivid. In December 1984 I went to Paris with my friend Celia Birtwell to visit a sick friend, Jean Léger. The big Watteau exhibition was on at the Grand Palais, and there was also an exhibition at the Beaubourg of Kahnweiler's gift of Picasso paintings. In the Watteau exhibition, which was wonderful, I noticed, as Celia and I were going round, an absolutely marvellous, charming little painting called *The Intimate Toilet*. It is of a rather grand lady attended by a servant. The painting reeks of perfume and sensuous feminine charms. Celia said, It's delicious; that feeling is just delicious, it's wonderful. I said, Yes, it's just marvellous, I agree. The next day, we were looking at the Picasso pictures in the Beaubourg and there was a little painting of 1932, which therefore must have been of Marie-Thérèse, and Celia said again, That's delicious, look at her, she's delicious. I pointed out to her a vast difference between the Picasso and the Watteau: in the Watteau, if you thought about it, you wondered where you, the onlooker, were looking at it from. It was as though you were in another room, looking through a little doorway at a lady being powdered by a servant. But in the Picasso painting, because you could see the back and the front at the same time, you would not ask yourself, where am I? You were *inside* the picture; you had to be, because you couldn't be simply outside it and move round it. In the Watteau picture you are a voyeur, you look at the scene through a keyhole; in the Picasso you don't.

AGAINST EDGES

We do not look at the world from a distance; we are in it, and that's how we feel. Some people may not like it, other people do. I tend to like the thought that I'm in

the world. I don't want just to look through keyholes. So, what I am talking about is the world, and pointing out that there are different ways of depicting space; one way is a keyhole way, essentially the window idea, the one-point perspective. The window is just a big keyhole with edges around it. And you begin to realize that it is the edges that define the keyhole. You are deeply conscious of the edges. I began to be obsessed by them and also by the realization that you might be able to break them. It took me a long time to realize you could break the edges, and, certainly, reversing perspective helps to do it. The edge then becomes a lot less important. Any photographer will tell you that the one cardinal rule of photography is that when you pick up the camera and look at things through it, you are very, very deeply conscious of edges. It is the edges that make the composition in a photograph and it is what you leave there that will enable you to see things in the middle. The amateur photographer is the person who is not aware of edges – the casual snapper just points the camera at something without noticing the composition that's going to result. But the composition is only made by the edges. When I began the experiments in photography, I decided to try to make photographs in which you could alter the edges a great deal.

The edge has to do with movement and time and most essentially with the representation of space. But there was another preoccupation in my work, which has to do with the surface; and the edge of a picture is of course related to its surface. All painters are concerned with the surface. It is a first principle, a cardinal rule in painting, just as noticing the edge is a cardinal rule in photography. In painting you simply draw, you are working on a flat surface and the surface has to be acknowledged. The moment you acknowledge the surface, you also acknowledge the edge.

It has occurred to me that perhaps a two-dimensional surface, if it exists at all, has to do with scale. Perhaps there's no such thing as a two-dimensional surface; it can only exist in theory. If you took a canvas and looked at it carefully, the closer you got to it the more bumpy it would look. You would notice that it was not actually two-dimensional: it only *looks* two-dimensional if you are distant from it, if a certain scale is established between the viewer and it. I have thought about this and I'm rather amused by the idea that a two-dimensional surface could only exist in theory, because a two-dimensional surface has to be absolutely flat from the start. How big could something absolutely flat be? How difficult would it be to make? Does it matter? Is it important? It seemed to me of some importance because part of the art of painting is using this 'flat' surface – we think it's flat – to express ourselves on, making marks on it. The moment you make marks, they begin to play with the surface. The eye might see one at a different time from another and, therefore, space is made out of these marks. I think that's how space is made in pictures: each mark asks the eye to sense different time. I think that is why photographs came to feel



111 Jean-Antoine Watteau, *The Intimate Toilet*, c. 1715



112 Picasso, *Femme couchée*, 1932

flatter and flatter for me, because in a photograph the time is of course the same on every section of the surface. In a painting this cannot be the case because a hand moving across it means time is involved and a line drawn: it has time in it because it has a beginning, a middle and an end and somehow this helps to make a space. I have often thought that maybe that's how it works in real life.

DIMENSIONS OF TIME AND SPACE

I got deeply interested at one time in how many dimensions there are. If you read a little bit about mathematics or physics you get interested in these ideas. The theory now is that we live in a four-dimensional world, in three dimensions of space and one dimension of time. In mathematics they start speculating, to help solve some problems, that there may be six dimensions, eleven dimensions, thirty-five dimensions, ninety-nine dimensions, an infinity of dimensions. But suppose you go backwards, go the other way, and speculate that there are only two spatial dimensions: it would mean that everything would be on one plane, which could be a sphere — an edgeless plane is a sphere — and we would be points on it. Suppose that, somehow, it is our consciousness that creates this illusion of other dimensions in time. It could be. It might sound ridiculous or silly, but so initially did lots of ideas which turned out in the end to be rather interesting, especially in science. New ideas often seem to go against common sense. I thought, why can't I put these ideas into my painting? When you begin to understand such ideas, it does seem possible to create a different kind of illusion of space on a canvas. It leads you into such strange areas that at times you even wonder if they're of any value at all. Nevertheless, I can't help thinking about them.

I read once in the *New York Times* a story about astronomers finding an object in space further away than a quasar, which they'd previously said was the furthest object that had been perceived. If you ask how far away it is they say you measure it in light-years. Now, the furthest object away they had seen, they calculated, is about thirteen billion light-years away. According to current theories the Big Bang was only about fifteen billion years ago. So the object we were seeing the light from began thirteen billion years ago, i.e. two billion years after the Big Bang. Well, you might ask yourself, where were we then? Where was the earth then? It's rather fascinating when you start thinking that, because you then become aware that the further out in space you're looking, the further back in time you're seeing and the idea of seeing backwards in time is a bit of a mad notion, or we think so at the moment. It makes me wonder, is all space an illusion? What is space? Just as it's very hard for us to think that if the universe is finite, space must end and there must be an edge there. And then, what is beyond space? We cannot comprehend it, it is unknowable. In fact, to my mind, the only possible thing you could think of, if, say,

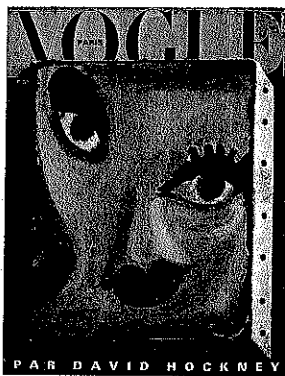
space ends, is that it is the exact opposite of space, a sudden wall, a solid mass. But even then you'd think, where does that go? On and on for ever? Does that have an edge? And even edges then begin to fascinate you. They do me. You realize that they relate to where you think you are and therefore who you are. You then begin to link spatial ideas with identity; or I do. When I see the link between them, it makes me think of all kinds of other things.

I often have these strange ideas in the morning, the moment before I am fully awake. I have been able to use this moment since I was about ten, when I first became aware of it — the moment when you're just waking up and moving from an unconscious to a conscious state. What is it that happens, how long is this moment? I've always found it difficult to describe. But it is the moment when certain ideas occur which do not otherwise. I assume this happens because the mind is free and uncluttered. When we are awake too much gets in the way. When I was doing all that photography, each step I took was based on sitting late at night looking at the work, thinking about it and then going to sleep. Then, in the morning, sometimes I'd wake up and think, of course, *that's* the next step, and I'd realize it had been thought out in the moment of waking. I don't know how long it lasts. You're not even aware of time and the mind seems freer. I think many people experience this — it must be very common. As you become aware of it you can use this moment of half-awake and half-asleep, use it to let your mind move into areas that in full consciousness you might doubt, or think absurd, and therefore not allow your mind to enter. It is hard to describe it but I'm quite positive that it is there because I have used the awareness it gives me.

CAMERAWORKS

My early photo-pieces were only made for my own enlightenment: I was interested in Polaroid pictures and I was just making experiments. But I always finished up with a rectangle because I accepted the grid of the white border round each rectangular picture. When I started using an ordinary camera, I didn't always finish up with a rectangular picture; the edges were all over the place. At first I liked that, but having to glue them down onto something meant that the backing was usually, for convenience's sake, again a rectangle. When I came to do the book *Cameraworks* (1984) — and after all none of those pieces was made to be put in a book, I was not thinking about how you reproduce them — I became aware that I had photographs that actually couldn't be reproduced; once I'd made a collage like that it couldn't be reproduced in the same way as a photograph. Any ordinary photograph can be copied, technically. A good technician could take a superb copy of an Ansel Adams, say one of the very beautiful black-and-white prints of Yosemite, with a plate camera, and you would hardly know the difference. This, of

In 1985 I was invited by French *Vogue* to do a 40-page section for their Christmas issue. Rather than use existing work, I created a number of new photo-pieces (e.g., Ills 114–117). I also designed the pages myself and did the layout. The whole thing took three months.



113 Cover of French *Vogue* magazine, Christmas 1985

116, 117 pp. 108–109: Double-page spread from 'Vogue par David Hockney', French *Vogue* magazine, Christmas 1985. Left: 'Word Tree'; right: *Jardin de Luxembourg*, Paris, 10th August 1985

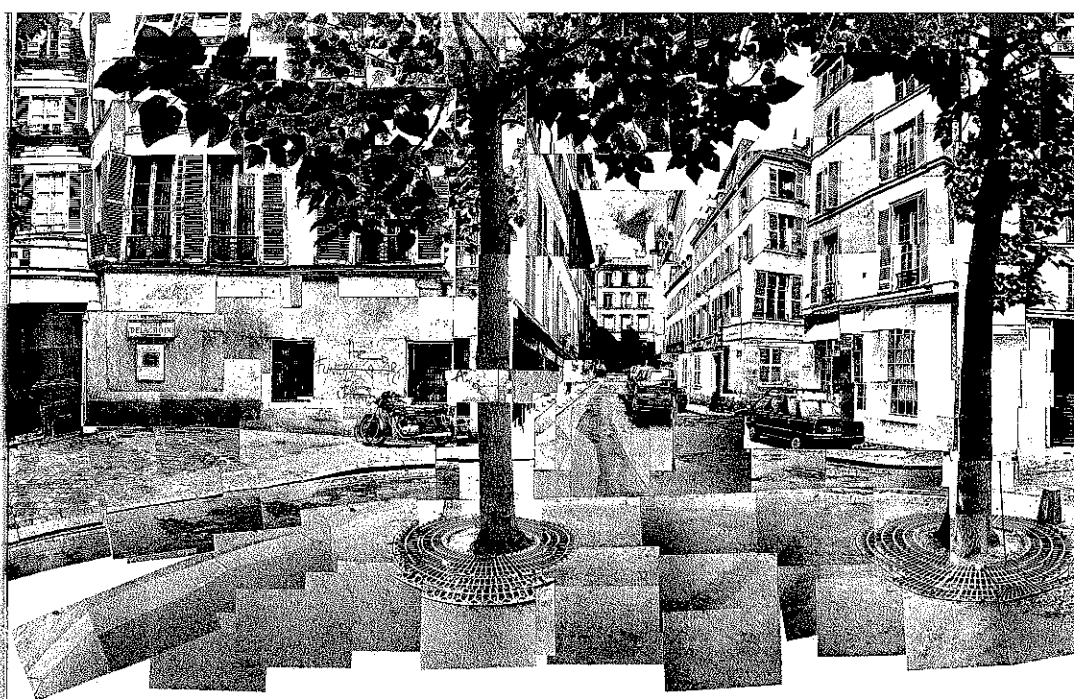
course, is not possible with my photo-pieces because they are collages of photographs and a collage acknowledges surface, it is a physical thing, and therefore you cannot just duplicate it – it would not be the same.

Some pages in *Cameraworks* are good, but I think the best are those that bleed to the edge. One of the main problems with a book of that kind is that, instead of the edge dissolving, you become even more aware of it meandering around, and you've got all this white or grey paper interfering with whatever you're looking at. For my kind of photography to work, it must work on the page. Another aspect of photography – and a reason why photography has spread so much – is that the half-tone process makes it possible for photographs to be well reproduced in books. I have always thought reproductions of photographs in books work as well as the real photographs. An original photograph, of course, is a document, of interest to a museum. But it's just as good to buy a book of Cartier-Bresson photographs as to see his originals. I realized that to make my kind of photographs work on the printed page, I had to deal with the edges, which are the edges of the page itself.

This is why I agreed to do the piece for the Christmas issue of French *Vogue* in 1985. When they first asked me I refused; I didn't know enough about fashion and I was not interested in it, anyway. Then they said it didn't need to be about fashion, it could be about anything. I thought, if it can be about anything, then I'll do it. I thought we could make my kind of photo-collages work on the page – on the printed page of *Vogue* – and show, therefore, that it's possible to break photography up, change it, provided it worked on the printed page. After all, forty pages in the middle of *Vogue* is forty pages in the middle of pictures which make use of one-point perspective, because all the rest of the photographs in the magazine are made in the conventional way. I wanted to show how photography could be done differently.

I spent three months on my photo-pieces for *Vogue*. They thought all I was going to do was send them some photographs of paintings, that they would then get a text by someone and then lay it out like other people who'd done the Christmas issue, who had just made a selection from their existing work. I think the year before they had done one by Zeffirelli. The credit said *Vogue* by Zeffirelli, but it was more like Zeffirelli by *Vogue*, in the sense that they were mostly pictures of Zeffirelli. It was about Zeffirelli, not a work by Zeffirelli. I didn't want to do that. I saw it as an opportunity to test my recent ideas about photography. So I made a number of photo-collages specially for *Vogue* and I made sure they would bleed to the edge of the magazine's page. I told them I wanted no borders around the photographs and no internal borders, which would mean more edges.

We started working on the photo-pieces, but making them into a rectangle was of course not easy, because the way I had pieced things together up to then, none of them ever became rectangles. Making them into a rectangle was much more

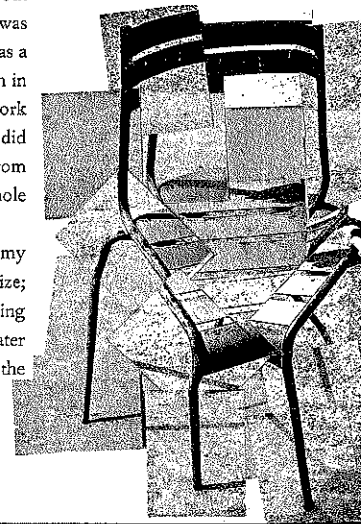


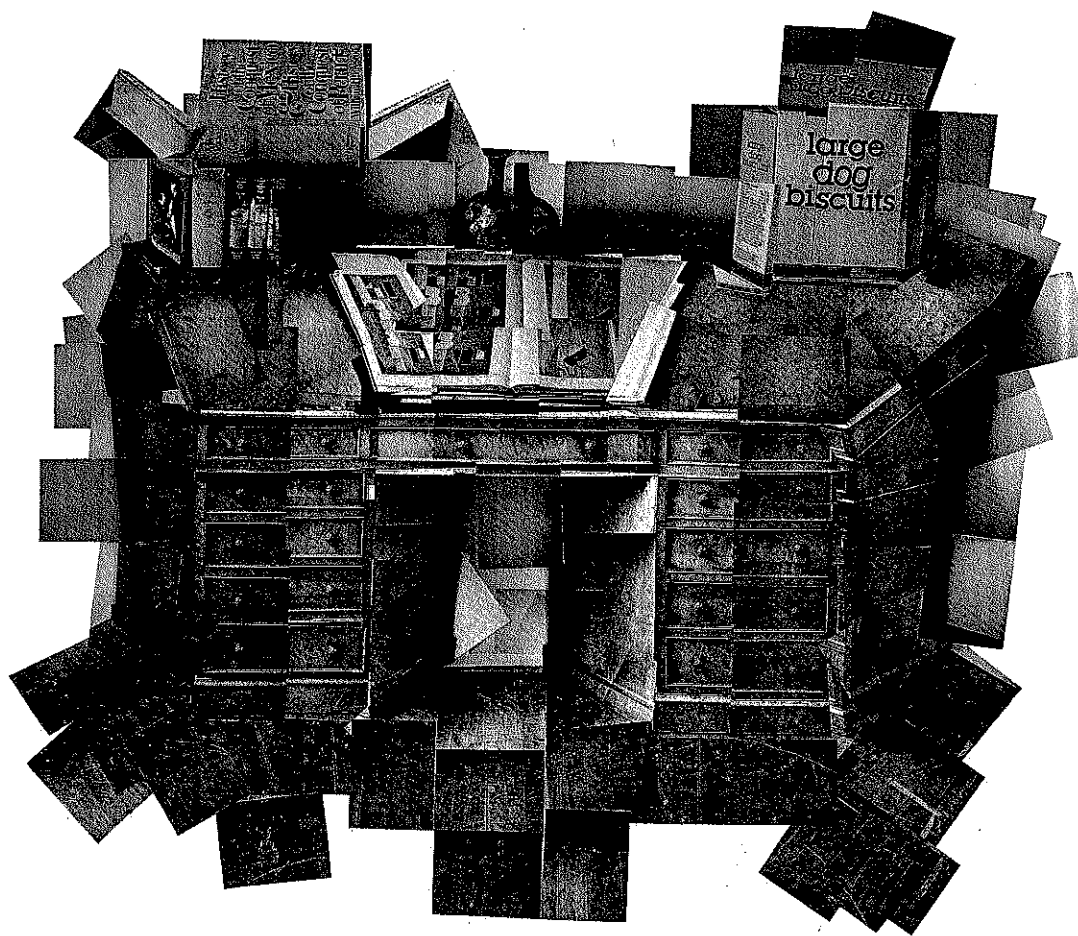
complex; it meant you had to be moving about. In my previous photo-pieces, I had usually included my feet at the bottom to indicate the angle for each shot. Now that I had to be moving about, the photographs stopped having the feet in them. In the first photograph, the one of the place Fürstenberg, where I moved about considerably, if I put my feet in they'd have been all over the place because I was walking in the space all over the place. I thought that in the end it did work as a piece. It also, of course, led me to other ideas. I realized that the whole section in *Vogue* was a work by me, not comment on my work by *Vogue*, it was my work deliberately made for the magazine. I designed the pages, I did the layout, I did everything. I said I wanted to control every square centimetre of those pages from beginning to end, even the way they put the numbers on the page. And so the whole section became the work.

At just about that time, the proofs arrived of the facsimile edition of one of my sketchbooks, *Martha's Vineyard*; they were proofs of drawings made actual size; nothing had been reduced. Reducing in reproduction is the equivalent of pushing you, the viewer, away. It is as if you're seeing a drawing or a picture from a greater distance. I realized that when a work is not reduced but is reproduced exactly the

114 Place Fürstenberg, Paris, August 7, 8, 9, 1985

115 Chair, Jardin de Luxembourg, Paris, 10th August 1985





118 *The Desk*, July 1st, 1984

same size on the page, the hand that made the marks is the same size as the hand that's holding the book; you are brought closer, a great sense of intimacy is created. Having this insight, every mark I made for the *Vogue* piece — every single mark, my writing, anything — was reproduced exactly the same size. And I also put in a drawing near the end which was of the room where I was working. The photographs couldn't be the same size as I'd made them, which was quite big. I could have taken the negatives and printed them smaller, but actual size in a photograph is less important than actual size in a drawing. Actual size is important when the hand works.

The Desk was done about 18 months after *Walking in the Zen Garden at the Ryoanji Temple, Tokyo* (see p. 100) and was very important to me because it was part of my attempt to learn how to establish an object in space. In *Walking in the Zen Garden* I'd done a space, now I was doing a solid object. I managed to put the two things together later, in *Pearblossom Hwy* (pp. 112–113).

REPRODUCTIVE PROCESSES

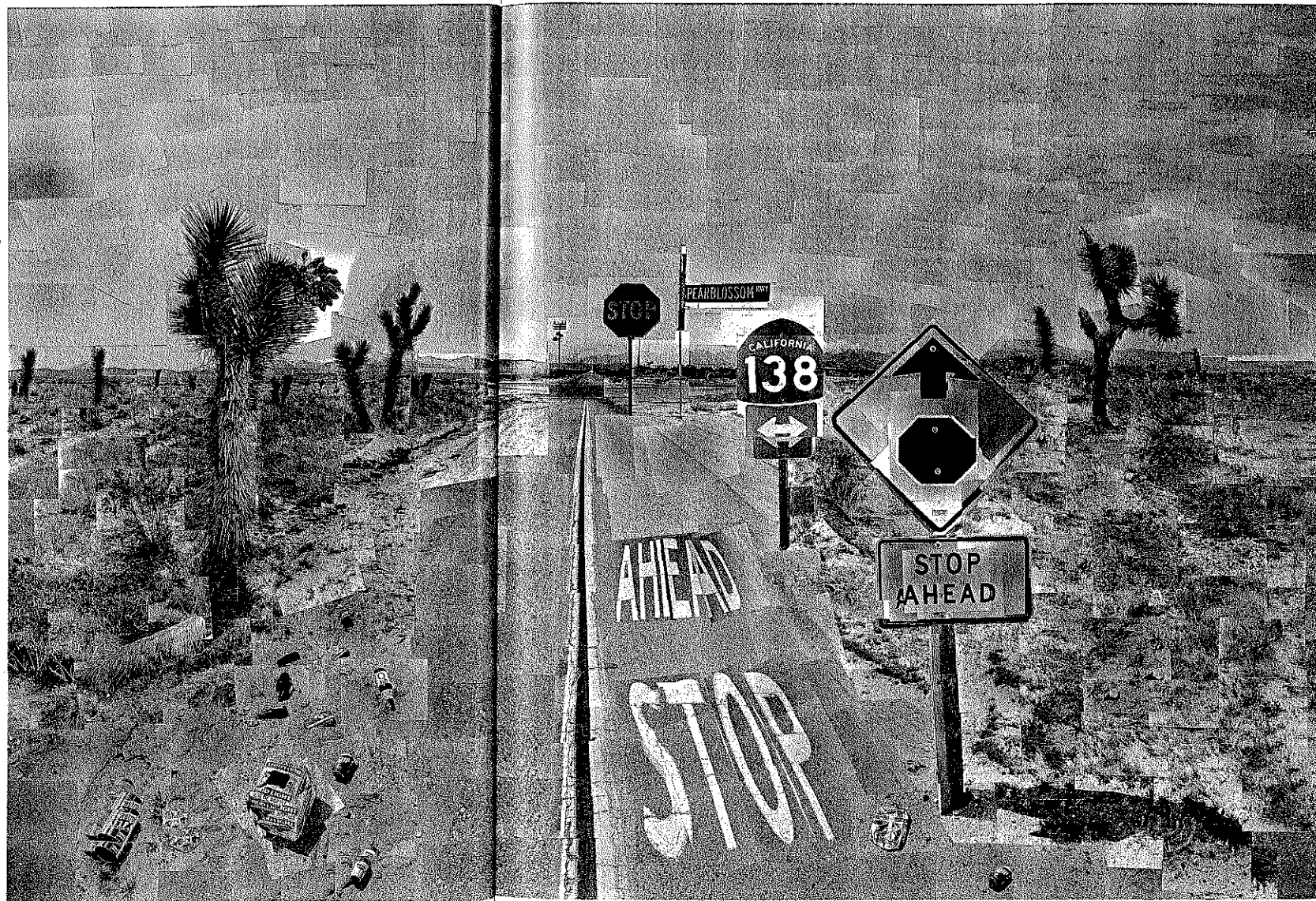
This is when I began to get deeply interested in reproduction itself — although I had always had some interest in it. When in 1981 I organized 'The Artist's Eye' exhibition at the National Gallery in London, my catalogue essay anticipated, quite unintentionally, ideas which were going to obsess me later. Only afterwards, for instance, did I realize that in the essay I was writing mainly about photography, suggesting that the best photographs were perhaps photographs of drawings and paintings, of *flat* objects, in which the photography is used a little like a photocopying machine. In that essay I criticized photography, but what I criticized I only began to deal with a year later. My concern in that essay was both reproduction made by my own hand, i.e., copying, and the photographic reproduction of a painting, buying reproductions, having them in a book, and so on. My own painting in the exhibition was called *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*; the exhibition was called *Looking at Pictures in a Room*; and the catalogue was called *Looking at Pictures in a Book*, each one dealing with what the title suggested, how one sees pictures in different ways.

The painting *Looking at Pictures on a Screen* came from an earlier period; it was made in 1977. It is of Henry Geldzahler looking at reproductions of pictures pinned on a screen. I'd quite forgotten about this painting and only when the National Gallery asked me to do the exhibition, which was supposed to include one of my paintings, did I think that it might be an interesting idea to use *Looking at Pictures on a Screen*, because all the reproductions pinned up on the screen were of paintings in the National Gallery. I had bought the postcards there and I always had them pinned up on the studio wall. For this picture of Henry we pinned them on a screen and had Henry looking at them. So I thought it would be amusing to make the exhibition around that. On one wall in the exhibition we had my painting. On another wall we had the real screen, the real chair, and the reproductions pinned on it. And on the third wall we actually had the real paintings, all great masterpieces: the real Piero della Francesca, the real Degas, the real Van Gogh and the real

94–105

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I started *Pearblossom Hwy.* when I was commissioned by *Vanity Fair* to illustrate a piece by my friend Gregor von Rezzori, retracing Humbert Humbert's journey in search of Lolita. It was my last photo-collage and the most painterly. I spent nine days doing the photographs and two weeks assembling it. I see it as a panoramic assault on Renaissance one-point perspective.



Vermeer. So on each wall were the four paintings in a different form. The catalogue essay was about these ideas, about looking at the pictures in different ways, about reproduction itself and about the role of photography. It was this, working on the catalogue, that made me begin to be aware of printing. That was the first time I became deeply aware of what printing does, how important printing is to ways of seeing, and that without printing we would know very little about painting because without printing the only paintings we would know would have to be the ones we had actually seen. When one thinks about it, most people know about painting now through printing of some kind, some reproductive process.

Then I also realized that, of course, even with a printed thing on a page each of us sees something different because each brings a different memory to it. I, being the person who painted the picture, never forget, for instance, what the scale of the real one is; somebody else might, somebody else might never have seen it. So we are all seeing something different. Images on a printed page evoke different memories. Even in a reproduction there's nothing that is objective. Scale makes a huge difference: the experience of the painting in life and the experience of it on the page is vastly different because of the difference in scale. Then there is the difference in surface, the physical surface that the eye sees.

In one of the pages in the *Vogue* piece, crayons and pens are photographed in actual size. If on that page you started adding a penny, or a cigarette lighter or a cigarette, they would all fit in with the page because they would relate as they do in real life. I listed in *Vogue* what I wasn't able to do in that piece: ideas about time, space and so on. And one of them was printing and reproduction. I did not know at the time how to get inside the printing press. So everything was still reproduced in the ordinary way using a half-tone process, screens and so on. I would have loved to have used the printing direct, but I did not know how to do it. I found out how a little later, again by playing with a different kind of camera.

I think I first became interested in reproduction at the time when a lot of people were making posters. European galleries especially, when they were having an exhibition, often wanted posters. There is a tradition in Paris of making them for exhibitions; they're stuck up around St Germain, lots and lots of them. I can remember suggesting to Paul Cornwall-Jones of Petersburg Press that perhaps it would be better sometimes if we did posters rather than prints, and I said the same to galleries. They did start making posters and some were better than others. At the same time, prints were beginning to get very expensive, certainly my prints were getting expensive. All through the sixties and early seventies they'd been quite modestly priced; almost anybody could buy them. The prints I did with G.E.L., of Celia smoking, were three hundred dollars; they sold out very quickly, which meant they were probably underpriced. Almost anybody who had a job could actually buy one if they liked it. But they started jumping up in price and I think

possibly at that time I became a little more aware that the poster was replacing cheap prints. After all, no matter what you do with it, how expensive can a poster be? The poster can be a marvellous reproduction, bigger than anything in a book, and if you print them well and take the photographs of the paintings well, the posters are worth keeping, people might like them, they can pin them on a wall.

I am aware that a great deal of my work is known mainly through reproduction; in fact, most if it is. Certainly, by the late seventies I was taking a keen interest in how the posters were made, printing them on good paper, etc. The difference in price for a poster printed on good paper with good printing and a poster printed on cheap paper with cheap printing is not that big for what you could sell the poster at. If it costs two dollars more to print it on a better paper, then you do it that way; somebody will pay the extra two dollars; it's not a great amount of money, and most people are willing to pay that bit more if the paper's better and won't fall apart.

When we made a poster of *Pearlblossom Hwy.* (1986) we printed five thousand copies for an exhibition at the International Center of Photography in New York. I realized that was the way most people were going to see this work, in this form of reproduction, because the number of people who could see the real piece, which is ten feet across, would be quite small. If you sell five thousand posters, not only are five thousand people seeing it, but maybe ten other people see each poster, so it means a lot of people. Therefore, I thought if that is the form it is going to be seen in mostly, let's make sure that we do it as well as we can technically. That's why my posters began to be rather good. We took a little more care just making sure the work was photographed very well and the printing was of good quality. I was surprised that so few artists seemed to take an interest in that. I think now more and more artists are becoming aware that reproductions of their pictures are the way most people see them. After all, artists should have known that, because that's the way they themselves saw a great number of pictures. For me, reproductions of my work were something that became more and more important, beginning with my first big book, *Hockney by Hockney*. I realized that not only had I got my work at my fingertips, I could flick through it, flick through my life as it were; I realized too that others could flick through my work, and I think this is also a part of art.

PICASSO'S EXAMPLE

In about 1978 I got the last ten volumes of the Zervos catalogues of Picasso's work and I studied them closely: that's the only way you can study late Picasso. Later on I bought all the Zervos catalogues. The early ones are out of print and I had to buy the original editions, which are quite expensive. I realized that Picasso must have

known what Mr Zervos was doing; he had begun cataloguing the work in the twenties. Picasso must have been fully aware that this incredible document was constantly being made of his work; and Picasso dated everything by the day. Virtually everything of the later years was put in, not every drawing, but every painting, in the order in which they were painted. These thirty-two volumes are a unique document; no other artist has ever had his work so thoroughly documented. Zervos's catalogue raisonné was being made as Picasso went through life, rather than after his death, when such catalogues are usually done. I think Picasso knew this and knew that whatever he did, somebody would be able to retrace his steps in this way.

That is how I learned, for instance, how he worked in series. By studying the catalogue I could see at what point he began and at what point he ended. In January 1983 I gave a lecture on some Picasso paintings, 'Important Paintings of the 1960s', at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, about thirty-two pictures, which Picasso made in a period of ten days in 1965. They all seemed to me to make one work. And if you saw it as one work, you realized what a marvellous, brilliant, complex work it was, made by a stunning old master whose work we had not been looking at in the sixties. Some people at that time were ignoring the work Picasso was doing then, thinking he was just repeating himself, that it was all the same, that the work had lost its power. But it can only seem like that if you don't look at the work carefully. The moment you begin to look carefully you discover that far from being repetitive, the work he was doing in the sixties was, in fact, inventive on a very, very high level.

I assumed Picasso knew that this could be discovered just by looking at the Zervos catalogue, even though the paintings are reproduced there only in black-and-white. Consequently, he didn't even need to exhibit them. Certainly the vast majority of the work was not being exhibited – if it had been, some of it might have been sold. But we weren't seeing great big Picasso exhibitions of current work in the late sixties or early seventies, except for an exhibition at Avignon in 1970.

Picasso must have understood that he could use a process, a technology, that had been, after all, only widely available since the twenties. The half-tone process of reproducing photographs on any kind of paper only began, I think, a little bit before the First World War. But by the end of the War the process had got quite cheap and more widely available and pictures could start appearing in newspapers. Instead of printing line drawings, newspapers were able to print photographs. By the late twenties photographic magazines began to appear. Zervos used this technology to start his catalogue raisonné and, as I said, I have no doubt at all that Picasso became aware of it and used it. Those thirty-two volumes became a gigantic diary, the most extraordinary diary ever made.

The last three years of Van Gogh's life are also extremely well documented. We think we know everything he did. If you put the letters, the drawings and the paintings together and consider how much time they took up, the only time left in that period would have been for sleep. And he covered it all, in detail, in writing. If you're on your own, sitting in a little room and you wish to make contact with human beings, of course writing letters is a very good way: you're talking to somebody. I tend to write longer letters when I'm on my own in a remote place. When you're with crowds of people, and talking, you don't feel the necessity. So Van Gogh's life is incredibly well documented for those three years. Probably no other human being's life is that well documented.

But in the case of Picasso you get nearly seventy-eight documented years. I think the first things in the catalogue were painted when he was about fourteen, and he lived to be ninety-two. That is an enormous number of photographically documented years by an artist who painted more pictures than anyone else. He is even in the Guinness Book of Records – not even a hack has painted more!

There are, then, all these different forms of reproduction of images, whether these are images from the world or invented images, like paintings, as in the Zervos Picasso catalogue. And I became fascinated with the idea of taking it all further and actually using the reproductive techniques themselves. To go back to the *Vogue* Christmas 1985 piece – that was a work deliberately made to go on those pages. Deliberately made, knowing the process by which images are put on the page. A little later I got to the point where I could put something on the printed page that was not a reproduction at all. And that seemed to me to break another edge; another barrier. Not long after the *Vogue* piece I started playing with a photocopying machine which had been used for it, to make up the model. We would photograph the photographs and then make a colour copy of them, of a certain size, to stick them on the *Vogue* pages. Having that model I knew exactly what happened when you turned the page. I didn't make the photocopies myself. We went down to a place in Hollywood where they would copy the photographs for you on a four-colour copying machine. I grew to like some of the ways the machine interpreted things, this kind of mechanical, cheap printing. Although I had not played with the machine myself, the moment I did I made some other discoveries.

PHOTOCOPIES

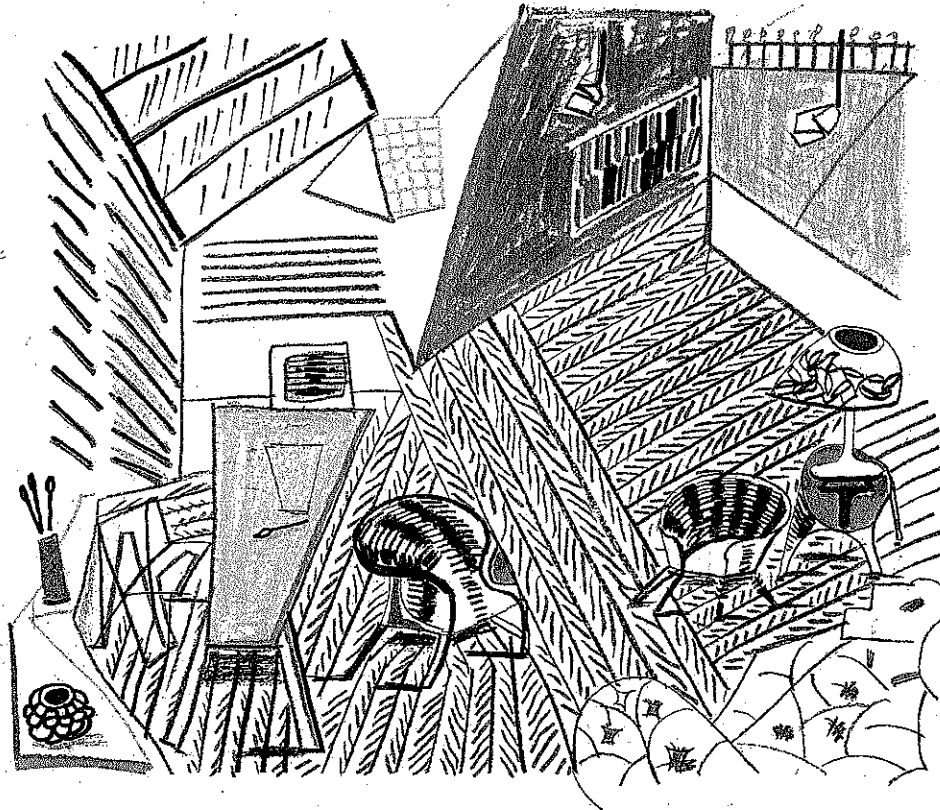
I wouldn't have known the potential of the photocopying machine, how to use it for my purpose, without my experience with printmaking, which I did very intensively at Ken Tyler's. I spent nearly two years making a lot of prints and very little else, most in 1984 and 1985 when my house in Hollywood was being repaired and altered. I used all kinds of techniques. When you are making prints your mind

122 *Two Pembroke Studio Chairs*, 1985



Because of the many viewpoints in these pictures, the eye is forced to move all the time. When the perspective moves, the eye moves, and as the eye moves through time, you begin to convert time into space. As you move, the shapes of the chairs change and the straight lines of the floor also seem to move in different ways.

123 *Below: Pembroke Studio with Blue Chairs and Lamp*, 1985



starts thinking in layers; you are separating colours and thinking in layers. Without all that, doing it for two years, I don't think I would have explored the copying machine as quickly or found out so quickly what it could do. So the copying work was a direct result of the earlier work with Ken Tyler.

The works I did with the copying machine, starting in 1986, were not reproductions; they were very complex prints in the same way that a print is not a reproduction but is just itself. One is using printing techniques to construct an image, as in making a lithograph. When I made the discovery of how to use copying machines to make prints from no pre-existing image I was very, very excited. I felt it was, in fact, the most spontaneous way you could make prints. Never before could you have been that quick doing it, and I galloped away making all kinds of things in rather a short period of time. Most of those that I call Home Made Prints were done in that period of about six months and they developed from very simple things to very complex prints, complex in the sense that sometimes a piece of paper went through the machine as many as twelve times.

124 *Untitled*, 1985



125 *Tyler Dining Room*, 1985

One reason, among others, why I think Picasso is so crucial is because he brings very much to the fore the question of verisimilitude versus the remaking of appearance. And what led me into questioning the verisimilitude of naturalism was that it was not real enough. Because the problem is not that naturalism is too real, but that it just is not real enough.

What was exciting to me in reading a book like *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* by Linda Henderson was that it made it clear for me that the early modern artists did believe they could change the world and that it was not until later on that this belief died out. But when someone says that artists used to believe that and now they know they can't, I cannot agree. I think they can. And I think modernism is being betrayed because it did not involve all the kinds of images that it could have involved. And the reason for that was that photography took over image-making.

We have to remember that it was not so long ago that the photograph first appeared. Photography might be over 150 years old now, but not many people would have seen photographs early on. It wasn't really until, I suspect, about the turn of the century that many people realized the implications of photography in art. When photographic studios began to be set up, making portraits, recording weddings, photography spread rapidly and became part of life. Almost anybody alive today could dig out photographs of their great-grandparents at the turn of the century. I have a wall in my house of photographs: my parents, my parents' wedding, my mother's parents, even their parents. There's one picture of my great-grandmother, probably taken at about the turn of the century in Bradford. But until the invention of the half-tone process photographs wouldn't be seen a great deal. The moment that process becomes available the photograph becomes ubiquitous; it's just everywhere, it dominates the way we see the world. Now modernist assumptions about depictions of the world, of course, do not seem to be very different from those assumptions people make about the 'reality' of photographic depiction. Modernist artists think they are playing with the world; the world, they think, looks like the photograph; and what they are doing is rearranging it in an artistic way. But the world isn't just like that. I think it is much more than that: it challenges all the time any static notions we may have of reality and representation. And I think we have become aware of that partly because we are now beginning to see the limitations of photography.

We tend to think of the photograph as a perfect record of life. But in fact the photograph is the ultimate Renaissance picture. It is the mechanical formulation of the theories of perspective of the Renaissance, of the invention in fifteenth-century Italy of the vanishing point, which many people think was one of the most profound inventions of all time. Brunelleschi, looking through a hole at a street in

Florence, makes a depiction of it from a fixed view-point. The Renaissance painters, of course, always suspected the rigid rules of perspective and bent them — as all good painters would.

In photography, however, it has to be rigid, of course. The camera is a lot older than the photograph itself; it is actually a sixteenth-century invention. The *camera obscura* is older than that, but by the sixteenth century it was developed with lenses. The photographic process is simply the invention in the nineteenth century of a chemical substance that could 'freeze' the image projected from the hole in the wall, as it were, onto a surface. It was the invention of the chemicals that was new, not the particular way of seeing, which goes back to fifteenth-century Italy. So the photograph is, in a sense, the end of something old, not the beginning of something new.

And then there is something beyond it, beyond the frozen photographic image. But you can only convince people that there's something beyond the conventionally made photograph if you alter it, by making it even more vivid, more vividly real. Cubism in painting does precisely that, but it became harder and harder to see what Cubism was actually doing because of the photograph getting in the way. You could always hold up the photograph and say, See, it looks like this. Until what we call Modern Art, which begins at about 1870 or 1880, people could look at pictures and understand them to some extent, even if they were untrained. Pictures were meant to be understood, like all those pictures in churches. Peasants who could not read could understand the Christian stories by looking at the pictures; that was the purpose of pictures. The painters wouldn't have painted Biblical scenes that the peasant couldn't even see, let alone understand; it was important that they see them. Modernism began by looking outside Europe, by discovering a different way of measuring the world, a different way of seeing.

New ways of seeing and depicting reality parallel scientific discoveries about a new way of measuring the world. But when it came to Cubism most people would say, The world does not look like that. Picasso looks full of distortion to them. Looking back at what people said in, say, 1925 — a year when, after all, great Cubist works had already been painted, when Picasso was in his neo-classical period — to the average person, even someone who had taken an interest in pictures before, the Cubist pictures seemed confusing and many people thought that this was not reality in a painting, that it was something else. To most people Cubist paintings were not of what they understood to be a shared reality, but a private version of reality.

Coming, as it did, soon after Expressionism, Cubism seemed to many people to be about one person's subjective perception of reality. And that was what Einstein's theories also seemed to be about. Before Einstein, space and time were considered separate and absolutes — they always existed. Einstein said, This is not

the case, they're not absolutes and they depend a great deal upon the observer; different observers see different events at different times. Such a view also seemed to break up the notion of a shared reality; it established that we all see something a little bit different.

But our memory causes that to happen, anyway. Conventional art history takes the line that Cubism was a forerunner of abstraction by 1925. That was the year that saw the beginnings of Mondrian and much else. In fact, what they would have called pure abstraction had happened before. But that is where we run into a problem, because people then thought, ah yes, we have abstraction, what we call abstraction, which does not seem to look like the world, or it doesn't matter whether it looks like the world or not; and then we have representation, where things do look like the world; and the ultimate representation is the photograph. The argument then went on: now that we have a photograph that mechanically records exactly what the world appears to be like, painting does not have to bother with this, so there is no need for topographical painting any more; painting can be about itself. But painting had always had to be about itself. This is what led us to believe that there were two separate things: abstraction and representation, and that they were very different.

I, like everybody else, went along with that thinking. But now I am not sure at all about that. I think, in fact, the more you go on the more you realize there's actually only abstraction. The photograph is a refined abstraction, a highly refined one, just as perspective is. In this sense, a Canaletto painting is a more abstract, and much less 'real', picture than an eighteenth-century Chinese scroll. And the reason why I made a film about this, in 1987, was that most people would think the reverse, that the Canaletto represented reality and that the scroll was a kind of invented, cartoony, stylized kind of reality. The photograph too is stylized, though it's no more stylized than anything that is a depiction; it has to be stylized, what else can it be?

What I have thought about the most in the last years has been this question of the position of the photograph and depiction, representation and abstraction. I have played with it, therefore, in some good ways and in some not very good ways. Sometimes you go off on tangents that turn out to be cul-de-sacs, so you simply abandon that little journey, come back to your main road and go on again. But you can't always see ahead very clearly and the road keeps bending; that's what happens.

If someone were to say that some kinds of art, like a painting by Rothko, are representations of inner states rather than outer appearance, I would answer, so is everything else. Someone once said to me while we were talking about Cubism, Isn't Cubism about the inner eye? I said, But that's all we have, that's all there is. There isn't actually any other kind.

le temps
l'espace
l'illusion
le regard
le dessin
la couleur
la surface
le collage
la gravure
la perception
la suggestion
la perspective
la photographie



et les magazines

Voici quelques idées et quelques images

à droite, une promenade dans les jardins du Luxembourg et
la double page suivante, une promenade Place Furstenberg

