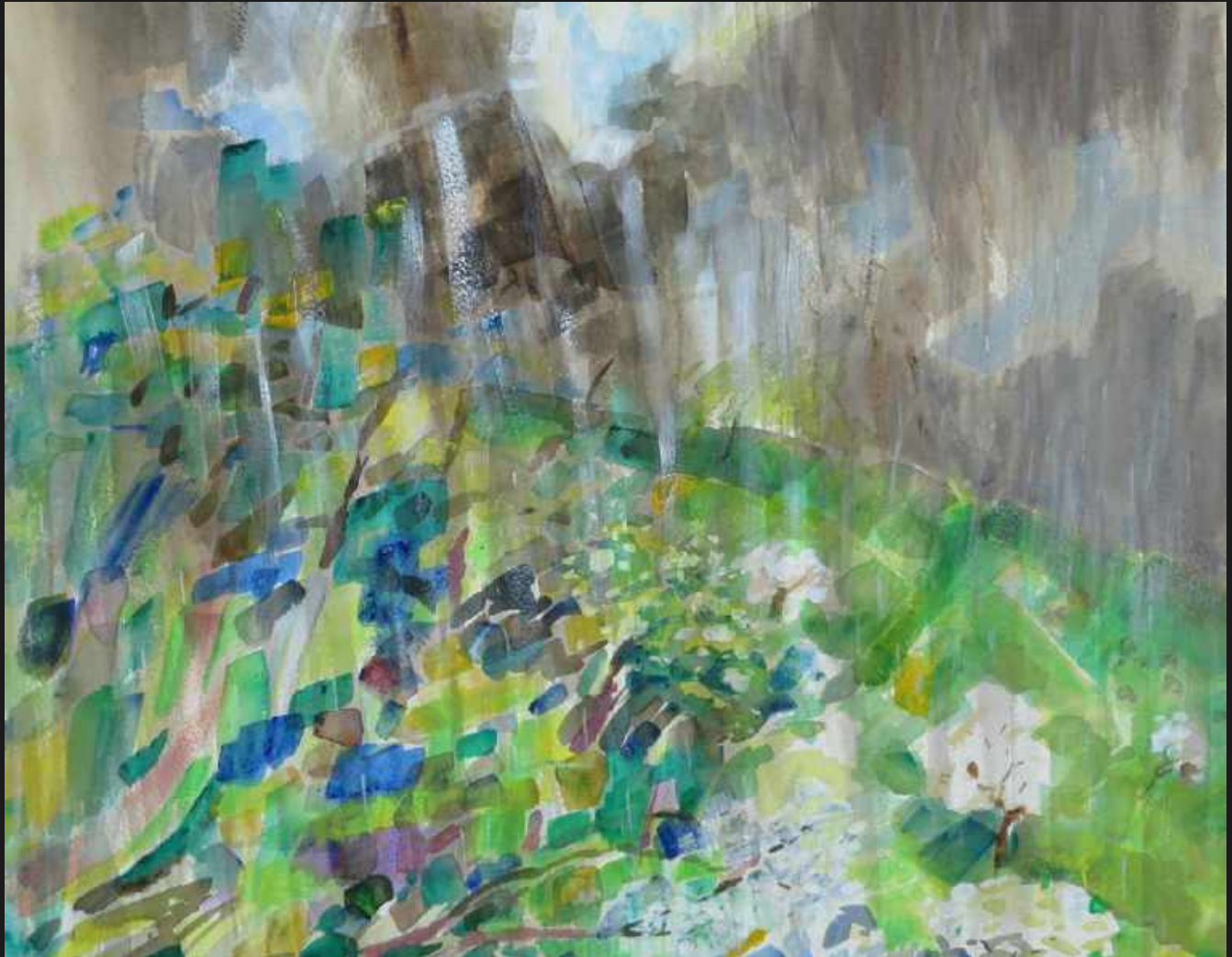




A painting manual Book 5 Details from paintings.
What is representation? What makes a painting work?
It's all in the detail.



This is a small, whole sepia ink drawing, 24x24cms. Most of the paintings in this book are details, from **1/9 to 1/36th** of the whole which are mostly 80 -100 cm square. A jocular aspect of the book is a provocation to the concept "abstract" painting. This little painting is clearly “rather abstract”, as they say, but all painting is abstracted from. “Abstracts” then, are not strictly speaking abstracts but inventions of pattern, based on a generalised aesthetics of Design: they play with “abstract aesthetic values” that are also common to industrial design, though without utility. In the book, I try to explain how these marks have an intended representational value, even if seemingly "oblique", that is, unexpected, and not obviously imitational. Here on the right, is the dark shadowed hillside with the edges “bleeding” suffusion which “represents” - “shadow of a cloud passing”. In the middle, there are two variant tonalities of the basic sepia colour and they “represent” two trees, but the suffused yellowy one on the left also functions as a suggestion of light. This is helped by the graduation of the marks for “sea”: paler ("horizon") to dark (shadowed). Above the “sea” are small "clouds" and then 3 larger ones, edged with white, representing the lower cloud edges illuminated by the hidden sun. Landscape painting should be modest. “It’s the world, stupid!”; not any showy off “mark-making”, but rather, affection and love for this world, we briefly inhabit!



Unlike most of this book, this is a **whole** painting. (75 x 55 cms). The intention behind this book of details is to consider better what you could call the language of painting; its nuts and bolts. Abstract art makes use a certain aesthetic vocabulary which is frequently used in matters of design: the "look" of consumer items, that through their "look" have to be "pleasing" to potential buyers or even be intrinsic to their function. On the main page opposite is a list of aesthetic terms that could be extended considerably but you can see how much they are those which we are used to reading as justification/ explanation of the supposed excellence of this or that abstract art but also of the "look" of consumer items - though for the art, the claims are a more "profound" waff (!) and do not have to pass a test of utility or reliability. I'd say that in these details, although there is an intended representation, we see the "design" criteria working not as abstract marks or shapes but as being involved (I hope) closely in the job of representation and meaning. A very clear demonstration. **Look at pages 16-21 Four close ups and the whole.** I think that art talk for the most part has got used to not being expected to make much sense. Art talk often seems just vaguely "impressive" with its lofty, long-worded chat. Probably this ubiquitous chat has wandered from "Abstract art" considerations into all art talk. This painting has those suffusions of water colours, seeping into each other, which were chosen to represent the suffusing light of such an evening: those rows of fruit trees, and hillside vineyards, so I hope that besides having "aesthetic values", it also represents a little, that love and wonder that such a moment deserves. A painter's marks must be correlatives of both feeling and representation. Here there is a farmhouse roof, with vineyards and fruit trees and it is evening. The blues have a double role: to represent the light of evening but also be a blue that effects us emotionally. The suffusion effects of the wet watercolour have that double function too: the emotional pull of watercolour.

If we look only at the "details", there is no larger a whole image within which to decipher the marks. It's a test. In these pages are some thoughts on how all the small "details" of a representational painting should have their own (near?) autonomy – that is, not be just subservient to "the big picture", but in some way, and to speak grandly, be microcosms of the whole image and thus, being important, able to stand alone! I have wondered in the past why the small sepia drawings of Samuel Palmer's are so beautiful and what is it that makes people use the word "visionary" of them so easily and immediately, (but without much explanation!). I think the secret lies in their detail which is not so much close up drawing but metaphoric, oblique drawing: that inseeing, which I presume explains that reaching for the word, "visionary"; but meaning what exactly!? We are so used to earlier forms of drawing such as Renaissance shaded drawing and delineation that we think that is "drawing", and pass over any earlier forms as just "primitive", but they were simply using different codes, many of which interestingly, were rediscovered by artists in the 20th century. So we could now say that Medieval drawing was not primitive but had formal eloquence not so dissimilar to Matisse's line drawing. Another good example could be Van Gogh, whose drawing marks had, we feel, an expressive "exaggerated" eloquence, besides their denoting drawing. There are many of his drawings that we would place beside Palmer as being "visionary" – that is, they are psychologically loaded; and maybe El Greco is a parallel. That fits my term that I feel comfortable with; "oblique representation". The marks are double; they both denote a scene/ "subject" etc but we also read them off as marks of responsive feeling that are wound around the denoting, or as Bacon put it so usefully; around "the armature of the real". This certainly explains the "distortions" of both Picasso and Bacon, and is even part of the mysterious French term, "passage"!

When I finish paintings, I take a photo and also often photos of close up details. It is obvious then that only certain areas merit the zoom! Why? Was the rest just dull, idle areas, with nothing happening and no merit – and above all, with no representation: little to catch hold of! Yes, and it made me aware of one-sided focus. Everything should be worth close examination - There are no idle areas in Palmer. Maybe, some of my areas might be excused as "calmer", but that's not very convincing: I should just admit; emptier! They are simply low energy passages and have stopped being those micro representations, with an "oblique", metaphoric charge! Recently I wanted to test to what extent there was representation in the details, (those picked out for a zoom!) – as in those Palmers; with their pull of oblique, parallel representation in the language of the details. (Microcosms). So I put my details together and set them on a computer's 3 second slide show. Yes, those selected details (but not in the dull areas!) had energy and could be judged by those "abstract" aspects of expressive drawing that are shared with that other word, "design" – (one could make a much fuller list): words like, **velocity, abbreviation, ("abstraction") pattern, rhythm, regularity, harmony, repetition, denied expectation, balance, stability, dynamism, surprise, "distortion"**, etc, and most interestingly, we would also find that the traditional terms of rhetoric give useful insights into painting's language of marks: **elision, repetition, hyperbole, exclamation, metaphor** etc . Then in addition: all those terms there are those of music which I would like people to notice in my painting; **staccato. andante, allegro, vivace, agitato, pizzicato, sforzando, accelerando, brio, above all counterpoint**, etc. All these terms would fit Bacon's half description of a kind of painting that: **"works along the nervous system", as does music!!** (I say "half" since Bacon leaves it hanging, unexplained), All these matters illustrate how we need to put back together what we have divided through the dualistic use of two terms – **drawing and design!** English has a lot of vocabulary because of its Saxon and Latin/French roots. "Design" derives from a French word for draw – designer. How did it come to signify, (interestingly), yes the "abstract", aesthetic qualities of say "industrial design" or "domestic appliances", but also serve as the same terminology used to convince us about "Abstract art"!

Consider, let's say, Medieval drawing; its form of representation. One of the beauties of Medieval drawing/illumination, is precisely its "design", (look at the above list again), and we appreciate and are moved by it for the same reasons as we are by the patterns and rhythms in Palmer's drawings. In both cases we can use the "design" terminology listed above in bold. Is it in some of those terms that reside the hiding places of Palmer's vision and of Medieval figure drawing. It is indicative that the terms used for say "industrial design" are used to describe abstract art which seems to most people to have superseded "representation" in art. So in Palmer's case, rather than just halting with the not very useful term "visionary", we would find those design terms above, very useful to explain the effect on us of his sepia drawings, (qualities which incidentally he lost when instead he adopted the conventional aesthetics of the time and ceased to be "visionary" in his manner of representation. So did those details from paintings that I had collected, pass the test, or did they, in their delimiting size, just fall back into being "abstracts"; (meaningless!). I wanted to see whether they still, (since they were the nuts and bolts of the whole), "represent" by means of the aesthetic qualities listed above for "design", an indirect sort of representation; that is to say, oblique, indirect, (despite being only 1/16 - 6%) of the whole or less, and yet **still convince others as being a ("sort of!") representations** of the world out there? My slide show gave me plenty to think about. Particularly I thought about that Francis Bacon concept of a painting needing the "armature of the real", in order that – with that assistance of indicated "fact", certain less expected marks would succeed in representing or get nearer to painting a "brutality of fact" indirectly – ("a wave more wave than wave"- Bacon's phrase), and at the same time have a psychological weight, so as to upturn the merely "aesthetic values" and somehow get through with oblique unexpected marks of representation which, (again a Bacon idea) would communicate **"along the nervous system"** – a sort of short cut or deeper tap root to that amalgamated whole - marks which are a **world-thing-response**.





Both whole. 95 x 90 cms. I several times quote Native American sayings. It is almost impossible to paint outside and not find oneself, without being aware of it, participating in some sort of natural religion; which is to say, a respect and awe towards weather, season and place which we know outlast us. Each year that effulgent Blackthorn tree. The sun and shadows of "proud pied April". The settled wall. The sheep. The church. Here above, the blossom of that crab apple tree. The might of a thunderstorm. Keith's barn. The first raindrops. A painting is then a small praise and memorial.



1/24th of 90 x 95cms. One of the most difficult facts of existence is that humans find it almost impossible to comprehend that one day, after a lifetime of being so utterly impregnated with "world", we will vanish! "into air, into thin air". How often do we wonder, aloud to ourselves, years after our dear dead have "vanished, "where are they"! This is a small detail but I have also chosen whole paintings because they illustrate various centralities to Landscaper painting. The world we experience, is inherited from millions of years of evolution. We store our experience of that world and it makes a core of memory and (if we ignore "Religions" - which I'd say, are human all too human), we recognise "nature", as our eternity, which we will die back into. So landscape painting to me has has a simple but deep intention - though by definition, I could never satisfy it - to somehow acknowledge a religious fact of our lives, quite different to any formal Religion - that this inherited world in itself is worthy of wonder; that it is extraordinary that we, along with other creatures, are here at all! In the painting opposite I should have tripled the number of "dancing particles" of its representation of a thundery afternoon in May. If President Clinton had been a painter, he would have pinned on the wall of his studio, "It's the world, stupid"! I think all the details of the book should work as sufficiencies, as if they were wholes. Here the energy of growth in an April wood. The globes of wild garlic.



Whole. 95 x 75 cms. I will quote an early 20th century American poet - **Richard Jeffers**. It expresses a thought that I wish that I had managed to bind into some adequate representations in painting - but it usefully indicates what has been a worthy ambition - though not attained. "If we had never before looked upon the earth, but suddenly came to it man or woman grown, set down in the midst of a summer mead, would it not seem to us a valiant vision? The hues, the shapes, the song and life of birds, above all the sunlight, the breath of heaven, resting on it: the mind would be filled with the glory, unable to grasp it, hardly believing that such things could be mere matter and no more. Like a dream of some spirit land it would appear, scarce fit to be touched lest it should fall to pieces, too beautiful to be watched lest it should fade away". Yes, landscape painting limps after that thought and we love those, among many, like, Constable, Van Gogh or Monet who managed to show us, "the valiant vision"! Sitting to paint in what Jeffers describes, or before this Blackthorn should make for fuller paintings than a "studio"!



1/20th of 80 x 85cms. This book of details. Very many people write biographies - not for others, who can't be much interested in their so different lives, but for themselves: a kind of stock taking before leaving the premises - what a dead friend's daughter called "death cleaning". **That you** should do, not others! I have often wondered at how the terms available to literature or music are quite lacking in the visual arts and as I've pointed out previously, I find music and rhetoric terms much more enlightening of painting than the usual art waff! So what should a landscape painter's marks illuminate or reveal? If I could have a second life (having, as we all have, wasted the first in stumbling and triviality, I would wish to find marks that might say this of Adam's waking, first day exclamation!

.....About me round I saw
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
Birds on the branches warbling: all things smiled;

Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed. (Milton).



Both these two are from the same place, and both are evening - on the left the rowan blossom of spring and here the berries of autumn with the same fallen tree. Both are **1/12th of the whole** (90 x 85 cms). As I often point out in these pages, a painter- unlike a musician or poet has to invent their language and hope others find it makes enough sense, (or simply shows enough). This was one of those glorious autumn evenings with its going down sun. There are so many "Landscapes" that just splash paint about egotistically. A landscape should be affirming the world common to us all and to get that across we need details that show the armature of the real, not just clever paint.



1/20th of 90 x 85cms. In this you can see the gritty dots which were formed around flakes of snow. We are so surrounded – no, moulded by words. We string together, thanks to words, formulations, clarifications, descriptions, enlargements and interconnections that are made possible because words keep sense hanging in the air while we add or modify that sense. Language has permitted all of human development – for better or for worse. Culture, in both “spiritual” and practical sense, is born of language – verbal, mathematical, musical. But music and painting take us into a region that words cannot enter. They are Sphinx-like since we cannot agree what is “said”. They have significance and “meaning” but only guessed at: meanings that you can’t pin down, they evade us. A composer puts together the elements that he/she feels are “right”, but that is an intuition based on silent mental practice, and a painting is “finished” when it seems to not want anything extra to make it as it should be; whatever that might be! The white paper here is used to help draw the bare twigs of winter and also the vestiges of snow visible on the fields, and also catch the “rhythm of it all!.



Whole 75 x 55cms. I think that a landscape painting should be “religious”, though not similar to any monotheistic religion. Once a teacher from school days visited and made a lovely comment. He said the paintings seemed to be “of Paradise”. Well I do think landscape painting should find credible images of the numinous, which is I take it, a religious feeling without “Religion”. Early humans made places such as Stonehenge into celebrations of a place and possibly of themselves. Those massive stones made the place doubly sacred, like those medieval Cathedrals, by the effort required, by the associations and through the regard in which they were held. A landscape painter often has special places that encourage better paintings, that “seem to say something” - even if only black and white - like this lino cut. What are the factors that make for images that touch us?



1/9th. Both 80 x 85cms. What matters here is the jagged, angular windy clouds, the rough squared brush strokes that you feel hitting the paper. and the jumbled, windy trees.and shadowed fields. It's Shamanism backwards - nature's spirit takes possession of us! Three brush strokes cover the right hand moor with a shower! For a Cezanne, a Constable, Monte St Victoire or the Stour valley, had already for them significance and to that feeling they wanted to find a painted correlative - which they found in painting it. Spinoza thought that the sacred lay in nature from which we have grown and to which we return. All our wonder at seasons, weather, place, the sun's light is due to our intuited participation in that billion year progression of animal, insect and plant evolution. To Cezanne, St Victoire was as sacred, as was Constable's Stour . That was the celebratory element of their paintings. Their paintings possess a dimly perceived “Holy” and which is so beautifully expressed by Wordsworth.

Old as creation, drinking in a pure

Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths

Of curling mist, or from the level plain

Of waters coloured by impending clouds.

yes, exactly!!



1/9th of 95 x 100cms. In this detail the clouds are almost just raw brush strokes to stand for their broken up dissolution. The paint is thin so as to imitate the clouds that have the light getting through. But is that some rain threatening in the right hand thickening clouds? The yellow between the clouds is bright sun-edged. This makes one feel the wind-sun excitement of the day. The sun illuminates all the edges of the clouds and is even more strongly, an echo of the blossom that has its own "patterning" of leaf and blossom. You could say that the handwriting of the whole is the uniting off square shapes - broken clouds, blossom, fields, cloud shadows. The distant crows give a sense of three dimensional space, because they make us remember and imagine the space that the birds are flying in. The painter is secondary to the world that we loyally try to portray: so I'd like to claim of that day; "this is really how it was", and the "art" disappears into the truth! If you think of it, in the times that we inhabit, that is a spirit that we should try and recover and have a view of all life like this expressed by a Native American. **"What is life?** It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset". **Crowfoot, Blackfoot warrior and orator 1830 – 1890**



1/9th. Or this of William Blake in a letter to his friend Butts that perceives a similar integration and which surely landscape painting should find a correlative for? Each grain of sand, Every stone on the land Each rock and each hil Each fountain and each tree Mountain, hill, earth, and sea
Cloud, meteor, and star, are men (us!) seen afar. **1/25th of 80 x 80cms.** In all the book's examples I make an important emphasis on how much in representational landscape painting, the detail is yes important to the whole, but should also have its own strong sufficiency. The surrounding picture is of an evening. I would say that this one gives an insight into the "oblique" drawing in Samuel Palmer's sepias. In the top half is visible the evening sky and the branches of a hazel with still the last autumn leaves attached. The trees and clouds and the rocks beside the stream have a diagonal lean which is a visual metaphor for the exclamatory beauty of the evening just before sunset and when objects seem to be so steeped in light, as if they had absorbed the sun all day. A photo of comparing that evening would have shown that a landscape painting is "visionary" or fails.



Whole 70 x 60 cms. Here it's clear that an important effect is the rhythm of the clouds: that barred dark/light of that kind of sky. Perhaps the left foreground grass should have been drawn darker so that the hawthorn trees could emerge more forcefully.



These four details are from the **whole** on p. 20. **95 x 100cms.** I have given many so as to best appreciate my argument about details and representation. In this one for example you can see the short hand of it; its handwriting and also the importance of the left white paper in giving it an exclamatory zing.



1/16th. This spring day was given crispness by these reductive abbreviated brush marks, as if painted by the cold May breeze that is suggested by the lent over diagonals of the whole. How important are the little white paper spaces in order to give a bracing sparseness to it all! That is also aided by the transparent striations given to the thin paint: taut and stretched. Chilly. The distant cows, the high blown crows. Reality matters!



1/12th. As can be seen by looking at the whole, there is a lot of impetus and almost identification with the day itself in this painting and I think it illustrates one of Bacon's intentions and explains what he meant by his wish to invent marks that communicated "along the nervous system"; a visceral painting. Its May, limb twitching light and shade, the swing of the clouds, the obvious unstoppable growth of everything. The large generalised areas are subordinated to their role of indirect representation that I have often mentioned and which is so clear in this painting. Even the leaves are rudimentary-dots and squiggles, hurrying to grow.



1/36th. You can see how important is the double representation here. There are the "clouds", "bush in blossom", "fields", "cows", "distant hawthorn trees", but there is also the haptic, body sensation of that awakening month in the brush marks. Can you make a painting shout - Alleluia?





Opposite is the whole painting of the previous 4 details. It maybe interesting in this case to see the whole in order to better understand my argument about not "standing back"! Here above is 1/16th of 80x 85 cms. A question I often think about in seeing others' paintings and also my own is, how much "armature of the real" (Bacon) is **sufficient**? What constitutes too much "artistic" interference? In this detail do we feel that "the moors", or "the thunder storm", "the cattle", "the barn" still seem **of the world** rather than a mere artistic interference? Hiding the thing itself rather than conjuring it? And in the one opposite, comparing it to the details, how the "whole" seems to lose so much of the body-felt veracity and unexpectedness visible in the close up details. How does effective **representation** work!? In fact. What is it?



1/16th of 85 x 90cms. In these two details of sepia ink paintings, what is obvious is how the "drawing" could be described with musical terms: **brío**, **accelerando**, **sforzando**, **staccato**, **glissando** and no doubt others. All this while being also describable with rhetorical terms, like **elision**, **exclamation**, **abbreviation**, **punctuation**, above all **metaphor**. All these aspects of language - musical or verbal have also their plastic, symbolic versions in painting. When we are outside and threatened with a shower, how we read the implications of the clouds or the sudden maybe final illumination of the sun. Painting, like music is so **incarnate** - body-response representational. Certainly that is the pleasure of landscape painting - how to make a picture convey place and a feeling/body response: the body aliveness of our memories of place which painting should resurrect. Here I have afterwards scratched the "clouds" to imitate the glaring-out effect of the sun, and the diagonal harmonies attempt to convey the vigorous wind of that autumn day: **con brío**, **accelerando!**.



1/9th. As said previously, the term Design includes and implies many aesthetic terms: **velocity, abbreviation, (“abstraction”), pattern, rhythm, regularity, harmony, repetition, denied expectation, balance, stability, dynamism, surprise, “distortion”,** or even a pleasing disobedience to norms of conventional expectation; (which clearly covers most of the significant painters of the 20th century who have obeyed this law of disobeying previous invention, in order to refresh representation). One could almost say that the trendy modernity of “Design” has borrowed qualities which are just as integral to **representation**. Design also applies that aesthetic terminology to an industrial product; (its “look” and the ease of use or suitability to a task). Those aesthetic “abstractions” of “design”, yes belong in cars and toasters, but also in an art object, except there it is a different, since there those qualities have to also signify a **meaning**, since they are not there to dress a functional usefulness! All of this obviously applies to photography too, which like painting is interested in reality! We, who live in a secular world have no overarching meaning to our lives other than the decent citizenship of a functioning fair democracy, (!) or concern for our children – or our reciprocity to wider sociality. And is that all? Are we all desperate for some larger meaning and “vision” in which to house, or place our transience and which might in some way, recover a meaningful **sacred** in the world and in our lives? Is that in fact the role of the arts that Schiller hankered after? NOT as unrooted, abstract aesthetic “values”, but because they better reveal our world to us. As Bacon imagined; “A Wave more wave than wave”! Have paintings been just my prayer flags that try to fill a void? Symptoms of unease? An attempted sacred?



1/16th of 90 x 95. Hawthorn blossom is not just white. Its flowers are articulated and bunched together with small new leaves still obstructed by the blossom. But it is the visual impact of such blossom that made me choose here to make it a solid white. That is sometimes misnamed “abstraction”, but all representation has to work by finding marks that “represent” with, in themselves, “meaningless” marks. That kind of sky with light and darks of thicker-thinner cloud is an echoing “white” to that of the blossom. As I explained on the opening pages, the terms we use in design (or music) are often useful: a painting has an emotional tow, often thanks to such musical mark-rhythms and harmonies..



1/4 of 85 x 80 cms. This was that very last light after a day when the sun has seemingly saturated all and colours are so intense. In the front are the boney branches of a dead tree which I left "confused" with water ripples. (It seemed "right"). The globes of wild garlic below merge with the whites of those branches, ripples and bubbles. Only some of the trees are illuminated by the last rays of the sun which are reflected in the stream. The sky of another 1/2 of the painting pulses with the last light. All the "abstractions" here were servants of that.



1/16 of 95 x 100 cms. Like the previous small detail, this too is of a sudden shower. The rough blockiness of the sky's brush strokes is carried over to the hill side, so that all partakes of that windy squall of the rain. shown in the pale central smudge. *And then another Native American:*
 "Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but a thread within it; Whatever we do to the web,
 We do to ourselves". All things are bound together. All things connect". **Chief Seattle. 1854**

Are we all well summarised in this statistic - that 25% of us will suffer some sort of mental illness? **Journal of Affective Disorders. 2012.** "In effect, humans have dragged a body with a long hominid history into an over-fed, badly nourished, sedentary, sunlight-deficient, sleep-deprived, competitive, inequitable, and socially isolating environment, (in mostly treeless, concrete and metal cities), with dire consequences".



1/20th of 95 x 90cms.. How to represent water! How much of the loved world, modern art has abandoned with its hermetic self congratulatory "marks", and footloose "aesthetic values". Here, besides the harmonies, I wanted to represent the silky transparency of such a mobile stream. The life of water. Its shine and splashing. Part of the splendour of that evening with its blue shadows.



1/16th of 90 x 95cms. Both of these skies show how you can use paint marks to record the forceful gesture of the hand while at the same time depict the sky and that becomes a mixed thing; a representation-response. That is what is called “haptic drawing”, as for example we are familiar with in Van Gogh, where gesture is so descriptive-physical. In both paintings there are the rhythms of curved brush marks that lend a cohesive harmony and are like a musical element of pattern and repetition. The large cloud lifting itself over the horizon holds shower and it shares its diagonal wind force with the rest of the painting. Perhaps swifts would have "nailed" the movement of the those swishing sky diagonals of blue and white! Early June.



1/25th of 90 x 85cms. There is in these two detail from paintings a lot of “action painting” but not for the sake of making merely emphatic “abstract”, self important paint “marks”, but to communicate the excitement of such moving windy skies and its swifts. In this right hand painting, all the swifts add to the element of excited movement in the trees and, not unimportantly, give that pathos to the painting of a species of bird that may soon, no longer return each year to communicate a special sort of *joi de vivre* to our grandchildren. And that represents a threatened double death; denies me that immortality of love that I inherited with the swifts, and which others' might have had passed on to them: to enjoy too - afterwards. That is what Spinoza meant by our dying back into nature. But we pass on ever less to those that come after us.



1/16th of 85 x 90cms. This depicts a thundery afternoon. A problem of representation. How far can we invent oblique (and therefore renewing) representations of this thundery afternoon so that more is expressed by making such simplifications around that which Bacon called “the armature of the real”, and “less is more”? Here you can see how I have preferred to paint large simplified and separated bands of cloud or trees in order to introduce calmer static harmonies; to imitate indirectly, the silence of such an afternoon of approaching thunder and rain. The white edges to the clouds may also read as flashes of lightning. The middle section of sky has some downward marks to suggest rain falling with the distant moor hidden by it. The paint marks have an assertive sharpness. Do the blue and brown crayon marks signify lightning or rain?



1/16th of 90 x 95cms. I wanted to keep a unity between the "dots" used to draw the clouds and the leaves and plants. That is part of the rhythm of the painting and which is more apparent in sepia drawings because it has to make do without distinguishing colour. Here the dots are its language- (along with the help of all the other 15 parts!). We should demand that a landscape painting should not just imitate/represent but show a feeling response. Communicate something! To mention music again - here the pizzicato, and the "brio"! Then besides, remember those words of Jeffers.



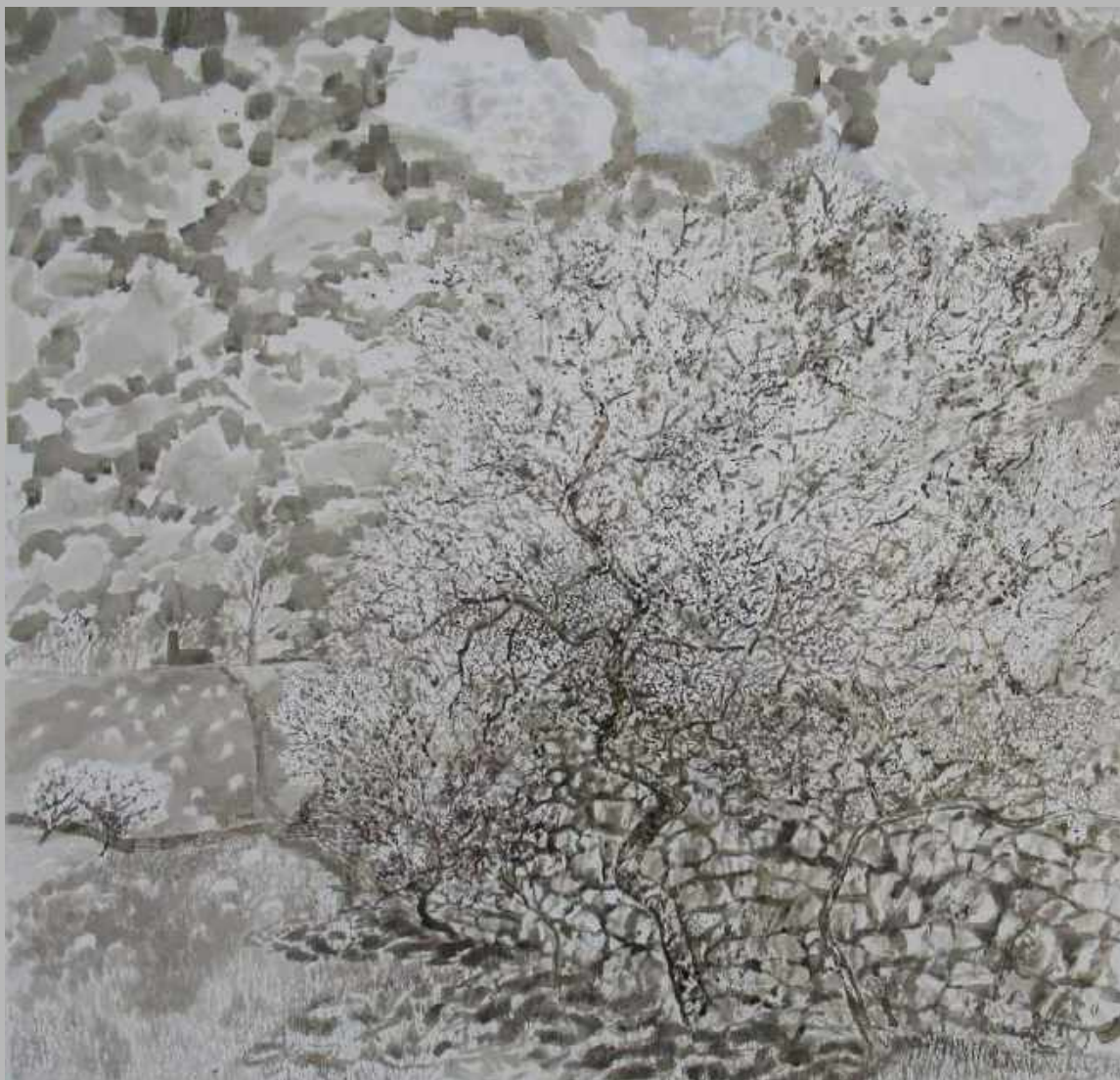
1/16th of 9809 x 95 cms. This detail is a good example of what may seem at first glance “abstract”, but which, when seen with the whole, makes a representational scene. Again, that Bacon phrase the “Armature of the real” is useful, for it acts like a code decipherer. Representation has a vast gamut of possible marks, and every artist has to invent, to a considerable degree, his own language. Here I wanted to convey the delicacy of a spring wood; the fresh greens and pale yellows, the uprights of the trees and their diagonal shadows, the bluebells: all over-laid one on another, while at the same time giving order and harmony to the image as part of a “feeling” of the delicacy of a wood in Spring: (incidentally, that is a useful idea in understanding Cezanne’s apparent “abstractions”).



1/25th of 85 x 75cms. This represents “leaves” of a tree and plants beneath, but since I wanted to give the painting a rhythm, the marks are generalised and not very leaf-like- though sufficiently so. To represent the light I made strokes of chalk mark, which may seem almost invisible, yet still give an effect on the whole that would be felt missing if not there: fragments of daylight: abbreviations.



Both whole and 90x95cms . These two ink drawings show an aspect of “abstraction” in all representational painting: here, the wished for harmony, pattern and rhythm of the whole. The barred clouds have their rhythm which is echoed in the patterned shadows on field and wall. Painting can have many similarities to music - which makes us want to dance, so at least a painter should make the marks dance and that would glorify that fresh April day with all its allegro con moto, and this singing blackthorn tree that blossoms each year - there! And we like it, breathe.



As with the other opposite, there were two characteristics to that day in blowy early April. The kind of clouds, that “mean no harm”, but as it were, decorate the landscape with light and shadow and so add to our enjoyment of such early spring days whose characteristic is their rapidly alternating shadows and sudden sun. The wind across the sky gave the clouds that lovely patterning that seems so in harmony with the vigorous whites and darker twigs of the Blackthorn tree. Then this “abstract” harmony is further emphasised by the patterns of the shadows on the settled stones of the dry stone wall. Ah the vigour of April. Alive! It's a dancing landscape! It's a challenge: to see how much you can catch of such a day and maybe there will also be bound in to it, a loving appreciation. It was indeed a lovely morning! "Allegro con moto-**Vivace**"!



1/16 of 85 x 80 cms. It is a summer evening. What is the “reality” of such an evening that I am trying to encode, to show or add to? The dazzle of evening light; that last splendour. In a way, this painting is depending on what we know of light reflected off bright surfaces. The highly coloured hatching and the white paper’s “brilliance” are looking for a “representation”, a visual correlative that might surprise, just as does such a splendid moment before sunset. Treat this for a moment as if “an Abstract” and see then what is lost! Then return to what it is: a painter trying to find an adequate or even possibly visionary correlative for a small cascade of water on a summer evening, but with the other 15 parts of the painting helping to fill in the gaps to a cumulative comprehension! Think how a musician forces us by sequence to “follow”! The poor painter must depend on a viewer’s chaotic all at once looking!



Whole of next pages. This was a painting to put on a wall in order that I should better understand the “hiding places of its power”: that is: what is making it effective? I’ve remarked before that in representational painting, the “abstract” marks find a home (unlike in the pretensions of “Abstract Painting”). A Landscape painter should be often astonished by effects of nature and then try to find a correlative of marks that can succeed in **passing on** that astonishment and wonder to others. The whole scene here seems bathed by a unified impulse, which I tried to find marks for (the all over curved strokes) and which is so beautifully voiced by Wordsworth, and which I think is similar to what Jacob Boehme (1579 - 1639) meant (but could only report but not convey in words), about a beam of light reflected from a pewter dish which suddenly seemed to hold an intuition “about the cosmos”! Listen to Wordsworth: “Of something far more deeply **interfused**,...A motion and a spirit, that **impels** All thinking things, all objects of all thought, And **rolls** through all things”. *The impulse of the high piled clouds. The force of the waterfall. The current of the stream. The wind blown leaves. The indistinct figures. The light. Maybe there is a far better painting hidden in this one!*



1/16th. These two are from the same whole painting on the previous page 37 and they perhaps better explain (as this book intends) the qualities that lie in the detailed drawing and brush marks of a painting. Here the effect of white paper interweaving with the rhythm of the curved marks gave a kind of majesty to it all, the force of the clouds, the movement of the leaves, the symmetries: the microcosms of it. The indirection of it, which is why I like the idea of a painting, so large that you could not stand back from it, but were forced up against it, as in all these details: to be thrown into the microcosm of it!



1/9th of the same painting. It is particularly clear in this detail how in this same painting, the effect of the whites and the directional paint and crayon strokes gives an energy to the whole. It also is a good example of how musical terms help us to understand the emotional effects that painting can achieve, although the painting speaks a language that has been invented for this place and moment, and is also in fact, the result of an accumulation over years of all the previous attempts to find some way that might satisfy me and mixed also with what I have been shown by others' painting. The slashes of white/light seem so important to that only "intuited meaning", although of course the point of painting and of music is that they reach the parts that "other beers don't reach"! No wonder artists get to an advanced age (Hokusai, Cezanne, Titian, and all the rest) and realise that they have only just begun to understand and be able to shape a "vision": to invent simply, a language - while poets find one - ready to go!



Whole. 75 x 55 cms. This is a good example of non abstract “abstractions”. The design language of “Abstract Art” has so muddled the discourse on painting. Here is a painting of a scene with long blue shadows cast by the low sun. All the graphic abbreviations are part of the **representation** of the setting sun’s fugitive last rays. But the blue of the shadows is “unnatural” though suitable, as are the water colour suffusions of the watery passages of watercolour paint. Such a setting sun may suddenly dazzle you in a way that stops it being possible to see distinctly. Could I find a path to that with “Abstraction’s” abbreviations that might seem realisms? Look for example at how effective are the “childish”, “abstract” rays of the sun and those crayon blue “shadows” and the water suffusions to stand for that moment of sunset.



1/12th of 85 x 70cms. There is such body vigour about sepia ink. Its dark-light contrasts that are so suitable for representing the light of such a blowy day, or better said, the “Chiarascuro” of such days! Then look at the short hand clarity of the “clouds”. How well the absolute “unrealism” of the white contrasts with the diluted shades of sepia ink, but conveys all the better, the vigorous chiarascuros of such a sharp sky. Surely, this attempts to “**embody**”, and it illustrates: (a favourite phrase Bacon for his “Haptic” painting); paint that is “felt along the nervous system”: a realism that other realisms cannot reach, (to redeploy that Guinness advert!). The watery seeping of the ink stands for the suffusing light on “moor” and “leaves”, to better make us imagine, fresh bracing air!



1/20th Both of these (95 x 90cms) demonstrate what Herbert Read liked to call “Haptic drawing”; that is, body-expressing paint – showing the movement of the arm in the drawing, as well as something more visceral. (Pollock's action painting - the mere record of body movement - in itself-though in its way - vivid - a graphic of dancing!) Van Gogh made us familiar with that kind of expressive drawing – one which later in the 1920's was called “Expressionism”; the emphasis on communicating feeling through rough/violent marks – what music calls **sforzando, staccato, forte** etc. The sky is menacing with “violent” clouds, with possibly thunder and heavy rain to come: **fortissimo!** All the painting's brush marks take up a diagonal direction as if under the pressure of squally wind. **Velocissimo. Agitato!** The **brio** of such a day!



1/16th. I hope people feel the weather excitement of this painting, as much as I did painting it. This is another “Haptic” painting with scrawling marks standing for the downward rush of sudden rain! The sudden breaks of blue sky in the brown greys with the white unpainted paper contrasting better than any mere white paint! The scribbles of white chalk “rain” on the right, are just another haptic, immediate sensation mark, while the ochre and burnt umber are so realistic for the colour of such clouds so that they carry and support with their “realism”, the unrealism of the blatant arm movement sky! In many ways this also has parallels to the music effects of **sforzandi, staccato, accelerando, fortissimo**, and above all, **"con brio"**!



1/16th of 90 x 90cms. Here without colour, we notice more clearly what are the limitations and restraints on **realistic representation**: what is it that aids comprehension of a painting, (unless we are just passively expecting "something" in our minds to be jogged by colour and shape - in themselves!). What is it exactly that makes a painting readable by all those who have not had the steady "education" or **self-conditioning** in "reading" nature in a particular way? In this detail is a stream and a bank of accumulated stones from past flood waters. On the opposite bank are hazel bushes with their sparse autumn leaves. There is no colour to help us, but in fact sepia ink in its one colour only limitation, forces us to make different decisions about representation. On the one hand there is no colour but the sepia must be made in its drawing and patterning, to make up for this, for a sepia ink depends much more on drawing and design than does colour. All depends on shape, ink dilution, and an "abstract" short hand. This one has a Chinese felicity of "tache" so that we enjoy the represented scene and weather but also that **Chinese brush-panache!** Like the sound of a trumpet - if only!



1/6th. In this sepia the effect depends more on the white-brown contrast and the water dilutions of the sepia ink. The white paper is being used as light, to contrast the sun's shade under the trees and rocks. Constable loved the effects both pictorial and in real life, of contrasting light and shadow - that to which the Italians gave the name "Chiaroscuro" (light-dark). Although it was hardly necessary to use white chalk slashes to represent the strong sunlight, its gestural vigour functions as a metaphor for the sensory pleasure of such a day. The illumination of it. The warm sunshine. Its "**staccato, velocissimo**", its **sudden sforzandi**! Its exclamation.



1/12th of 90 x 85 cms. The scribble of the sky and the nest building crows, the white paper left empty and "unfinished", and the only approximate marks for fields, sky and wood are what aid the feeling of windy April's lightness, when winter is still half present. All that comes from a metaphoric language which seems to bodily imitate the body presence of this Spring morning of sudden and brief showers. The scribble gesture of the crayon drawing is like the paint marks; rough and approximate, and this suggests the quick changes of that morning. That aliveness of warm, sudden sunshine and then a shiver: "...the uncertain glory of an April day, that now shows all its beauty to the sun, and by and by, a cloud takes all away"! I can only limp after such words! The pleasing jumble of these rough paint marks are a realism! They jog us.



1/16th. This detail is a good example of pattern in drawing; finding it but also imposing it. In the lower half are the currents of the water and the reflections of some branches on the bank, trailing in the water and being reflected.. There is a small waterfall and its subsequent ripples. In all that attempted realism there is also the search also for harmonies and rhythm. Brightness.



1/20th of 90x 85cms. This too is an example of what is often loosely called “abstraction” in the sense that there is no painstaking small mark invisibility: the brush marks are yes descriptive still, but have their own elan. A lot of “realism” work is being done by the effect of a dry brush passing over the white paper, leaving alternating specks of paint – and white paper, (snow!). This is then aided in short hand sign for “sun” as it sets and by the abbreviated marks of the catkins of the hazel – bottom left but more apparent in the whole painting. Just as when we listen to music, we sense the body metaphor of it, the dance of it – indicated in its use of Italian descriptions: **adagio**, **andante**, **vivace**, **staccato** etc, so too, do we read off paint marks into movement. I like to think that my paintings have “**brio**”! An excited involvement: that of course is their "naivete": so yesterday! In themselves they seem particularly "abstract": yet not so!



1/16th of 90 x 95 cms. The mark choices that day were conditioned by a sunny April wood. I chose to show this detail, partly as a provocation. These marks were not the result of studio cogitations about the "values" of this form, mark, or colour but simply a response to **a world out there, that day**: "When proud pied April dressed in all its trim, hath put a spirit of youth in everything". It is a homage to that delicate moment of the year: sunshine and yet still April's chill, fresh buds yet still bare twigs. So I painted these transparent layers - in which lies the beauty of watercolour, and also the transparency of April. There is little Cezannesque attempt to impose an "artistic" order - but rather to convey that chaotic, all-at-once, all-together pleasure in a wood in April. As I said for the previous detail, the whole painting does the deciphering work which then sets the "marks" free to make, in the small areas, the work of oblique representation - and hopefully, also to represent a body-mind response and pleasure in such a place and season.



1/9th of 75 x 65cms. Let's think of both of these details for a moment as "abstracts". We may find their colours and shapes pleasing. I think that such details and the quality of their close up handwriting is illuminated if we think a moment of Chinese calligraphy. Chinese writing is a fascinating hybrid - painting and writing together. The mark - hieroglyphs are both things and concepts. Chinese masters of calligraphy were admired for their transforming touch. (but of course - the sign was also already a meaning!). The master's mark could contain a magic that seemed to an observer to be both right against the sense and right for its abstract harmony. The sign was enriched by the **performative** brilliance, and eloquence of the brush's trace. So thus the "sign" here for "river's current" has a special manual eloquence that seems to "say", **current**; and I think of the Chinese adage, "Spirit being present, hand may be spared execution"! A school of Abstract art that comes to mind is Tachism: tache - the mark, made with Chinese eloquence, but, without the intrinsic meaning: **current of stream!**



1/36th of 85 x 80cms. (See p. 189, 224 for other parts). There is a pleasing "harmony" in its mauve, blues, pink and yellow crayon marks. The whole we hope, will make it recognisably a place, a time or a season. These elements then would find a niche in the viewer's mind because of their personal experience of life. So then those "blues" and greens might leap into the residues of another's personal life. We all look for meaning in our life, and within our memories there is often such love intermingled . A painting of nothing but itself' is not able to sound the huntsman's horn that awakens the ghosts of another's memory! For this is the question; does a painting stir memories, or is it no more than the pattern of curtain material? Even if it fails, painting should be ambitious to catch the world and our experience of it. Here today.....gone tomorrow! So with the help of "the armature of the real", allied to all those invented "**falsities**" of art", these colours may become "tender" or celebratory, because the huntsman's horn has sounded and we heard and that then flowed back into the image.



1/16th of 85 x 80 cms. This illustrates the eloquence of abbreviation: I don't use the term abstraction. Some lines of poetry are brief yet so full - almost because of the brevity. A case of "more is less". Here there are what you might call "blue abbreviations" - those evening leaves are just reduced to blue curved signs "tumbling" from right to left. Think how poor a matter would be painstakingly drawn "leaves" and in the sky, how much more "poetic" is that cloud: simple, linear and white and crisply divided from the blue. The barn would be less effective if "properly drawn" and the stone walls are also simplified, though one is illuminated and one is in shadow. As said on the previous page, a painting is often handwriting. The Italian Renaissance used the word "sprezzatura" to describe confidently abbreviated eloquence; in art or behaviour.



1/20th of 90 x 95cms. This is from the same painting as pages 14 and 15. I have spoken about those aesthetic terms of design such as **harmony, balance, pattern**. This by contrast is full of abrupt discontinuity: hardly a positive quality in industrial design, but especially important in the expressive language of modern painting. You could think of the **staccato** marks, or loud/soft marks for **crescendo** in music scores. This is the same stream, but you see how abrupt and rough is this water and waterfall. It has rough, abrupt lines of "bank" or "fence" and the "gate" is necessary to, as it were, keep the decipherable representation show on the road! They share an abrupt linearity with the rest of the painting, with its exclamatory sky. Painting's marks are descriptive, and yet also autonomous - though relational.



1/16th of 90 x 95cms.. On the left are bare branches of a rowen tree with a few leaves and berries still on it. To the right is the water of a stream, reflecting the yellow of the evening sky and the ledges of rock at the stream's side. This is another that would like to force people to have to stay close and not "stand back", so that they can NOT easily take in the whole painting because often that just allows them to see "stream", "tree" etc and not notice any detail! That is the same cursory tendency that people have in confronting more serious issues than a painting. People can look and think too summarily: "Oh I understand that".



1/12th of 95 x 100 cms. This the same Rowan tree in Spring with its lovely saucers of very white blossom. In this detail you can see how important for the balance and rhythm of the painting is the single black ink, where all the drawing leaves small spaces of white paper which then acts with the blossom to give an over-all harmony and sympathy to the painting. Although I am no pantheist, such a pictorial harmony can almost seem a "visionary" intuition, parallel to those words of Wordsworth already quoted earlier. **"Of something far more deeply interfused,A motion and a spirit, that impels All thinking things, all objects of all thought, And rolls through all things".**

It seems a pity that art in modern times has little space for love. Maybe the defaced earth might benefit from it. And here is a contemporary of Wordsworth; but we can hear neither message!

"What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across The grass and loses itself in the sunset".
Crowfoot, Blackfoot warrior and orator 1830



Whole of 105 x 100 cms. These are both paintings where the graphic writing, (and the sepia colour) determines the expressive range. The sepia ink can be diluted to give gradations of intensity as can the varying frequency of marks and how small or close they are placed, and the patterning of the marks is a source of what you could call the musical rhythm of the painting. Its "shimmer" would translate very well into a lino cut because of the **allegro-vivace** of its small, quick marks. The "whites" of the sky reflections in the stream and the undrawn "whites" of the boney branches of the trees make this almost a painting of "whites".



Whole 95 x 95 cms.. Here you could say that the graphic shorthand for "falling snow flake" has determined an all-over vertical patterning, which like that in the opposite painting's swarming marks, is what gives the whole painting its rhythm, and these rudimentary, abbreviated downward strokes can also be an exaggeratedly contrasting colour; on condition that the whole is still convincingly, a painting of, **"Moors in the snow"**. I think a painting should be more understood as having parallels to music so that pattern is both a source of aesthetic cohesion but also a source of expressive power.



1/12th. Both 90 x 85 cms. From two different paintings but done at the same time: early May. Sun and shadow alternating. Distant rain clouds, sun across the fields, hawthorn blossom, blue bells in the wood and the paint marks rough and approximate, and seemingly hurried as if a quick response to what the senses perceive.



1/9th These thin layers of paint and their fragile abbreviations work well to convey a slowly awaking wood of April. There is a large cloud with white edges with a greyer area that might hold a brief shower. The trunks of tree are delicate as the rest and on the left there is hinted, the crows building their nests. There are chalk marks which along with the transparent watercolour, I hope conveys the brittle chill of such a windy April day, which like page 31, is so well illustrated by the Shakespeare quote. The large amount of empty white paper adds to the bare April feeling of slowly awakening nature, after the cold winter. The sky's blue is cold and weak! All the symbolic "sign" drawing emphasises the chilly fragility of April.



1/12th of 95 x 90 cms. The pleasure of painting landscape is that you are hunting for an adequate symbolic correlative to feelings **and** to make an image of something that is comprehensibly - world to **others**! A visitor to an exhibition might wonder what is an adequate and satisfying "representation". It is not dependent on any imagined complete imitation: if that were ever possible! Many people still, deep down, think that there is a "realism" and then there are arty lies! But the Chinese adage about painting tells a subtler story: "Less means more" - particularly true of their ink paintings which carried the influence of their "eloquent" (seems the right word), pen drawings and calligraphy. As I've often said, rhythm is totally central to a good drawing. Incidentally, I think the greatness of both Van Gogh and Cezanne was their integration of "drawing" with "painting" and their introduced "musical rhythms". The "thesis" of this book, (one I want to prove) is that what matters to us is; "the world stupid" - and that is where art comes in, but only secondary to the **world**! Look at these "clouds", which through their less-is-more abbreviation, they better present, "lovely white clouds" with a short shower occurring quite near. And to dance us on our way, is there not rhythm in the leaves? And oh! Look, there are even some cows in a field to fix the spot! All very - "everyday".



1/36th of 80 x 90cms. There are 35 parts of this painting missing! This is a watercolour of water and the medium is here in fact suitably "watery"! The watercolour medium is suited to the transparency of the stream and the sheen of the rocks. There are brush stroke hints of "current", but the pleasing realism is the blue sky's reflection. To risk being boring, I'd point out that "blue for its own sake", is not the same as blue standing for "sky". We don't just "see", we interpret with memory, and that conditions our expectations. Representational painting tries to shepherd our responses in a direction. Here, the blue, the taches, the lightness. The realism must be in the paint detail, not in the "view". The marks should "work on us".



1/24th. What was one of the beauties of Impressionism was the little marks that seemed to say, "sorry, these are only indicative; the world is beyond adequate picturing, so excuse the truthful tentativeness of these little ad hoc marks". Their paintings also reminded us that "seeing" is really cumulative. We should not just think that "those are the twigs of a hazel, a holly bush and possibly a stream". Those should slowly appear, and emerge. There is so much we miss in our large presumptions of "oh that's a...". So this is a painting-drawing of a stream in the pale light of a late winter afternoon that slowly asserts itself. The white crayon tries to give a hint of the sun's pale reflecting shine and the blackbird considers the berries on the holly tree. How could I do justice to all that! But there are 35 other sections to help us! The white crayon twigs are true" and "poetic".



1/16th of 95 x 95 cms..(see also p. 211 and 231) The makers of these books do a good job, save that reds (as on opposite page are too exaggerated and pushy. This pairs with that opposite. Here there is no pushy red to unbalance the sinuous trunk of a Blackthorn tree in blossom in April. The sun sets shadows dancing across the old tumbling stone wall. The mossy and shadowed variation chimes with the sparkling blossom and the small clouded sky (which you see in some of the other hidden 15 parts!). What matters here is the fragmentary sparkle.



1/16th of 90 x 95 cms. This was a windy day bending the hazels and detaching most of the last leaves. The clouds also like the leaves, scudded across the sky. That was the day, and the reason for sitting there and trying to "catch" its boistrous movement. It was not a studio contemplation of grey, mauve and yellow. I say that to emphasise that painting could still be about the world out there - though we mostly ignore it and "art" struts away. This is no doubt a poor effort to celebrate that day, which the marks try to describe; both the day and our experience of it. Such attempts should **still be allowed**. Modern art and all its slick galleries are like bullying policemen. See how the white paper left by the dry brush is so essential for the dessicated end of autumn.



1/25th of 85 x 80 cms. In this one too, the white paper is an important expressive part of the not drawn areas. The white is not just "empty"! It is that which allows the paint marks to have an intrinsic energy, autonomy, and shape while still, within the whole, to denote place and day. You could say that everything is drawn by the white which is untouched. Cow parsley and ferns, and tree trunks in the bottom left corner are enough extra help with representation to allow the musical variations of the small marks to, as it were, work across the image as a sort of **counterpoint**. The slashes of white crayon are also helpful signs and symbols for "light" and also for the movement of the wind in the leaves and of the hand. It is a kind of reverse Shamanism: not a pantheistic transference, but place possessing us! Thinking what you've been thought! Alive!



1/36th of 85 x 80 cms. In a representational painting that is trying to find oblique, unexpected marks that have a double function of standing for things but also for physical and emotional responses, drawing must work indirectly. You might say that here it is a pity that this is such a small % of the whole since the effectiveness of this is sustained by all the other 35 parts! But the point of this book is to show the engine room as it were of the details. It's there that the expressive language of a painting resides, and what seems an indirection does have direction. "Thus do we of wisdom and of reach, by indirections, find directions out"! If only! Here - the foam and current of it; the light - the "Jeffers" of it! (page. 7) . "....If we had never before looked.....".



1/9th. This is a snow scene with its snow laden sky. Snow flakes are initiating and single. The sky, stream, (here only the tumbling water on the left join ing the stream below), trunks and twigs are given a similar impetus by the the small individualised upturned saucer-shaped brush marks. The colours are the blue, mauve and yellow that seems to be the colour that fallen, uneven snow takes on. Snow when seen in sunlight has a yellow appearance and in the shadows, as noted by Delacroix in the yellow cabs of Paris, the shadows seemed mauve: (the colour contrast of yellow -ie. red-blue). Branches and twigs share a rhythmic curve; an exuberance. But that is balanced by our memory of falling snow: its enveloping hush.



1/9th of 95 x 90 cms. "Modern art" instead of simply being modern: (of now), became a creed, and those that didn't follow the trendy trends were snobbed. This may well be a very innocuous painting of a "summer day", but it seems a pity that others won't try to do better at celebrating "nature" or swifts because it is considered so yesterday! What hope for respect for nature if art has been disallowed to consider it? I simply "love" such days and the intrepid flight of swifts. This was also a painting about such clouds which blow across the afternoon, having little or no rain in them, and the distant moors seeming to be slumbering in their blue. I have borrowed some white from the cloud in the turned up leaves of the hazels which are trembled by the breeze. A being-alive sort of afternoon, and the swifts made my joints jump!



1/36th of 85 x 80 cms. In this one there is a more obvious movement in the landscape to match the swifts throwing themselves into their speeding swoops. As in the one opposite, the leaves are made to participate in all the movement. I have given the sky its own brush strokes of impetus and force to add to the overall sensation of wind and movement and the crayon marks and bits of white impasto help billow the clouds with their abbreviating hand movement. There seems to me to have been so many "discoveries" in 20th century painting which we weren't given time to use, because our fretulous times just roll up the past behind us and we all have to turn the page to a completely "new thing". Maybe we are now so tied up in what an Apple engineer called triumphantly the Technium, that such a celebration of disappearing swifts is just naive: like I said opposite, so yesterday? Like the swifts themselves; and who will care? We'll get them on an app! What's not to like!



1/26th of 90 x 90 cms. How I love such March-April days that so boisterously announce the slow arriving Spring. And there you sit, trying to catch its scurrying, elusive, chilly beauty. You try to communicate the love and the health of it; simple as that! The blue of the sky is that pale cold blue of March and the light clouds have little rain in them. The marks of the crows make us feel the day's weather. and their seasonal preoccupations. Like the so slowly coming Spring, it's a provisionary first sketch of Spring. The bracing wind of it! All very sketchy are the marks of the straggled clouds!



1/25th. Landscape painting wishes to present, in an involving way, what it is that moves most of us in nature. Sun, clouds and their shadows, rain, wind, snow, the light effects of morning, noon and evening. The changing seasons, the colours and contours of things. In fact, much that is mobile and changeable in nature. This sky here is visibly impetuous. and here the bits of thick paint are **relevant!** A painting doesn't just depict, but wishes to call up the energy and beauty of nature and the in-the-body sensations of such a windy spring day that we respond to, and hopefully, call it up in others. So here there is a gestural imitation of these wind driven clouds and thus this depicts not just "scene" but how we feel in such a setting or weather. But you see here how that depends an indirect, oblique sort of "representation": like the flourishes of windy crayon. The trees and moors are only lightly depicted, so as to participate in the sky's busyness. This detail also illustrates an eloquent "Tache", with its Chinese calligraphic elan. The "marks" have a "**primitive**", **haptic** participation in the day. Yet despite an apparent abstraction, how **unabstract** are these wind marks!



1/24th of 90 x 85cms. You would almost say that it's a pity that people have to have a whole image since here in the detail you can better feel the rain. That was an insight behind 20th century questioning of a facile representation. If we know "what something is" too clearly, we stop looking. That was the insight behind Impressionism - they really looked and so too, quite rightly, must the viewer put in some work, and we don't just respond, "Oh that's a ..." . Our view of what constitutes an adequate Representation tends to see conventionally. A painter has the difficult task of inventing a language that can get **more load into its image**, yet not lose touch with Bacon's "Armature of the real". I wanted to have "rain" and "lightning", "trees" and "moors". If you look at the whole image on the right, you can see how much of that day I am wanting to fit in.



Whole. Were I to stand in a studio making up mere "marks", I would miss all the pleasure of this advancing spectacle . The pleasure-fear of rain falling and ruining this pale imitation of the real thing on the paper! Rain falling almost upon me as shown on the left hand side. The chiaroscuro of the water in contrasting impact, with the first drops of rain striking the surface, while to the left is an approaching curtain of rain and in the distance, a little afterwards, the excitement of lightning striking from the thick layers of rain laden clouds. A poor thing would be the cogitations of a studio, although recently, I've done a lot of that, trying to finish 270 left over, incomplete paintings of the last 40 years. But oh, how slow I paint inside compared to the "careless abandon" outside!



1/24th of 90 x 85 cms. Painting rain. Another sudden shower like that previous and opposite. A good challenge to somehow find an equivalent mark for that rain. The rising distant moor hidden in the sheets of rain. The distant Hawthorn tree. The gate. The near nettles. Difficult to do well while trying to protect the paper!



1/16th of 95 x 90 cms. A sudden shower in May. Painting in a "studio" is a lame thing in comparison with being there and worrying about too much rain, but I hope that hurly-burly involvement is apparent in the painting. The marks for trees and grass in the wood are rudimentary but join in the rhythms of the clouds and the downpour. The hawthorns under the deluge, and in the far distance on the right, can we just see a horizon clearing of clouds? How beautiful is such a spring day. Divide this painting not into 16 but 100 parts and every one should hold a "representation"!



1/6th This is a good example of the imitative, natural effects of water colour: how its paper shines through the transparent paint which fuses and seeps the colour. Some of these "watery" effects are evident in the detail on the right. Here the diagonal hand movement is part of the rhythm, but the "bleeding" of the colours is important. in conveying that last brilliance of the cold day. If you use at times a dry brush, it leaves specks of white which act as a sort of white pointillism, and then do the same procedure again with a different dry colour and then both can be reactivated by passing a slightly wet brush across the area. A beautiful medium is watercolour.



1/3rd of 75 x 55 cms. Winter evening after sunset. This is also watercolour used wet and intermingling. A beautiful medium - its intrinsic imitations of weather and season in its watery suffusions. Here too, a dry brush that can be dragged across the paper to leave dots of the paper's "touche", that is left unpainted by the dry brush as it passes quickly over it: its metaphoric imitation of that effulgent brightness of evening. Some lovely imitation effects are got by adding new colour to an area of still wet watercolour. How the light glitters.



1/36th. 90 x 80 cms. Let's say that most people who were asked to pick, "the most realistic" of some paintings, this would not satisfy many of their realism requirements, although it might do better than others. Both of these details are from the one painting. Probably the colours here would not pass the test of "natural". In representational painting there is a limit to the "liberties" we can take. Here the colour is unreal but a painting may still seem realistic. What matters is that, as in a key change in music, the relationships retain a proportional or qualitative differentiation. Is there something "idealised" in this, as if we might wake up and say, "I dreamt last night that it was snowing and I was standing before a stream, and the colours were as bright as stained glass. It seemed like a previous world". Again read Jeffers' words - page 7.

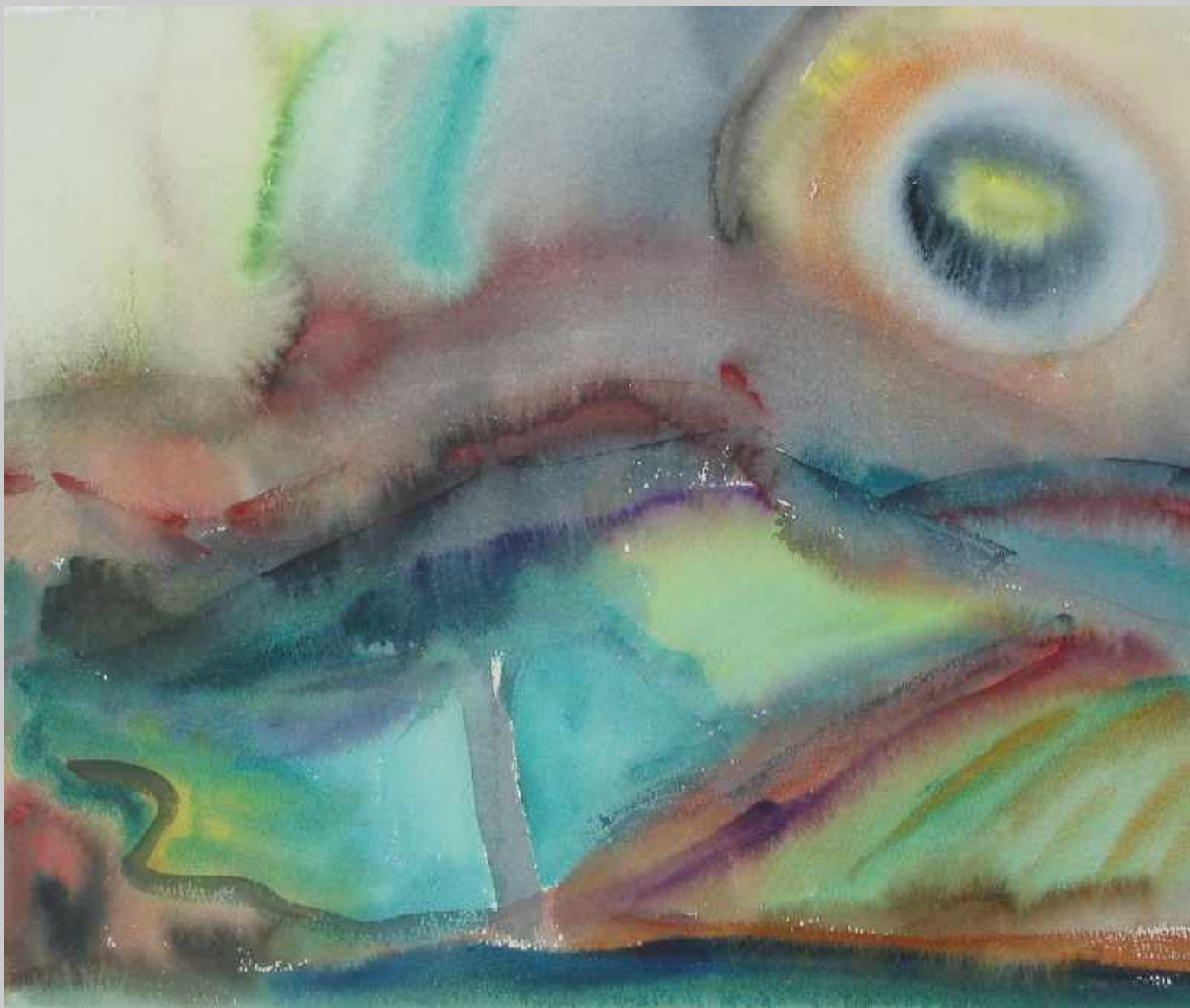


There is no reason why a painting should not borrow the expressive brightness of stained glass as a form of ideality and as a transposing of feeling. Abstract art practitioners tell us of the intrinsic quality of colours and their "symphonic" combinations! Here I was looking to express a shadow of wonder. A painter might strive to imitate how Milton imagined Adam's first glance of wonder:

**And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
Birds on the branches warbling: all things smiled;**

**About me round I saw Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.**

What words



Whole. 17 x 15 inches. Both are whole and only 17" but they resemble the details. .These two are obviously sharing in that brush stroke vigour of Chinese ink drawing. They also try to let the colour express itself, yet keeps the show on the road by telling us - "there are fields sky and sun".



Whole. 17 x 15 inches. Likewise this painting indicates sky, hill and trees but lets the colour and the suffusions (that play around this "armature of the real"), **say itself**. You could call it abstract art plus!



1/9th of 100 x 110 cms. The same painting as that opposite. As I was painting this - (like all the paintings it was done outside) - I thought of keeping the paint loose as if it were a sort of homage to Jackson Pollock, though obviously I was constrained by the need to still represent a stream, trees, and clouds! When I say loose, I meant that I liked Pollock's "action" painting with its arm movement physicality, visible in the paint traces. However most of the paintings already show that movement and after all, here it was a windy autumn day, the leaves were blowing loose in the air and the stream was full and swirling. Pollock you'd say, was there in that day! So paint may be as energetic as "action painting" but also be a windy, autumn day. Win Win!



1/9th. To better show what I meant about "action" painting, here is another 1/12th of the same painting. The leaves and the clouds seem to be all disintegrating under the autumn wind. "Looseness" seemed to be the language of that day, and for me Landscape painting should communicate such a mimetic, haptic involvement, which I hope gets subliminally reinforced by the crows blown high in the sky. But just suppose we turned it upside down and lost "what it is of"! It seems to me that the really beautiful abstractions occur in representational painting - the spark jumps the gap!



Whole of 90 x 85 cms. This uses white paper or blue to stand for "snow", though the white is also left as a form of drawing, but given the snow "scene", the white is naturalised as "snow". The few early snowflakes create a sense of three dimensional space. Always such snow scenes must communicate the listening silence and "winter's bareness everywhere".



1/16th of 80 x 80 cms This is a stream with orange peaty water. I put a blue crayon swirl to stand for "current". Because this is so close up, certain painting matters come into sight. There are some pale yellow "leaves" from the hazels that are indicated. In similarly short hand way, the little beach beside the water is only suggested. Many of the new forms of representation of the 20th century, starting with Impressionism, were to represent in a less tromp d'oeil fashion. For example the paintings of Matisse, Picasso, Francis Bacon are representational in a new way. (see comment p. 83).



1/9th of 110 x 100 cms. This was a painting of a slowly sagging Blackthorn tree. It was beautiful both in winter with its mass of twigs and in spring, with an effulgence of blossom which I painted for many years till it died: though recently I notice it has begun to send out shoots from a resurrecting branch. The whole painting is one of the most musical that I have done, because the representational "abstractions" of the twigs and grass and then up into the clouds give it a rhythmic coherence of the parts. (And then those lines of Milton seem to be a possible ideal "content" of a landscape).



Whole. 110 cms square. Opposite the paint marks were small and even, whereas here the marks are more like a scribble. This was a windy leaf blowing autumn day so the impetus implicit in the scribble marks seemed fitting, but in both cases the white paper left by the brush is important for the rhythms that the unpainted paper sets up. Done at the same time as 83. The rhythms of the scribble, its music.



Both paintings are whole. 75 x 55 cms. Watercolour is a medium where you get it right or you don't, and if it's the latter, there's no going back, except that when still wet you can add, but not subtract, unless blot it to be less. These two are of a vineyard. It was a late evening in autumn. There is something special in the way that watercolour takes to the paper. You can keep it very wet or use a dry brush. Here above it's dry enough to preserve here and there, little white specks of paper which serve to add to the evening brilliance of the colour through the contrast. The cherry tree has its foliage just blocked in, with its browning leaves, and the foreground plants are briefly summarised. The painting is really "about" the rich autumn colours at such an evening hour after sunset. Years after doing it, I find something **fervent** in it and its companion painting. Abstraction with a home!



Here there occurred one of those lucky chances - it began to rain but only lightly and to the advantage of the dull painter! The little spots of rain are not in any way representational of leaves but yet they work to give a pleasing effect of varied light on the plants. The cherry tree seems further advanced in its autumn browns. I suppose you could say that there are many "abstract" effects in it, above all the unrealistic simplification of the plants into blocks of colour which the wetness of the intermingling paint slightly mitigates. But such intermingling makes the painting into a metaphor, that somehow gave the whole its **exaltation**. So a painter finishes what he started out not foreseeing, and then afterwards, both these paintings make an amalgamated thing: place, season and mood, and for the appearing "content", I reach for the word, **fervent**. Mysterious!



1/12th of 80 x 85 cms.. Here is an acrylic and opposite, a lino cut. Both say something about graphic - mark making - both those of "design" marks and those of representation. Opposite is a lino cut of about 20" which shows how the directional marks give the effect of energy and almost of exultation. Similarly above, the white "glare" of the sun is summarised with the rough impact of the white brush strokes and the white edged cloud set against the flicker of the dark leaves and the black cloud. "Con **brío agitato** and all of it, **staccato**"! The same description for the lino cut!





Whole. 75 x 55". If you compare the visual impact of the whole and the detail, it is clear why I have this absurd idea of forcing a viewer to keep nose-close to a painting, so that the right hand detail could not be diluted into the "whole", by "stepping back"!!! Nor would it be resolved by getting my imagined "apprentices" to make blow ups of the details! What is needed is just to be close up - that is what people do for small paintings like Palmer's sepias: they peer into their smallness! Certainly they do not "stand back"!



1/16th. I find it even surprising to myself to compare this detail with the whole opposite! To begin with we are aware of the rain drops that have given such "graphic" interest and variation to the larger "slab" marks, mottling them with their patina. The brush marks are seen to be overlapping each other, each with its own direction which is what gives the painting its energy. You could say that the abbreviations, ("abstractions") of this, feed back into the over all place - river, sky, wood and stream, and obliquely represent something more: but what!? How eloquent the detail is without the self evidence of, "oh it's a painting of...."! and the shorthand of the river Erme (Devon) seems eloquent too. "By indirections we find directions out". The beautiful byways of representation!



Both are **1/12th of 909 x 85 cms**, of the same whole painting. This painting is so old fashioned. The sheep, the snow and icicles, the catkins. "Don't you know; the times have moved on"! But - dear day, season, and place! This may be a very banal, yesterday painting, but it seems a pity that fashion makes it unlikely that younger, better painters are, almost, not allowed to try.! But let's wear our naivete with pride!



The stream has ice forming on it. The colour is a blue-grey of the icicles and the partly frozen edges. The grey blue suggests a slight mist. There is only the slight green yellow of catkins and left over hay that was given to the sheep. In such a painting there is world and there is painting, but the former should be the most important. The whole image seems to be iced and icicled and the sheep eat their hay. Brrr! Cold.



1/9th of 105 x 100 cms. Perhaps this should have even smaller marks, white spaces and frequency in order to glitter more and yet also to catch that "content" a painting should always contain.



1/24th. There are various effects here that you might call decorative, except that they have a deeper emotional pull. The green and blue of the macherel sky, the catkins against the snow, the blue of the snow across the moor, the shadowed dip with its straggled trees, the barn. And that is only 1/24th! Long live representational painting and its "armature of love"! And all just marks.



1/9th of 90 x 85cms. The sun was finally overcome by the clouds, laden with coming snow. In this detail we attend to all the particularities: the glare of the sun, the few snow flakes, the distant moor, the twigs of the hazels, the yellow of the sunshine and the catkins, the departing crow, all of which tend to be missed when looking at the whole "scene" and the "Chinese" eloquence of the marks is missed. How full of sensation is this detail! The whole painting has the same patina of marks as this detail. Again, that wish that viewers of the paintings could not step back, because a painting is not just to be viewed as "scene", but as a painting! (The visceralness of it - like music!): the odd flakes already falling. Such realistic effects in representational painting often depend on formal, "abstract" aspects of **rhythm, abbreviation, pattern**, "exaggerated" colour. Here for example are dashes of yellow that "echo" that of the snowy clouds, and also of the catkins that are so visible in winter. Incidentally there is such pleasure in being outside painting the drama of such a body-felt evening - the evening's cold! The marvel and hurry of it.



1/24th. This was very enjoyable to paint. The high piled clouds which I tried to make as energetic and almost as imitational of the swooping swifts,. That partly explains the diagonal lines which call up the whizzing diving of the swifts. As Impressionism showed, there should be some imaginative work to do both in the painter and the viewer in order to make a painting arise! Can it be true that we have lost 80% of our swifts? Oh the misery of that thought.



1/16th of 85 x 80 cms.. This sepia has the same pictorial advantages that make us like black and white photography so much. The sharp contrasts. The unity given by gradations of just one colour. The harmony possible to a single colour. The **necessity** and possibility to distinguish those elements that make for a harmonious image - for example the gradations of wash, and distinctions of drawing and the dance of white spaces. The balance of fact and rhythm.



1/16th. The "armature of the real"; that phrase of Bacon's ? His paintings clearly refer us to another additional phrase he coined - "the brutality of fact": he gives us enough (the armature) for us to recognise a reality we know. The two phrases point to the wide gamut of representation that may occur around the "armature". On the one hand it has to clearly orient us to "wave more wave than wave" - a kind of super charged realism that while focusing our memory on the world we know, takes advantage of this to disturb our expectations or sense of the "real"; to give us in fact, "a wave more wave than wave". This I think describes perfectly Picasso's drawings and paintings of "bodies". Picasso is witty. That is why in an exhibition you see so much smiling. People get it! Here I so wanted to respect the foam and flow of this cascading stream but are the marks too conventional, stale? A painting should wake us up to what we have stopped noticing. Is this stale, unrenewed?



1/6th.



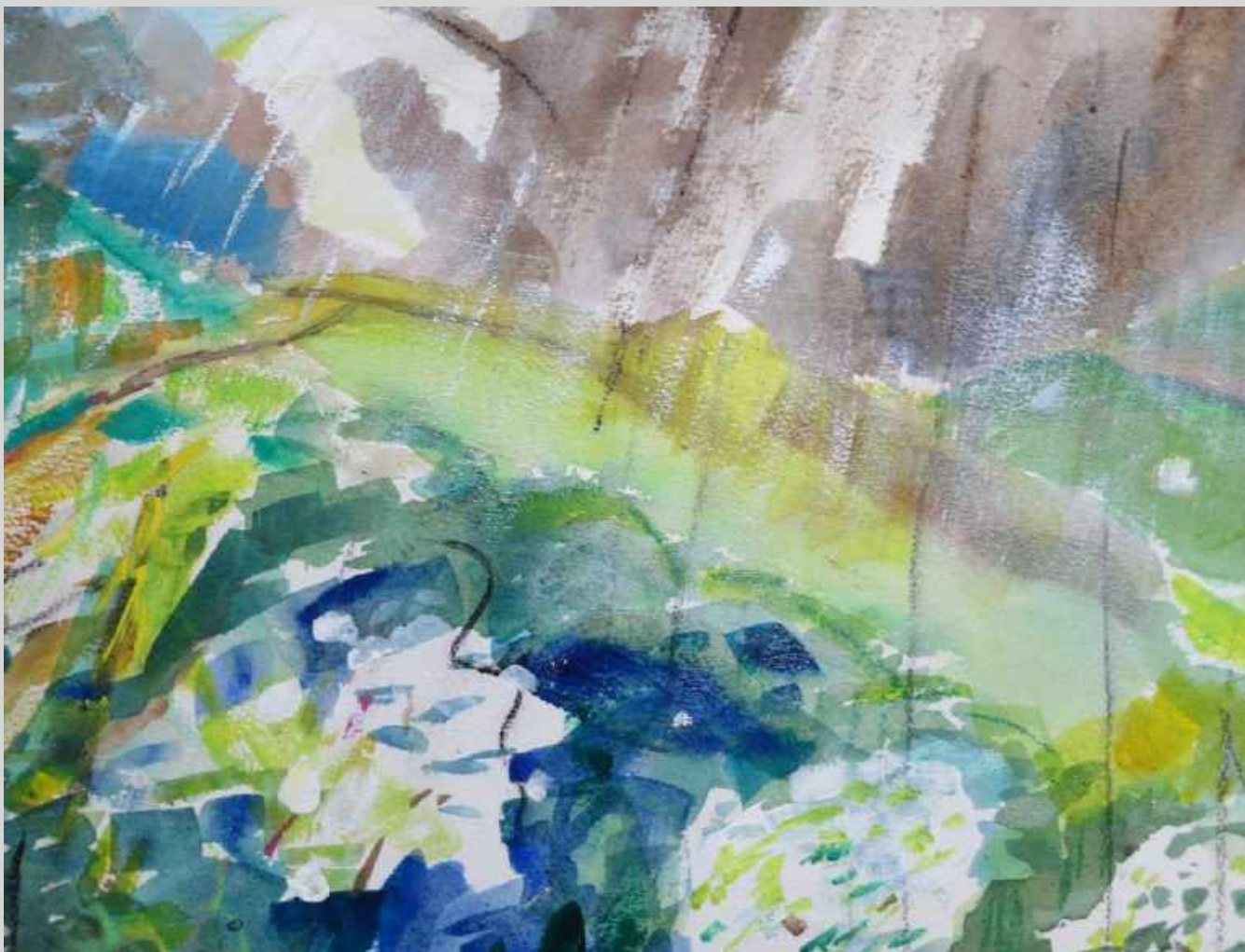
Whole. 75 x 55cms. This is worth seeing close up to see better how the white paper, being rough, has left over specks of white as the dry water colour paint has passed over it. Its that dryness of the paint combined with the white paper is the suggestiveness of such a winter evening. In fact subsequently I used a pointed razor to pick off the colour and renew the white that I had too hastily covered. (see centre).



1/12th of 85 x 80 cms. More swifts throwing themselves about the sky! The painting of the sky tries to mimic/suggest that velocity with the lines of "hatching" in the sky and the curves of the various trees while the white in the trees should borrow the light of the sky in the leaves upturned by the wind.



1/64th of 90 x 85 cms. Here too the rough surfaced white paper is important. When a dry brush passes over it it leaves what they technically call "scumble"; the alternation of paint left on the high point of the paper and the hollows, still white because untouched. That has been added to with white paint and the drawn current.



1/16th od 90 x 85 cms. This is another example of "eloquent" paint, in the sense that in trying to represent, what I saw, the brush has made eloquent abbreviated marks. This is an attempt to paint rain and how it puts a pallid veil across the landscape. There are strokes of diluted white and the crayon marks of white and black are only obliquely representational, for they might more fittingly be called hieroglyphs: "rain". However a magic of representational painting is that such an unrepresentational sign for rain can, when supported by the rest of the "cast", seem to be much more rain!. The hawthorns in the foreground share the "agitato" of the rest.



1/24th. The dashes marks and the rounded crayon marks of the clouds as it were, participate in the flight of the swooping swifts and the marks for the branches on the left have the gestural speed of the swifts! Maybe in another life (!) I could find marks that might say this. Once more - Milton:

About me round I saw
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled;

Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed. (Milton).



Whole. 75 x 55 cms. Evening sky. Catkins and rain that has almost washed out the painting because you can see how the rain is making channels and puddles on the paper. But that is the beauty of watercolour and the resulting fusions of colour were after all suitable for such a day: puddles become "expressive"! See how the catkins, sky and all pulse with rain and light!



Whole. 75 x 55 cms. On p.21 I wondered about the gamut of representation. Here is a much loved place, so it has to look "real"! That wall, that conservatory, the wheel barrow, those flying autumn leaves, and then people must say - yes, that's how I remember it. But then shouldn't all paintings have that same quality as that given to ones who knew that place - as Seth does? All art should have respect for every and anybody's "reality". It is **ours**.



Whole. 75 x 55 cms. Wilkey's moor garden. Place, the sitting outside to paint it has always been for me part of painting, (as for fishing!). Here are three of the same place that I would probably never have thought of painting but for knowing it so well. Someone who was a young child when I painted them is so happy to have all three. The secret of landscape painting is to make place similarly significant to other people. The Impressionist did that. The "armature of the real" is often made from just such an ordinariness as the two wheel barrows, the ladder, the cat, the football and a familiar autumn day.



Whole. 75 x 55cms. Wilkey's moor garden. You could say that here the "armature of the real": the garden, is accompanied by the curves of brush stroke that draw the grass, the cat, the trees, the clouds and flying leaves: bound together by the emotion of memory. Like a good photo, a painting should convince you - "this is how it was", so present but gone! "Ou sont les neiges d'antan"!



1/24th of 90 x 90 cms.. Painting envies music, for the way its combinations of sound and tempo can go straight to the mind and heart. The painter has a more obtuse medium and the language has to be invented and that sometimes seems to others, just an incomprehensible mess! There are different shaped brushes and their marks are part of the alphabet. Here I used the square shaped brush - these marks stand roughly (!) for areas of leaves or clouds and have various orientations which conveys (I hoped) the jagged abruptness of such an early Spring day. Colour and colour-contrast and the tempo and direction of the brush marks are painting's notation. Then hopefully others knowing the season can read off the marks. What are those squares of blue and crayon marks doing!?



1/24th. of 90 x 90 cms. The clouds are "drawn" by the white between them. Those small clouds with yellowish light coming through - the thin flicks of "sun rays" breaking through.as thin white lines and I think that to the fields I must add such lines of light in order to describe that over head light of early afternoon and make the whole landscape flicker, breathe and reflect the sky's light.



1/24th of 90 x 95 cms. The shape of water and how to render it is never satisfactorily done! Here there was a double current: one diagonally from the left bank upwards from left to right and joining another flowing along the far bank, right to left. There was a clear merging of these two currents and often this merging of two leads to ripples which unless careful, when drawn, do not lie flat! The problem is how to interweave these currents. Such things matter otherwise one's homage to the out-there fails.



1/24th of 100 x 100 cms. This was done in the same place and time of year as that opposite but here I had a playful idea to "do a Jackson Pollock", that is, to use a drawing action that was loose at the wrist - a little like Pollock's use of arm movement to give movement to his abstract image. Nice idea but better if it could translate the vigorous movement of stream, bank and trees and (in the other 24 parts) the scudding clouds .



1/25th of 100 x 95 cms. Both of these are "abbreviated", "ok, if you like, use the word, "Abstracted", so they need the whole to render these smaller parts readable but that for me, is not a bad definition by what I mean by "oblique" representation: when there is sufficient all-over "reality" for the viewer to orientate by and thus "read" the "oblique" marks within the whole, but the point of the details of this book is to claim a reality also for these oblique details. Here stream and banks. The glitter of light.



1/25th of 90 x 90 cms. This you could say was one in which I wanted to imitate Action painting - that is go say, marks that were determined by the action of the arm and asserting no "meaning". But here, although I was doing an "action painting", it was still subordinated to representation - at whatever remove it seems. Again it is worth remembering Chinese Calligraphy as well as Tachist abstraction. Both assert "the mark" as eloquent in itself. Here a bank of bushes.



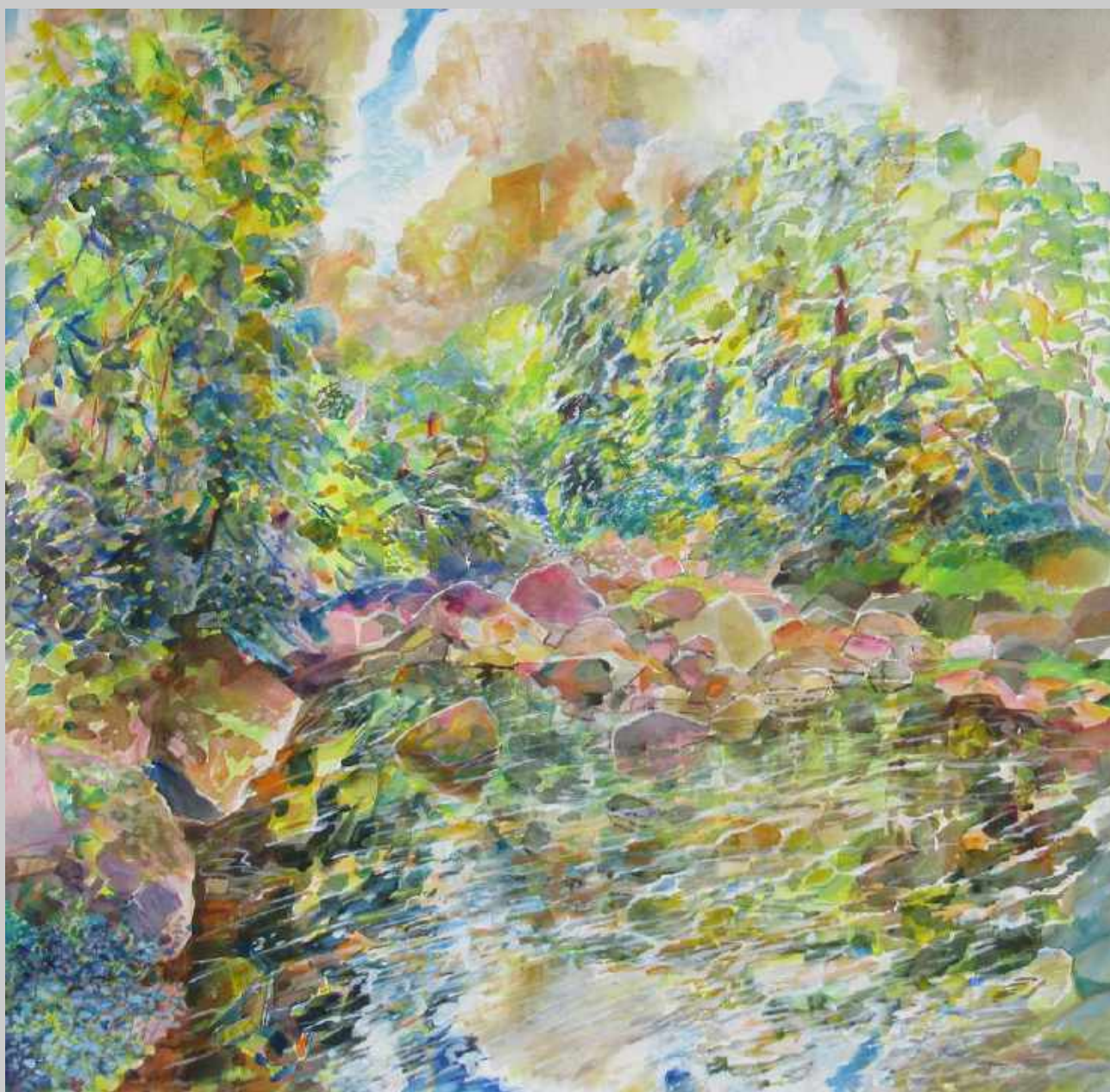
1/12th of 95 x 90 cms. A painter's language is made of paper, brushes, colours and the possible combinations of these under the impetus of intended drawing - mark making. Here the terms of music are again useful as the brush sets up the "musical" rhythms of its "representations". The stream, the autumn, the whole impetus of the day: the moving ripples in the water, the wind in the trees. All those diagonal marks on the far bank are both representing, and also using colour to do what abstract art presumes to do with "pure" (!) colour.



1/24th of 90 x 80 cms. This is a very small detail and probably needs help from the other 23 pieces! However it's a good example of the important representational obliquities underlying a painting. Here, the "stream" - white crayon, winter branches dark crayon. There is a holly bush and overlaying branches across a stream. The white spaces are left untouched by the crayon and paint marks and are obviously important in setting the rhythms going of the painting.



1/9th of 95 x 90 cms. Both of the same painting. The white edging represents the overhead light on the tree edges. It is a specially illuminated time - midday, much loved by Constable for its reflective brightness and vivacity, and his marks for upturned leaves for which he was disparaged by the Royal Academy "judges" as being his "snow". I like it for the justification it gives to spread more evenly the enhancing white between the colours. The clouds need to retain some cloudiness rather than mere paint. I have hesitated a long time whether to soften that brown orange underside of the central cloud. Is it too painterly? Maybe it should be more effaced, though I like it. In the whole you can see the affecting poetry of those whites: Midday sun and clouds.





1/20th of 85 x 80 cms. The truthfulness of Impressionism was that looking is cumulative - especially when we look hard and do not go by rough approximate looking - as we often do when we think we "know" (already) what is there before us. In that sense a painter returns to attentive ignorance - or tries to look without pre-formulation. This is a frosty scene beside a stream in the late afternoon. The low sun is touching the branches of the hazels and there is a holly bush (below). The rough white crayon marks add some pale light illuminating the branches and twigs. The blackbird induces some silence. (see the missing 19 bits!). The marks for the hazel branches and the glare of the sun share in the "hatching" and the marks in the sky merge and maybe are a tiny pace towards fulfilling that quotation opposite. The barn sets the scene.



1/24th of 100 x 95 cms. This is a detail from that on page 14, 15. Unlike the opposite page there is no hatching of thin parallel marks but single slashes of diagonal colour to represent the exclamatory nature of that summer evening. I very much exaggerated the "blue" of the evening because I was struck by the purple of the shadows. You could say that this painting is half way between naturalism and visionary "exaggeration". Knowing that it represents a late summer evening, how exciting are these vestiges of colour on that "blue shadow"! look at them, one by one. Hieroglyphs!

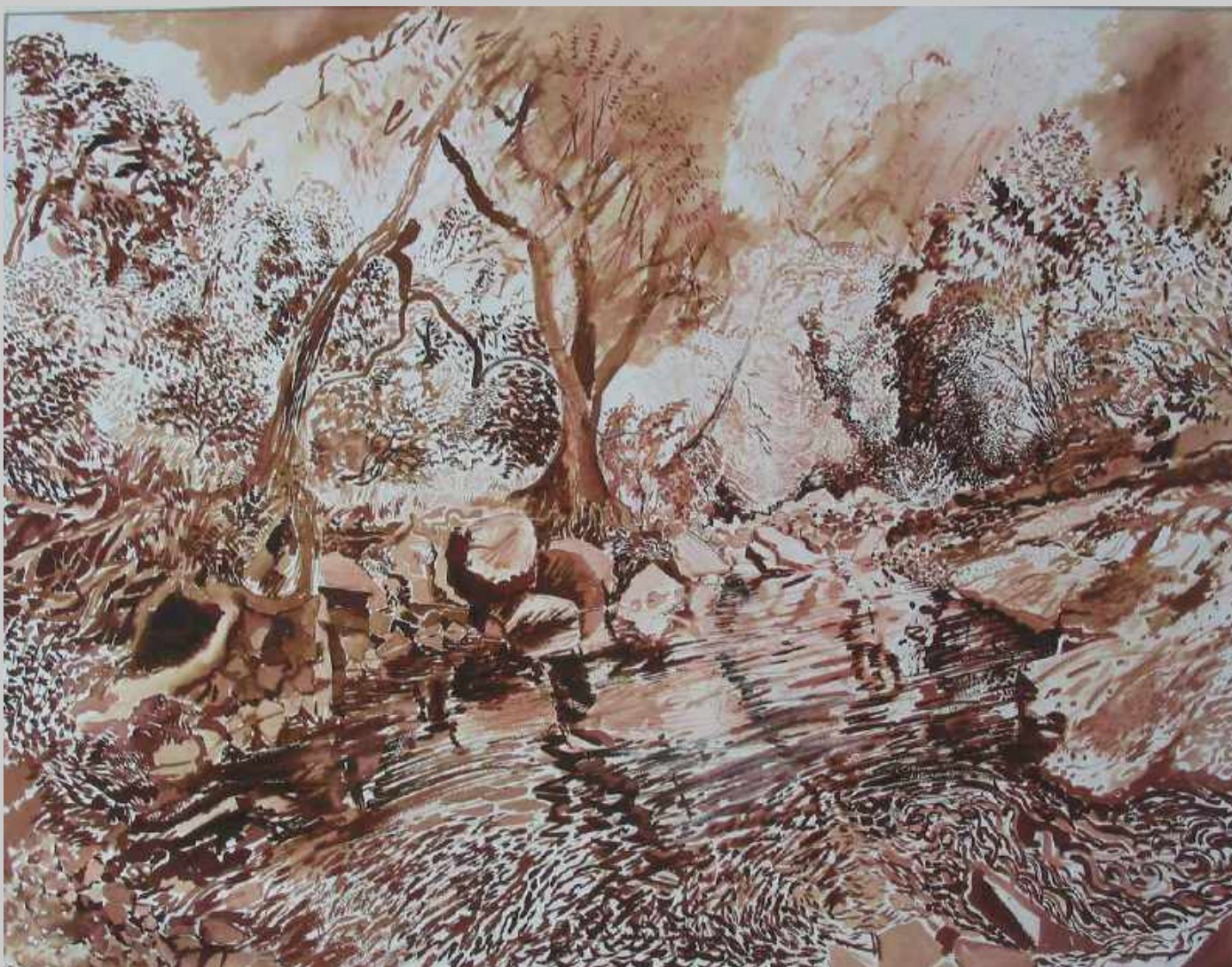


1/1/9th of 95 x 95 cms. This painting was conditioned by the curves of the bare winter branches, so that the shape occurs all over. In the abundant "bare" white spaces the few autumn leaves have a chance to stand out. Another painting of "whites".



This is a **whole painting, 75 x 55 cms.** was one of those moments that encourage you to make a painting into a brief exclamation mark and for that, watercolour is marvellously eloquent. The white acts as an exclamatory energy and enhancer of the colour. The diagonals of the stream's ripples seemed to need a asimilar echoing "tache" all over. Added to that, the painting was done in less than an hour and so many years later I look at it enviously! You could describe it with the terms of music and rhetoric. **Agitato con brio.**





Both are **whole paintings 90 x 85 cms.** On the left you see a swimmer in the water and there is much more mingling, "atmospheric" brush strokes and an attempt to paint the rain. The one above is sharper and makes the white of the paper give a sharp, bright chiaroscuro effect suitable to the bright afternoon that the large clouds suggest. This sepia uses the contrast of white paper alternating with the ink. Opposite, the rain, the distant moors, the wild garlic bottom left and the dry dead tree and the rain spotted surface of the stream with its ripple circles are important as are the rain soaked wet merging marks. Such realistic touches give a painting a smell of the outdoors rather than the "studio"! That one goes "**Andante**"!



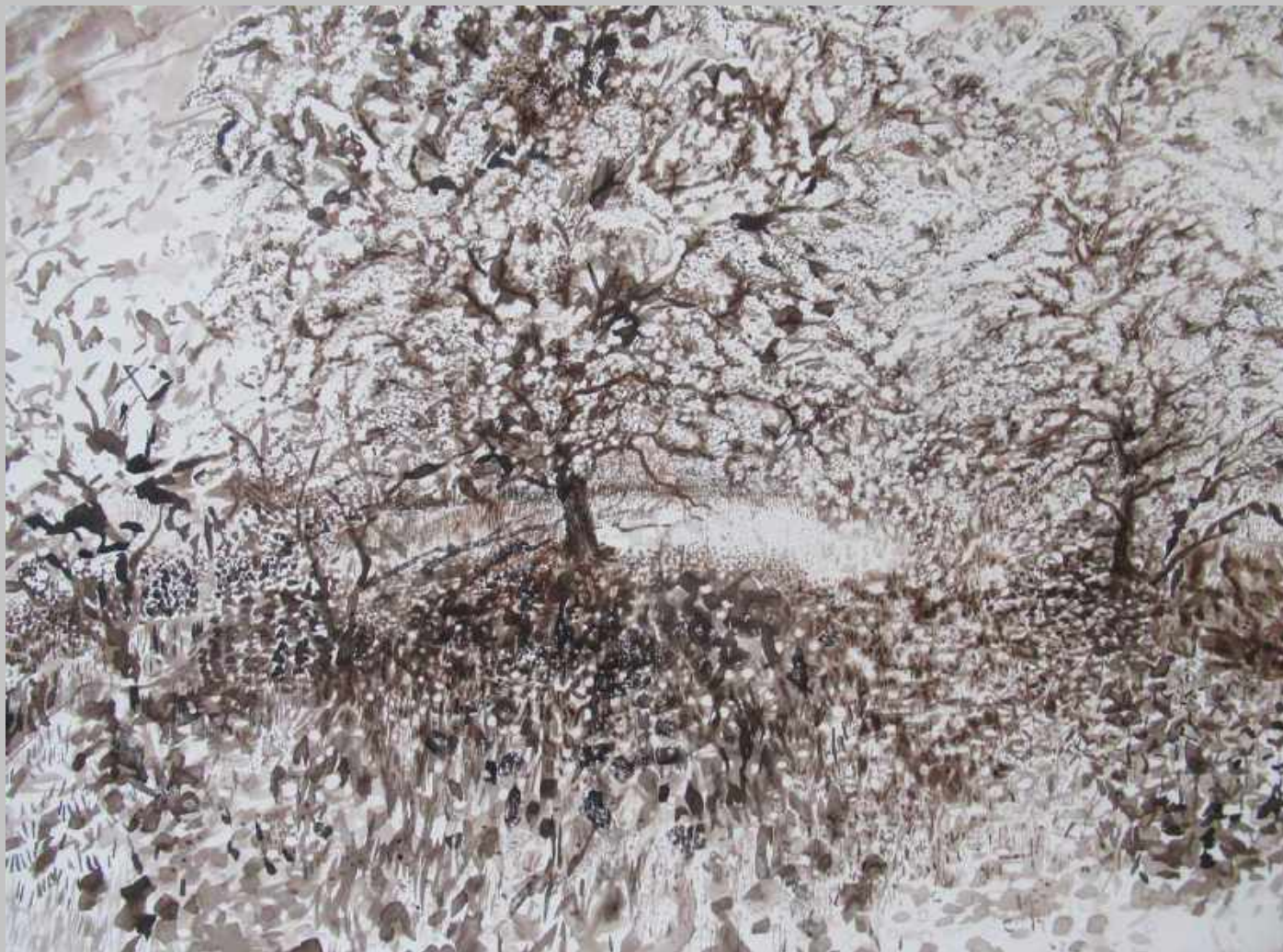
1/25th of 100 x 95 cms. These two details from the one painting, define my attitude to painting. It has to include the particular in order to make a homage to the everyday. The gate, the frozen edges of the stream, the hazels with their catkins, the icicles and the sheep feeding on the hay, while in the detail opposite, the strange under colours of a snow laden sky. If the colours seems untrue that is because in painting, on condition that they remain proportionate, such untruths can seem more convincing; and besides, colour is emotive.



1/16th of 100 x 95cms. The sky presents an interesting question. A snow laden sky has often a range of barely perceptible mauve and purples and even very pale greeny yellows. Of course I have exaggerated this element for “expressive” reasons, though despite my exaggeration, it is that base “armature of the real” of our personal body experience of a sky of gathering snowfall which helps us make sense of, and to “read” these representational short hands, and their emotional “distortions”. Those colours that lie behind the thickening fall of snowflakes being blown from right to left are expressive, and they make the dots of the falling flakes seem less intrusive. In winter the catkins on the hazels are a marvellous contrast - especially with the snow. It's a fine thing to sit worrying whether snow will spoil the painting; but I have had beautiful effects from the colours that congregate around a fallen snowflake. As for freeze marks - they are too competitively beautiful with my little human scratchings!



Whole. 85 x 75. The rhythm of this painting comes from the criss crossing diagonals of the tree's lower branches - **bottom left to top right** and the counter diagonals of the upper branches and hillside slope - **top left to bottom right** with the shower marks and the nettles beneath the tree in an **upward right lean**. The whites are not just kept for the blossom but give white paper brightness to the clouds and between the drawing marks all over. **Allegro vivace.**



1/2 of 90 x 95 cms. The sky and sides are what is mostly missing. The representation here was of a hawthorn tree but I didn't want to unbalance the whole, so the illuminated cloud edges echo the blossom as does the whole sepia drawing. The dandelion globes and the little illuminations of sunshine between the shadows under the trees permit a more rhythmic integration and it is those harmonies and rhythms that can make a painting poetic. I may load more detail onto this to make it fuller. I must try for more of that intensity I so admire in Samuel Palmer. *Veloce con brio.*



1/30th of 90 x 90 cms. This another detail from the same painting: (See 128-9). It tries to catch the early flakes of the coming snowfall, the swirling stream, the gathered snow between the rocks. There is a holly bush on the other side of the stream and snow is beginning to settle on the near rocks. Beautiful stillness despite the streams subdued chatter.



Whole. 85 x 75 inches. The sky had high cirrus clouds and so the drawing lines of the drawing seemed appropriate for the whole which then is bound together under the energy of these generalising hatching marks. Perhaps that was suggested by the striations of the left over snow on the hillside and the long clouds. Those browny marks in the sky need to be diluted away, although water colour "mistakes" can never be completely retracted. This is a painting that asks interesting questions about what we too easily call "drawing" and there is a lot that seems to support that Chinese adage of "less is more" in painting. "Abbreviation" might be the word to catch the important concept in drawing: something so miraculously demonstrated by Rembrandt.



Whole. 75 x 55cms. Someone might object - "What are all those tick marks doing in the sky"? You could answer that it was simply the chosen mark for the whole painting, but also it was partly "justified" by the twigs of that winter scene and the small current marks of the water and if I changed that "language" I would create a quite different mood. There is a pleasing contradictory affirmation of the snowy stillness that is given by these hurrying, fugitive marks of its representation. An oxymoron!



1/3rd of 95 x 80. I'm still unsure, years later whether I was right to not "fill in" the remaining blossom parts of the trees or not "complete" the sky. Sometimes the unfinished has its own appeal. Perhaps the detail of this foreground water would be served better by a tighter complete drawing all over?



1/12th of 90 x 85 cms. This was a March day with those beautiful fast moving playful clouds - not a drop of rain in them and the sun giving out at last, some warmth. The twigs were white bright when the sun came out which justifies all that white crayon standing for the illuminated grey twigs. This too was given a relaxed and pleasant mood by the generalised curves to everything - and even though there were still no leaves, it all seemed to foresee "Proud pied April dressed in all its trim that puts a spirit of youth in everything".



1/9th of 90 x 95 cms. I like the rhythm effects in this. The simplifications go with the lightly drawn diagonals of the wood, moving up into the directional clouds with their bright-day brown and grey clouds with their white edges. The yellow "leaves" of the wood are diagonal like the other marks and this helps communicate the wind-driven day. As I often remark, this 1/9 of the whole is almost enough because the detail is giving enough realism and which is perhaps too diminished when hidden amongst the other 8 parts! All those parallel brush marks in the sky have the force we would feel in the wind. Brisk day.



1/16th of 100 x 95 cms. In this detail it is clear that the two most influential fact of the representation is the dryness of the colour on the brush (with little diluting water) and the "tooth" (smooth or rough quality of paper). This meant that I could overlay colours without them "bleeding" into each other. In effect the water colour is used as if a crayon. This meant that the white paper was itself a "brightness" similar to that of the late winter evening and where the dry brush passed across the paper it left little specks of white which was lower than the paint stroke. Technical matters, yes, but the jubilation at all things bright and beautiful! "And when snow bright, the moor expands. How shall your children clap their hands". Stevenson.



1/24th of 100 x 95 cms. This is one of those paintings that I feel could never have enough small marks building the density. Here is visible a holly bush with berries and the blackbird in the late evening winter sun. Painting against such sun glare is always a difficult choice between what the sun leaves still visible and one's wanting to disobey such fact with building up ever more thickness of what you know is there. I tried to give the not to obvious concentric glare-rays of the low sun. How to paint the sun! Turn it upside down and it doesn't even honour failure!



Whole. 80 x 77 cms. What does the word "design" include? A pleasing combination of aesthetic characteristics. In a painting those elements are combined to convey thought and feeling. Here was a blackthorn tree in blossom under a windy fast moving sky. The blossom was white and the edges of the clouds too. I wanted the whole painting to "support" the spirit of the blackthorn, in the sense that it participated with it. This is where the distribution of the white is important. There is the white edging to the clouds and the specks of (white) light under the tree and there is a sympathy of diagonal direction in the whole painting. You could say that landscape painting depends on the magic sympathy of that derided aspect of Romanticism - "The Pathetic Fallacy"! That is; thinking that our feelings can be participate with nature. But that is what we feel when moved by nature. A synchronicity.



Sepia 1/6th of 100 x 95cms. This is another painting that has a little of "Tacheism"; that branch of middle 20th century art that made a little too much of a mystery of "marks"! However, as pages 16-20 showed, painting can make marks that have an "eloquence", as does Chinese Calligraphy. This is just a humble "representation" of stream, rocks and banks. This exploits the expressive power of contrasting white paper and a flicker of marks to represent water ripples of light and dark and sun on leaves. Tacheism exploited a calligraphic sensory excitement of marks on white paper. Here I am trying to use it to convey the felt physical excitement of sunshine on stream and banks.



Whole. 85 X 65cms. Because of the pointed brush, this one has much more of an energetic exclamatory spirit, partly because of the exclamation mark sharpness of the marks but also because there was no rain merging those clear marks. So that day beside this wonderful sagging Blackthorn tree that I had often painted before, and is now "vanished", (sagging because undermined by ground too wet and unsupporting), I took that day a pointed sable brush because such a shape makes pointed marks, and would be suitable to an expression of exclamatory wonder: as if exclamation marks! A nice "spirituality" within something so prosaic as a brush!



Whole 150 x 110 cms. 1/9th. The same Blackthorn tree. On the left, the brush was pointed and I wanted the marks to be dry and neat whereas here the brush had no special shape and besides, it began to rain - though luckily a fine rain of the sort that sometimes you can co-opt into painting with you! These differences gave the two paintings done at more or less the same date a different spirit which you notice by comparing them: a different feeling.



1/16th of 90 x 85 cms. If abstract art has a point, and colour and shape and brush mark can have an intrinsic power, then why not give us a parallel communication: banks of plants reflected in a stream - which the other 15 parts of this painting help fix. So then, "yellows", "blues", "greens" etc have here, yes an "intrinsic meaning" and after all, if you really wish, you could turn it upside down, but the same thing is here part of water reflections, sky. A no brainer!



1/16th of 90 x 85 cms. What a lovely abstract! This was very much dependent on a particular paper, so here the water colour, being a medium that doesn't forgive second thoughts, the effect of that first touch of paint on paper was very dependent on the characteristics of the paper - its "weight" and its "tooth" - (ie. how the paper responds to the water.). Especially so for this paper which was immediately stained and nothing could be taken back. A kind of blotting paper effect but beautiful in its merging and (out of sight here), is a beautiful sunset sky as well as more abstract felicities of paint! Another no brainer! Win win!



1/20th of 100 x 100 cms.. This was a painting that was much improved when modified inside. When outside I painted the current of the stream and some rocks highlighted by the light but it lacked the harmony and symmetry that I gave it later. One way to put it is that I "idealised" it but I would prefer the thought that in painting, some effects seem oddly truthful just because they are untruthful, unrealistic, or as we said, "idealised". Maybe now as it is, it gives a correlative for the wonder that certain phenomena of nature awake in us? The lit upper sides of things has become a generalising "patterning" and a white stain glass leading! An invention! Why should abstraction have all the freedoms!



1/16th of 95 x 95 cms. This was a spring evening with on the lower left a flowering Rowan and the skyline trees muddled and dazzled out by the setting sun shining through them. In some paintings in order to communicate better you have to use the cymbals! What I mean here is the use of rough approximate strokes of colour that are percussive one with the other! Yet at the same time to hold true to what a viewer can feel are "evening colours": the suffusive rapture of it.



1/12th of 95 x 95 cms. I paint outside, though some require changes and completion because either you get discouraged or the conditions change - maybe it rains! 90% of the whole paintings from which the details of the book derive are 90 x 90 cms and done in about 3-4 hours. Thinking about these two now it is clear that I have been influenced by the panache of Chinese calligraphy. The Chinese find that some calligraphers can make hieroglyphs that are so beautiful because of the impact and eloquence of the laying of ink on white paper. Sepia ink encourages you to keep in mind this Chinese tradition. With just gradations of one colour, the rhythm and frequency of the marks is so important: the way one can utilise a sort of optical flicker of dark-light-dark-light.



1/9th of 90 x 85 cms. I explained on the opposite page, how important Chinese penmanship is. This "sepia" in fact employs 2 "colours" the sepia and a greyer ink. Because of the stream's current and sky reflections, the painting is naturally calligraphic. In both paintings, the pictorial essence lies in the chiaroscuro of the "taches" on white paper - just as in Chinese calligraphy with its meaningful marks . So I hope these too are meaningful because the real scene - water flowing, is the "armature of the real": the meaning that stands in for the united Chinese **word/ hieroglyph**. Here the marks signify a something".



1/16th of 90 x 90 cms. Here's another to turn upside down. Might people be found looking at this in a gallery and making great efforts to "appreciate" all its abstract depth? Yet how simple if this of an April landscape and this the sky! But when we have seen the other parts, then we will enjoy this "paint" because it will sprout meaning as "clouds" from our own experience of living in the world. This pale imitation of those fluffy clouds - is then, as it were, anointed with all we know and love! Now we notice the impetus of the brush stroke simulating the wind behind the clouds and those layers of thin cloud colour is also more than paint! What "sprezzatura"!



1/12th of 100 x 95 cms. This is a similar example. Clearly I was excited by this field of May blossom and all the dandelion under its shadow. For a painter the problem to solve is how to communicate that to others who see the painting: what kind of marks, what kind of colour, what kind of abbreviation, what musicality of loud and soft, what staccato or cantabile, and is it to be played "con brio"? You could say that here I am using brass instruments to describe the impact of the day. The effulgence of May! Its cymbals.



1/20th of 90 x 85cms. This was of a sunset in February. The sun is palely illuminating the hazel twigs and making a pattern that I feebly tried to catch with these small and rhythmic commas of drawing. Really there was much more I could have done in retrospect to set this scene dancing, and which would more fully have caught the fervour of golden light over pale winter fields and the hints of remaining frost by the stream and on the roof of the barn. Though not seen here, there is a blackbird surveying attentively the evening. White paper "draws" as much as does paint!



1/9th of 100 x 105 cms. Sepia ink lends itself to a joint importance with the white of the paper which plays both the role of light falling upon things and also as element in the creation of what I have called, the importance of rhythm in drawing and painting. The edging light on the leaves of the sycamore, the ripples in the stream, upon the rocks, and on the nettles, wild garlic and weeds on the other side of the stream.



1/16th of 90 x 90 cms How much "imitation" can a self respecting painter do?! I'm aware that such a painting subject - lightning, high piled clouds and a tree in blossom is not very modern. However it's that which seems to me worth painting - very much a matter of trying to summon it up and exclaim. There are passages of parallel strokes to suggest heavy rain starting in the distance on the left. The brush strokes in the sky are overlaid so that there is a suggestion of dark-white thickness in the cloud layers. The tree is illuminated by the last brightness before those clouds close in! (see p.154 and 5.)



1/16th of 90 x 85. The whole painting is painted with hatching brush strokes. That is partly an attempt to give the painting a rhythm and is partly imitational of the lines of snow/shadow on the fields, the hazel branches, the thin stretched out clouds and then the rays of the sun. Of course, the unity of these right inclining slashes is part of a hoped for "musical" undertow to the representation which contributes to its emotional undertow. The taut coldness.



1/16th of 100 x 100 cms. A section of a stream with a small waterfall. What are the right borders between what Francis Bacon called "the armature of the real" and the painterly effects that are discussed for the opposite page? It's not as if there were realism and then the rest.



1/20th of 100 x 105. This is a small section of a painting with a sky of stormy clouds. Here it is evident why I would like a painting to be so big that you could not step back. It is also another demonstration of one aspect of "Abstract painting"; "Tachisme", where the muscular representation of gesture with brush strokes on white paper is played on. But such Chinese Calligraphy is much better suited to Chinese hieroglyphs of **meaning** or to representational painting - such as this stormy boisterous sky, with its energetic slashes of torn white/dark clouds or on the right, a sudden shower. Although this book of "details" was partly a provocation, in some way it turns against me because such "abstract" effects of brush, colour and paper **do** communicate a something - but the assertion here is they work to support - a "big shower coming", not mere aesthetic "values".



1/16th of 95 x 95 cms. . This really does deserve a musical description. **Agitato con brio.** The lightning, the slanting wind driven rain, the full blossom of the blackthorn tree, the sheep, the church. **Accelerando.**



Whole painting. 75 x 55 cms. Here the marks are small and uniform and the rhythm is given by their directions. The colours of the leaves and their reflections are "autumn". But you can see where their job of representation breaks down as the directional marks become contradictory in the bottom left quarter and the sense of flatness of the water is lost! This demonstrates how watercolour gives you only one chance: you can't rub out! - unless you "cheat" and somehow (though it is always apparent), add thicker acrylic paint to cover up mistakes. There were two movements in the water - one forcefully, a top left diagonal down to the right for the current but also a bottom left up top counter flow from the rebound of the currents from the left bank. All in the same language of short strokes.



This watercolour 17 inch square. This you could say is all water colour and the artist has just sleep walked through it! It was the paper that was in charge and I could never repeat - what with watercolour you are tempted to call, the "performance" of it! Watercolours either "come off" or you fall from the trapeze! I've sometimes asked friends of a painting, "Who did this" to get the astonished reply -" you did". That's what the medium itself can do for you!! Was it about this one, done at Powerstock (Dorset), that Bruna suddenly surprised by my dotting and dabbing asked, "what are you doing"! Yes, truly, a good question!



32 x 22 inches. As can be seen, this was another watercolour that was a partnership with the rain. Beautiful effects. Of course another partner was watercolour itself whose watery suffusions produce such effects. In a way, there is an imbalance and I should have called up the rain or lent further back to allow spots in the foreground to simulate the rain drop circles on the water.



1/16th of 90 x 90 cms. This has worked very well in its crispness. Everything is as if braced by the April wind. The sky diagonals and the sharp white edges to the clouds and the briefly indicated boughs of the trees and the fresh still pale new yellow leaves is all given a brisk April crispness by the summary brush marks and that is made so specific by that distant hillside that seems to have entered into a cloud-cast shadow. "The uncertain glory of an April day"!



1/16th of 90 x 90 cms. This is an acrylic detail. In many ways because of its watery medium, it is similar to water colour (160-1)), but it does not have the brilliant illumination of water colour, though it can have the wider choices of thick and thin and thus of painting out mistakes! However, as with watercolour, it is a loss when the white paper can no longer shine through the colour. I prefer to keep it diluted. It is a cold day and the stream is icing at the edges. On the opposite bank there are icicles. Its blues and greys feel cold.



One painting, 1/9th of 90 x 75 cms. Both details are from the same painting. How much referent to the real is needed in painting in order for all brush strokes to be "read"! despite their variety as real? The stream's current is stylised in a Chinese sort of hieroglyphic way. The icicles and the green half formed ice on the surface of the stream - all the rest is rudimentary and just doing enough.



Since the painting is of "snow", a lot of paper can just be left. "Less is more". That emptiness allows the sky to have its colour and weight of "more snow coming". The browsing sheep are also important for setting a mood of stillness and rapt silence, typical of such snow coming days. All the branches /twigs are painted faintly to give a cold attenuated look to the whole. The pinks, yellows and mauve set the mood of the scene.



Both are 100 x 100 cms. these paintings are complete but show similarities to the details in that they do not have the support of a more obvious representation. That on the left has water at the bottom, a sky and an indication of moor. This is a painting I might be tempted into "improving" with a more obvious "armature of the real", but it would be a pity perhaps to lessen its rough impact.

Pattern at the same time as drawing. The music aspect of drawing - its rhythms. Like the other, it is rough rather than careful - approximate, but that is an important part of its impact. This is very much a painting drawn by its undrawn white paper. Sepia painted like this has a special glitter and it is important to get a unifying rhythm into the ink marks and the right degree of variation in ink intensity. It is almost a brain teaser to decide on how to distribute the marks: where to place the diluted, where the small intense marks. A bit tense because, like watercolour, ink is painting that doesn't give second chances!





1/24th of 90 x 100 cms. This is a section of wood under the last sun and shadows of a setting sun with a bright sun throbbing evening sky and the long shadows of a low sun on the moors. This is another painting that in blow-up large version would do well in a trendy gallery but there would be 23 parts missing to detract from its mystery! You can see why it occurred to some people; "Why not forget about representation and the world and just offer straight pattern and colour.



1/24th of 100 x 100 cms. You can just make out the rain falling heavily over the distant moors. The whole painting has these jagged brush strokes to represent the rain- squall coming. It is a body painting. The left white paper is a sort of painted version of music's strong contrasting sforzandi. Con brio, accelerando.



Both from the same painting and **1/16th of 90 x 90 cms.** It is early afternoon with strong light shining through the trees. The yellow chalk or paint is of the new young leaves.



The sunlight filtering through the leaves. The chalk marks also standing for this light coming through. The quiet waterfall. The crayon grass on the right.



1/9th of 80 x 85 cms.. Through some trees that are on the opposite bank of the stream, the sun is showing through the leaves and on the hillside a tree in blossom is visible. All the sharp angularity is to represent the chiaroscuro of the afternoon. Shadow-sunlight, shadow-sunlight. The left white is to lighten that contrast.



1/20th of 90 x 95 cms. This is bank of trees with a low evening sun shining towards where I was, although only breaking through here and there with its small orange lights and thus setting up an apparent blue mauve complimentary colour in the shadows. The whole painting obviously would help us make "sense" of this pleasing confusion but in a strange way this detail makes more pictorial sense seen at its literal size in this detail than would a tiny reproduction of an entire 90 cms painting.



1/25th of 90 x 90 cms. This is so different to the one opposite. This was early Spring and the wood in its just emerging leaves was so delicate, almost fragile, so I painted in these tenuous superimposed layers of paint - as if on glass. In a fancy London gallery, it would make a fine large "abstract", rather than a day in an April wood! If only I had painted 2 metre versions of this - what success!



1/25th of 80 x 75 cms. As with the previous painting, this when seen in detail, even though small is at least nearer to real size so that the detail of its marks are more apparent as 1/25th than seeing the whole painting reproduced to this size. This is obviously not "true colour" but colour that wishes to communicate an expression and response. It was almost sunset on an intense summer evening. Everything seemed to pulse with the past day's light. The fulsome effulgence of it!



1/16th of 80 x 75 cms. This is a detail of a winter evening. It is a good example of the suffusions of either wet or dry watercolour which was suitable to this moment of the day. The paper was rough which aided the non contact of the dry brush and leaving white paper as brightness. In places a wetter brush bled the colours into suffusions and an evening sky brightness. The effulgence of such evenings.



1/16th of 85 x 75 cms. This detail is even more obviously non representational although the hidden parts would clarify that very easily. This is typical of how so called "abstract" marks may easily, within the recognisable whole, be the nuts and bolts of a deeper or more oblique form of representation. Notice the freeze marks in the centre of this section. (see p.200 for whole)



1/16th of 90 x 80 cms. Like the one opposite this too is white rhythmed where the drawing trace is allied to the function of the white. It has a patchwork look with areas differentiated by drawing marks.



1/16th of 95 x 95 cms. You could write a book on "why does white have such an influence on colour and the dynamism of a painting". In this case the white is being used to simulate the pale sky that is reflected in the ripples of a stream, and that is an imitational role, whereas there is a different logic to the whites of the bank above the stream which is basically continuing the pattern of the stream although there is a sufficient "imitation" of light reflecting rocks and plants, combined with the other patterns of the watercolour drawing. However watercolours is a little like high diving where you get it right or it's imperfect. So you can see where I have had to make up for not getting the whites right by adding acrylic which seems like "cheating".



1/16th of 95 x 95 cms. Just to be polemical I think these two small details are better than many an abstract that I have seen making great claims to vacuous profundity. This a detail of a wood in Spring. The diagonal marks stand for the grass beneath the leaning trees which you also see growing parallel from the grass. The left over white paper "stands for" the bright light upon the wood. The smaller comma marks stand for the new leaves. All painting properly considered is "abstract" - that is to say, inevitably, only partially representing reality - this it is an abstraction from, but also illustration of.



1/36th of 100 x 100 cms. This is a detail seen across a stream to a bank. This is an extremely small proportion of the whole. However it makes evident how important are the small marks within even so small a part of a painting; its nuts and bolts. The sky-reflecting water has orange depths and a sky reflecting surface and we can see some new leaves are just coming out. If you like "abstracts" you could just enjoy this little bit!



1/16th of 100 x 105 cms. This detail obviously depends very much on the rhythms of the white spaces. The white spaces are exploited by the placing of the single autumn leaves in order to set them apart. The leaves are much brighter than surrounding parts. Is that "decorative" or "artistic" or both?



1/16th of 90 x 85 cms. There is a stream in the middle, crowded in by rocks and trees which curve inwards in a balanced symmetry. In this example there is much less white paper left untouched but those gaps are still important for the giving the surrounding colours a vivacity. Perhaps it could be improved by adding drawing lines of white. It is worth reconsidering what I wrote on page 5 about painting/drawing and musical terms.



1/25th of 100 x 105 cms.. I often point out the importance of the left white spaces of the paper. Here the whites partly function as bright water reflections and partly just add contrasting brilliance to the colour marks. These separating lines enhance the colour and the rhythms as seen here. It has a realistic justification in the water's glisten and the outlines of light on the tops of the rocks. All of this was once an important aspect of painting with a special name - "chiarascuro": the dramatic, enhancing contrasts of light and dark, but now "high art" is very little interested in such natural phenomena.



1/30th of 90 x 100 cms. This is of the snow covered moors with snow beginning to fall at very last light. One of those days of strange colours in a sky heavy with coming snow: yellows, mauves and browns. This seems to be painted at speed as if to get it down before darkness and coming snowfall. You can see some walls of the moors and all is seen through hazel branches with here and there a few yellow dashes of catkins. What beautiful but REAL effects can paint make to catch the sensations of being alive in the world! Odd how thoroughly without the numinous are Hockney's paintings; but that is the true reflection of our painting times! .



1/16th of 95 x 90 cms. Two different paintings but done at the same time. Hawthorns in an evening light. Because of the bright setting sun, there were dark shadows across the meadow grasses and wild flowers, almost blue between the illuminated grasses. Dandelion, Hawksweed, buttercup and meadow herb. Again those lines of Jeffers (p.7). What an innocent soul! Had he known what we know! The pity of it.



1/9th of 90 x 85 cms. The sharp contrast of the meadow flowers and the sun and shadow of it made me spatter the paint so as to make a rich tapestry effect. In both paintings the crayon made some good imitation of the light dark "chiarascuro" of such an evening."Like a dream of some spirit land it would appear, scarce fit to be touched lest it should fall to pieces, too beautiful to be watched lest it should fade away", but that is the thing itself; this but a pale copy! But when I get to 150 I will be making a better fist of it! What difference is there in "spatter" and "drawing" - the sensation.



1/20 of 80 x 80 cms. This is of a section of stream. The white was originally reflected sky. I say originally because it remained so schematic, "abstract", yet it seemed to be right and the picture would have been oddly diminished had I made it "more realistic". We are once more with Bacon's "armature of the real". This seems to still be effective and sufficient: that is the idea again of an oblique representation, like many other touches here. Maybe this needs the whole to "explain" it, so that then its "obliquity" and "indirections" would channel back into the representation.



1/16th of 90 x 90 cms. (See 224 for clouds and 51) This is an April-May afternoon with a rain threatening sky. (See 224 for the rain shower coming). Here you can see how important are two aspects of representation for me. I want to be true to what is before me yet I also want to use paint to represent what we feel in front of such natural scenes. So some few late leaves are more "signed" with yellow chalk than "drawn", but that communicates a stronger impulse as does the obvious trace left by the strong arm movement of the drawing in all of the painting; as also in the power of the two clouds. (224). Is it in the spirit of Jeffers? Worth trying.



1/25th of 100 x 100 cms. This is wild garlic in a wood on a bright, windy day. The trees, clouds and stream have a similar lean. How much of this is "drawing" and how much "design"? I think a painting is a just equilibrium between these two poles: its seeming abstraction and its seeming representation. The tensions within the "armature of the real" and in my case I would like there to be a subtone of alleluia.



1/16th of 100 x 95 cms. The blue and white of the snow, the feeding sheep, the bright yellow catkins and the boughs of the hazel. Cold and rapt silence!



1/16th of 100 x 95 cms. Beautiful frosty evening. Crows returning. The coming night's new frost already beginning to settle on everything. The blue behind the trees is too obviously not behind the trees and to be improved. These are the things that are missed when painting outside. Getting too cold! Yes it needs correcting. Perhaps the sky could be made of smaller marks, like those on the left in-between the tree. The green too abrupt in merging into blue?



1/16th of 100 x 95 cms. The few remaining leaves on the hazels. A cloudy sky with shadows across the fields. A barn that sets the scale of the pictured space, along with the gate and walls. There are some diagonal marks standing for brief "showers". There is so much "mood" to sepia paintings. The dry autumn leaves set against bare fields and seeming to be detached by the wind and fall this very minute. Maybe the picture needs a few more brush strokes of shadows across the fields.





Opposite whole. 110 x 105 cms. This 90 x 85. Both show the power of white in drawing. Here what remains is some white but also colours which show white through them and these lie under the darker brush strokes. On such a winter evening, as the sun reaches the horizon there is so much dazzle and palpitation from this head on viewpoint. It's such a beautiful moment - which maybe I have looked at full on too frequently for my eyes! It had been a day long frost. How can you make adequate homage to such an evening? Triple the marks? Opposite the enforcing unity of pale grey-black ink's variations. Its steady restraint! Tranquil.



1/36th of 100 x 95 cms. This is the sky's reflections in a stream in the evening with weeds over hanging from the right bank. Again, the beauty of transparent watercolour.



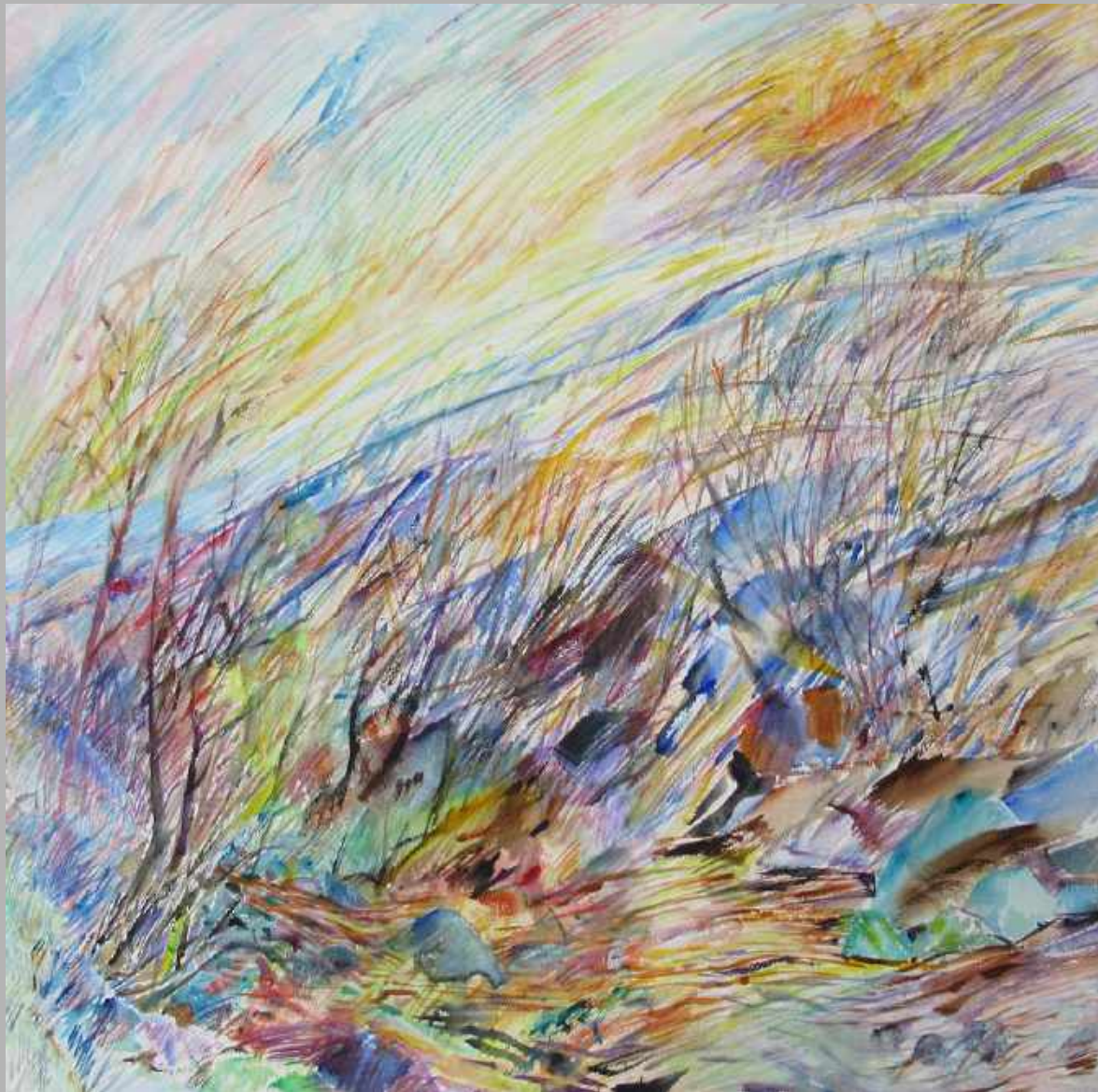
1/16th of 90 x 85 cms. You can see how much I use a kind of old fashioned "shading", more usually done with pencil. I have adopted it to draw with paint in long diagonal lines that partly draw the trunks and branches and are partly an excited conjuring up of the late afternoon's winter light, as if the light and the wind had hold of everything. That is more apparent in the whole.



1/20th of 110 x 105 cms. Look here how people **might (!)** enjoy this close up detail, if I could force them to go nose close! (and promise them 19 more sections - which, like a cow in a field, they could browse across!). This was a painting of snow covered moors with the darkening evening sky laden with coming snow; the odd flakes already falling. Such realistic effects in representational painting often depend on formal, "abstract" aspects of **rhythm, abbreviation, pattern**, and "exaggerated" colour. Here for example are dashes of yellow that "echo" that showing through the snowy clouds, and are also in the catkins that decorate winter. Incidentally there is such pleasure in being outside, painting the drama of such a body-felt evening - the evening's cold! So still. The last sun reflected in the stream. The first flakes of new snow to come. The meditative blackbird. The departing crow. The hazel branches and you're feeling cold - and alive!



1/24th of 90 x 85 cms. Side of a stream with calves in a meadow. Light filtering through the hazels onto the rocks beside the stream. Odd leaves and nettles opposite catching the sunlight. The blue mauve shadows of evening against the yellow light. Often in painting - the pleasures of seeing the short hand of representation.



Whole of 85 x 80 cms. This was a snow scene in which the winter hazel branches and the streaked sky seem to make it fitting that the whole painting should be painted with thin cross hatching brush strokes. This leaves the white paper of a watercolour showing between the colour and acts as if representing the lighter parts of "snow".



1/16th of 90 x 85 cms. These two paintings illustrate a quality of marks which both abstract and representational painting utilise. On the one hand the "eloquence" of certain marks on paper which in "abstract painting" are considered for themselves and in representation, those that stand for some aspect of reality - common to all; if of course the painter can convince with his "representations"! In this I was clearly struck by the alternating pattern of the dark light sky and the way this was echoed in the fields and trees. But what I call pattern, is yes that, but more importantly, is something common to all our experience of certain weather and its fast moving skies. The light that catches the sides of all uprights - tree or grass.



1/16th of 90 x 85 cms. This painting was an example of the strong influence of the paper on the effects of the painting/representation. What shows is the absorbency of this paper, acting a little like blotting paper where marks can not be cancelled but only overlaid. The lower part shows the reflections of sky and leaves in the stream with shadows at the sides. (see p.145 for another part)



1/16th of 90 x 90 cms. This detail shows the sun and it's late afternoon glare. The marks/leaves have also been whitened by the glare of the sun so the leaves and clouds are fragmentary and imperfectly seen.



1/12th of 90 x 85. As this is close up we can see details of the clouds edged with sun/white and the rest of the cloud seeping wet colour. Fresh leaves against the sky. In the foreground are hawthorn trees. In painting a pleasure lies in recognising the hieroglyphs; the abbreviations, indirections and generalising that is involved in representation.



1/20th of 100 x 95 cms. Another painting of abbreviations. Here the acrylic is being used thicker for its oil paint similarities and in other parts with thinner washes. This is of the distant moors with an evening light on it. You can see how subordinated are the "abstract" marks to "the evening", because they derive from a real experience of a real place. Here abstraction is in partnership! Another painting for a smart London gallery! "Oh but not another landscape, please."



1/9th of 100 x 95 cms. I tried to reproduce the pulsing effects of such a sky with light unevenly passing between the parted clouds. The same effect seems to ricochet from the land below, so you see the upright marks that leave light striations. But next time I'll know what to do better. Zoom further into the image. We endlessly look for the just correlative marks.



1/16th of 100 x 95 cms. This detail shows how extensive can be the forms of representation within a frame of the "armature of the real". There is a snowy hillside The brown crayon in the sky stands both for the impetus of the spots of snow and also for a delineation of "clouds". It fits I think what Bacon meant by a visceral painting: something body-felt, where the paint and its "touch" get at us indirectly: "along the nervous system"! The mystery of painting that interested Bacon was the way accidental and indirect, obliquely representational marks had a double facing - towards body felt response (as in music) and what he called the "brutality of fact". Everything that Guinness alluded to with its clever ad - "...reaches the parts other beers don't"!



1/36th of 110 x 105 cms. This was of the lower branches of the sagging Blackthorn in April. On the right you can see the twigs and from the grass are growing the first nettles. The yellow crayon picks out little sun illumination on the grass. (The pleasure of getting such things right!). This is another validation of the power of "abstract" design and colour, except that here it is calling forth a real place and time of year and is driven by affection.



1/16th of 100 x 95 cms. This is a painting of a low evening sun shining through leaves. (Same painting as 199) As with the previous detail, being only part of a much larger whole, the detail of the small representation is visible. it is noticeable what are the "abstract" nuts and bolts of its representation, used to stand for a sun coming through leaves, and opposite for a downward illuminating midday sun. Of course there is a parallel pleasure in the marks - partly "in themselves" and for their cheek at presuming to "represent"!



1/36th of 90 x 95 cms. This is a part of a stream. Like the painting detail opposite, this one also validates the believers in "abstract art", except that in both cases the paintings (hopefully) also illustrate the world rather than marks in themselves. Here the abstract pleasures of the paint marks employed to figure that world are enjoyed also for the pleasure of seeing paint marks becoming something else. These marks can claim to be tasty.



1/12th of 105 x 100 cms. (See a lower section on p. 63, qnd 231). Another good example of the indirect, oblique drawing possible within so called representational painting and which should be much more open to "abstractions" than the dualism of representation v. abstraction has discouraged. Look at the paint marks for "clouds": how expressive they are compared to plodding "representation" (!) and the "extra" crayon marks for sky (despite the other paint marks for sky), how, along with the active "white" paper, the sky dances with the ebullient blackthorn blossom and the tumbled, sun shadowed wall. "Sweet daylight"!



75 x 55 cms. Eddy was an intellectual. He read enormously and taught what I'd call a historical sociology with plenty of 20th century difficult thinkers. Here he is in his study in his rather grand but dilapidated house. I have given him 4 fidgeting legs to indicate the body rebelling against all that sedentary study! One window is dark and open to "La Notte" – in the symbolic, intellectual sense that he wrote of in one of his books - which is also reflected in the gilt mirror's the deep blue mystery ! The other window is letting air and light in to his intellect! He was a good chap! And a very stimulating person. I am pleased that it is such a good likeness. The table light has been symbolised into a halo to stand for his, in a way, saintly intellectual life. He was very like an ancient friar illuminating manuscripts though in his case illuminating the confusions of "modernity"!



1/9th of 90 x 909 cms. This has the **brío** peculiar to watercolour. I have always painted fast - con brío - because both the natural effects excite you and because there is something so intrinsically rapid about the watercolour medium: the brush across the paper and the varying ways it "holds" to the paper and the way it invites to quickly follow one brush struck with another; to merge or overlay, before it dries. This winter sunset was just such a quick moment; the sun already set so I used a red/brown crayon to mark the after trail of the set sun and in the yellow sky above, some grey "cloud" marks as if rayed by the sun. Visible on the moors are the dry marks leaving the pricks of untouched paper - a beautiful effect but to be used sparingly! I lightly crayoned "trees" into the wet paint to give a cold twigs representation. There are some blue and white suggestions of left over snow. Some remaining white paper in the sky suggests high clouds. This was a case of when brief painting gets it.



1/20th of 100 x 110 cms. This was a thundery summer sky that was about to perform a thunder and lightning display. The black crayon marks sign the first drops of rain. The sky was that grey, yellow, mauve of such a coming thunder storm. Maybe the square rough brush marks were anticipating the downpour to come while the mauve crayon is suggestive of lightning not yet occurring! On the lower left is a yellow, clearer sky, cut by the dark blue line of the moors. The felicities of "indirect", "oblique" paint!



1/9th of 85 x 75 cms. The white of the paper is particularly important here. This is a painting pulled from a drawer 35 years after being abandoned - which can happen due to changing weather or day too advanced and no time to finish, or simply from discouragement. So I took it out and changed it, yet I think it captures the day of those children playing in the stream much better after the considerable work on it, and as usual inside, it all progressed very slowly! - Maybe the attention given to the repainting was coloured by a nostalgia for "les temps perdus" and although I added the joyful swooping of swifts, that is another motive for regret - how long will they endure with their 80% decline? Perdue?



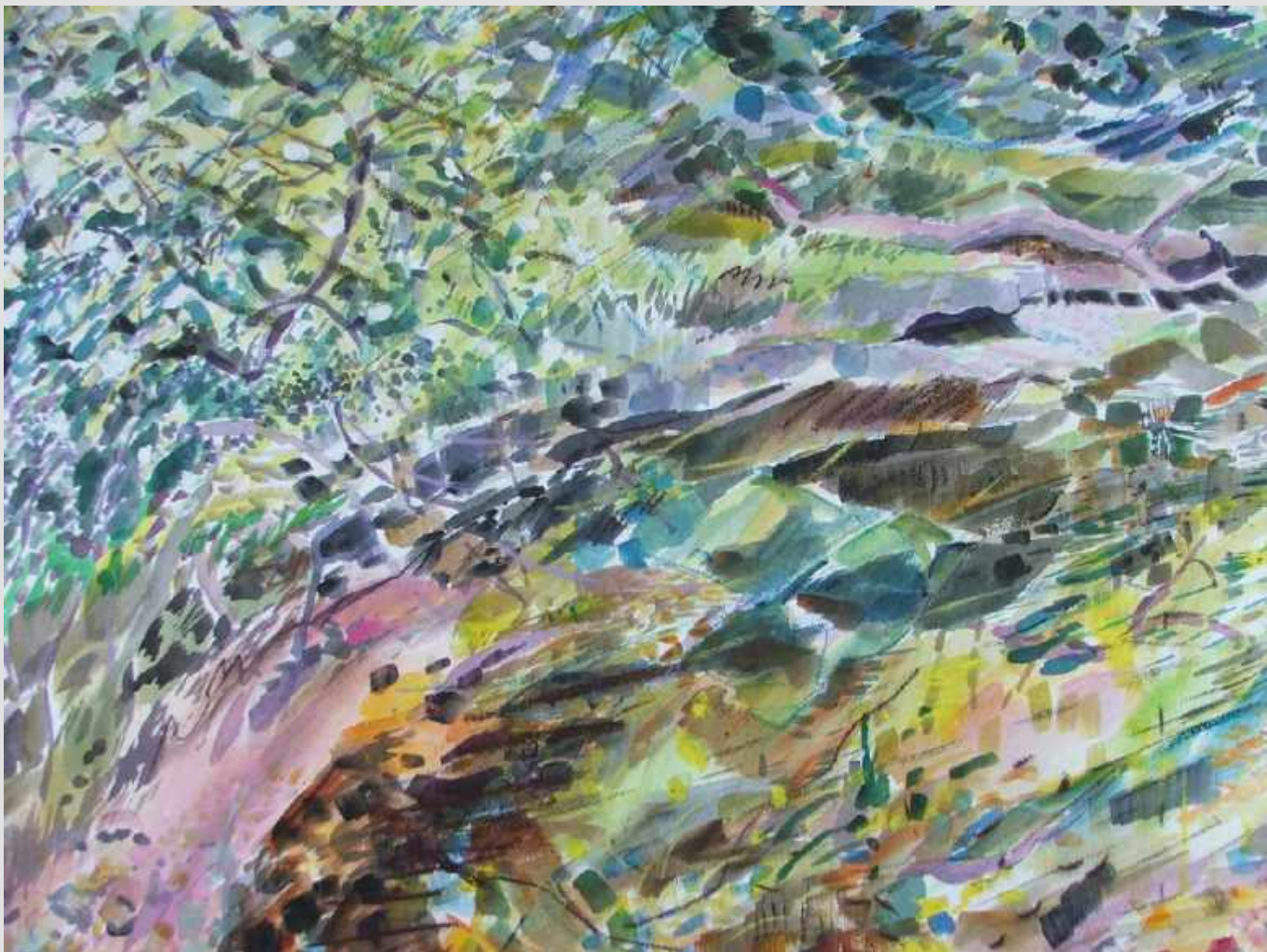
1/25th of 80 x 90 cms. This sepia is so Chinese calligraphic! The white chalk dragged across the ink sets some white dots dancing beautifully across the water. It's a pity that you can't see the sky as well! This kind of detail is very educative for me because you see to what extent a whole painting may fail on the harsher test that a detail like this may pass. Could other details have the graphic coherence and clarity of this section? There is a small miracle sepia of Dedham church under a shower by Constable where nothing is superfluous and nothing missing.



1/16th of 90 x 85 cms. Both of these details evidence some interesting matters of what we could still call drawing if we are interested in representation. I say still because drawing can be either narrowly or generously described: that is to say, drawing should I think include all painting. So in Cezanne or Van Gogh, their painting brush strokes were clearly a form of drawing, and we could also say that Impressionism merged the distinguishing of painting/drawing. In many of the details in this book there is a similar blurring of the distinction. The 19th - 20th century saw this occur and now all that has been put away to soon!



1/9th of 85 x 80 cms. This was May blossom - (Hawthorn) with the meadow flowers under them. It was painted roughly and approximately to try and imitate the effulgent immediacy of the day and place. The yellow crayon marks were a hybrid sign, standing for both the shadows under the trees and for the sun between them. An "oblique" that shouldn't be "corrected".



1/9th of 90 x 95 cms. It would be worth including the whole as it would show the role of white paper and how it is not just brush marks that create harmonies, symmetry, and rhythm: white paper does. There is a Rowan tree in blossom and its white is distributed across the whole painting. This section is unified by the diagonal current marks being echoed across the painting as flecks of light which share with the Rowan blossom. This is another representational painting that is beautiful because of its meaningful, loving abstractions!



1/9th of 85 x 75 cms. This was of an intense summer evening after sunset. The intensity of the colours. That final moment when everything seems to breathe back the light it has absorbed - as I like to believe! You can see how important the rough paper's "tooth" was to the "artistic" effect. Here's the big unknown - I know what I felt and feel now, but do others follow me, or am I just in my self - "bubble" as cultural relativists like to say? In which case no art can communicate anything, but just may or may not stir the embers of another's quite different fire and by chance! Bollocks, I say! I think this is trying to say what Jakob Boehme thought about light reflected from a pewter dish. It's an epiphany, a rapture, a secret if the cosmos! Or at least, let's have tried!



1/16th of 90 x 80 cms. In this detail you better notice the splashes of the first raindrops which soon turned into a deluge. Although it is only a poor shadow of his paintings, it is clear that I have loved Constable's paintings with their squally skies and chiaroscuro contrasts of dark green shadows and light reflecting upturned bright leaves. With acrylic if you are treating it as if watercolour, you can't have those impasto effects which Constable would get from using a palette knife. The transparent marks standing for water give a nice glassy reflective effect.



1/16th of 95 x 90 cms. Same painting as p.208. Twigs or pattern? There some sprays of blossom but for the most part the Blackthorn has not flowered yet. Under the tree there are the bluish first shoots of the new nettles. The whole painting is similarly twiggy and in this detail it is very clear that I was emphasising the rhythmic pattern of this first tree of Spring to flower. You can see that a representational painting is always abstract! So where does that leave "abstracts"?



1/12th of 95 x 90 cms. (see 189 and 51 for lower part). This was a windy may afternoon with clouds scudding across the bright blue sky, causing sudden shadows and showers and there a more menacing flash of lightning. Bracing weather which I think gets into the marks. We'll be sorry to be dead and not breathe such daylight of May!



1/9th of 95 x 85 cms. This is a painting that does hold a similar magic to black and white photographs. The chiaroscuro of it - the whites so white against the rich variations of intensity of the sepia ink. This also illustrates the body exclamation of monochrome painting's contrasts and rhythms: its musical excitement and maybe I was envying the magic of Samuel Palmer's Shoreham sepias. Though we can't remotely approach such painters, they exercise their influence; moles that leave their signs though they are underground! Dear man.



1/16th of 90 x 75. This is a snow scene. The blues "stand for" the snow but so does the white left blank paper - or rather the paper has a double function to also represent in an oblique fashion, the brightness of that winter day. On the bottom left is a holly bush and the brown marks are part of the peaty stream water. Is it valid to say, "the rest will clarify, what here is not sufficiently drawn"?



1/16th of 90 x 80 cms. Winter evening with the sun glaring towards us and illuminating a tree. The deep blue shadows of the hill. The participating, hurried slashes of the brush strokes. Maybe it all could be more itself. Or perhaps the rest of the painting saves the day? The old question should every section be self sufficiently complete, have its own pictorial logic? Could this be more loaded with descriptive marks?



1/25th of 100 x 95 cms. This detail shows the small twigs of the blackthorn tree. It would be a pity to think that a "modern" painting is not allowed to do that. Too yesterday! Again the white has an important "drawing" and illuminating role.



1/9th of 90 x 95 cms. I have often referred to the use of rhythm in painting and thus seen the connections to music. Of course it has always been accepted that "pattern" is an important under element in aesthetic pleasure. Here you can see how the marks have been made artificially patterned by the determinant shape of a square brush. This is partly justified by the shape of the rocks and the leaf masses, but that has been added to by another artifice of pattern that came from leaving a white edging to these blocks of colour. You could say that it also has a naturalistic justification because an over head sun does edge things with a "white" outline of illumination, as have been, more obviously the ripples in the water.



1/9th of 90 x 90 cms. Like the painting on the previous page, this too has a strong brush shaped patterning, though here too it has a naturalistic "explanation" in that snow has variations from white to blue shadow and the shapes of rocks are edged with snow, and ripple shapes alternate with sky reflection.



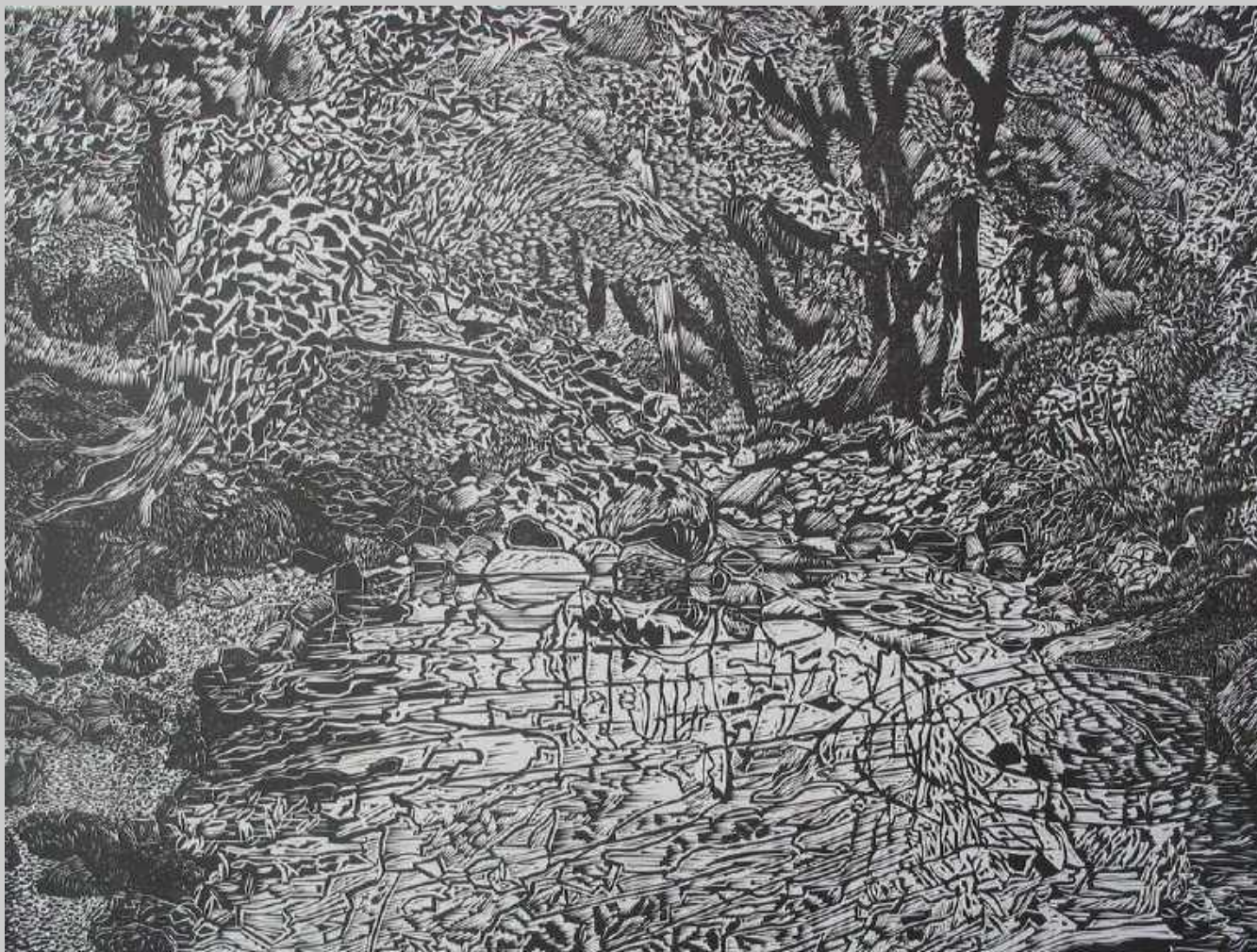
1/12th of 100 x 100 cms. (see 211 and 64 for other sections). This is a blackthorn in blossom in April. It was done with areas of white paper spattered, painted, and crayoned, To maintain consistency the sky was painted with crayon in a similarly rough scribble fashion combined with grey cloud paint marks. All this suited the windy day. Over the blackthorn is a light yellow wash to stand for the small young leaves emerging between the blossom. Like a piece of music I am tempted to call it an "allegro vivace".



1/16th of 80 x 75 cms. If you look at this close up you can see that there is almost no limit to the enriching overlay of colour and drawing mark that I could, indeed, should have put in, except that the remaining white paper needs to be left visible, as it is an important part of the whole image. Here is just visible a stream seen through the twigs of hazels and the frosty blue of the day. It was a similar day to that opposite.



Whole 90 x 95 cms.. This seems less interesting without the benefit of close up detail and could seem, "just a landscape"! As a criticism I might say that it needs to be loaded with thousands more touches to make the whole image flicker with that setting sun's brilliance and glare. This was done outside but maybe it would justify a longer meditated version that would try, by heaping up 10 times as many touches of paint, to really catch that evening's effulgence in all its glory. Its frost and remaining snow.



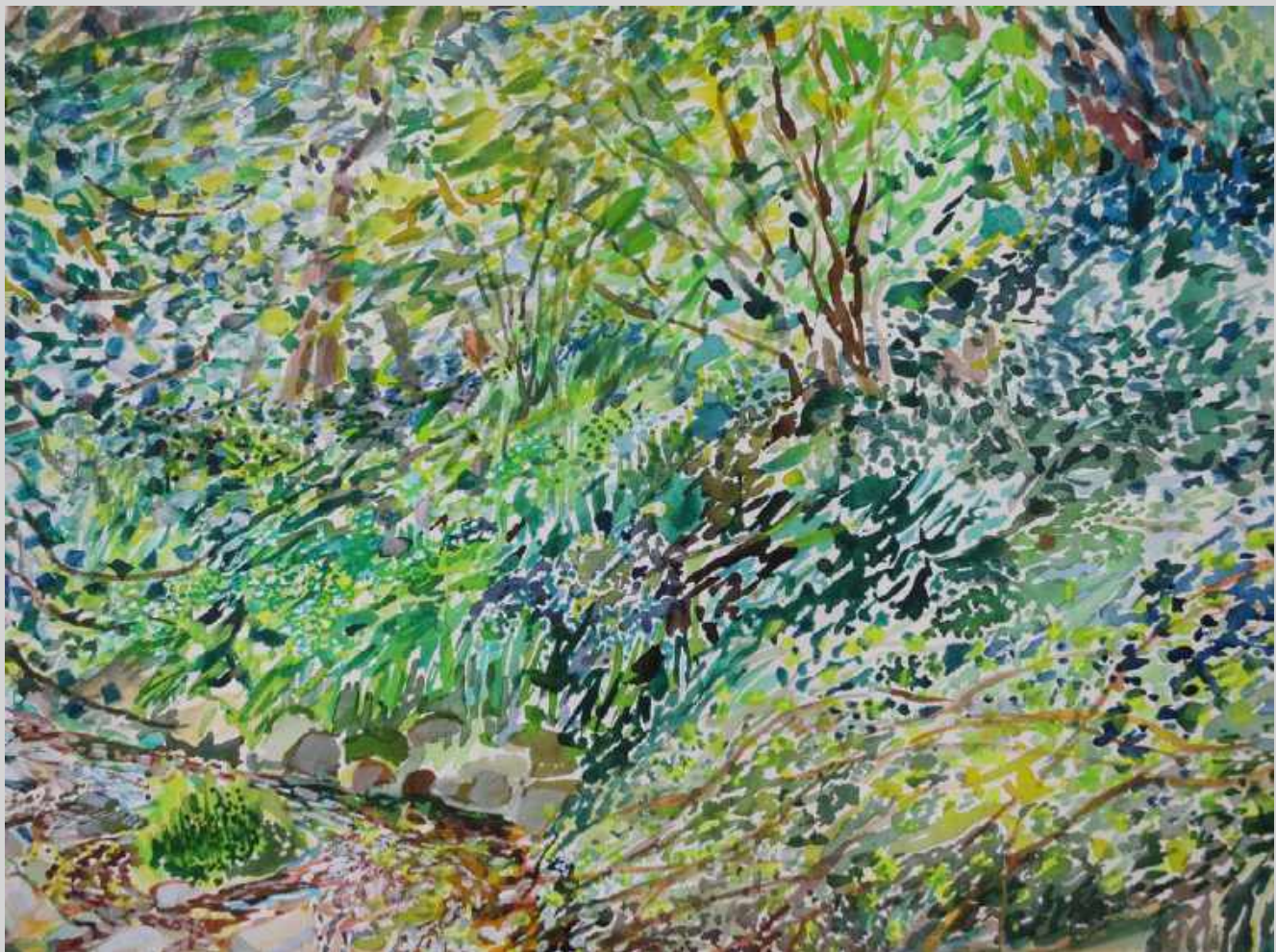
Whole lino cut 75 x 55cms. Brush or pen are easily manipulated into a great variety of marks. In lino relief printing, partly because of the simple cuts of the tools, one is almost forced into a uniformity and also into a simplification. However, you could say that I limited myself further by leaving lines visible in the open areas. (as seen at the bottom of the print which helps create the over-all rhythm. The variety of mark comes for "stones", "leaves", "water", "tree trunks", and the need to differentiate them, but the rhythmic harmony, you could say, is clearly what I like to find or invent in the paintings too.



1/16th of whole 95 x 90 cms. This you could say has similarities to the lino cut since the marks play off against the white paper as does the lino cut. Both are a form of reductive drawing; almost what I referred to at the beginning as "Medieval" **line** drawing. On the bottom left are "plants" whose particularity has been "lost" in obedience, as it were, to the formal properties of the "design". I have used an orange and a black crayon, but that comes as a half way between the two ink colours.



1/9th of 110 x 115 cms. What I say about kindred marks is also true for the relationships of colour. Colour may be concordant or discordant. Each has its place in expression. Again, the parallels with music, and as with the next page; marks can have an intrinsic quality; which is the point that Abstract art" overplays.



1/12th of 110 x 115cms. These two are both of the same place but different paintings, though they obviously were painted at a similar time and show, what you might call a similar handwriting. As I have often said, rhythm is a most important element in painting, and seems particularly so for landscape which after all is looking at a unified, "great creating nature". I would like to make large lino cuts of such a scene, borrowing the rhythms of white paper and painted marks. If you look at the two lino cuts (pages 234. / 81.) you can see the kindred "handwriting" and the importance of rhythm. What I say for the cut marks of lino is valid for brush marks. Quickly look from one to the other.



1/16th of 90 x 95 cms. This painting is to be considered under what I have said about Chinese calligraphy. A matter of sympathetic imitation. Have you ever seen a mother, using a teaspoon, feed her baby? When the baby opens its mouth to accept the spoon, so does the mother often open hers - in a kind of imitative sympathy - sympathy in the double sense of two chords ringing together. The paint marks here seem to call up a similar "sympathy" of chiming remembrance, in our body-mind so that we feel the water's glisten and the first rain drops breaking the surface, and we feel the day. **Glissando, veloce.**

A biographical addendum.

“In the great scheme of things”, is the phrase we use to put pretentious self-importance in the shade. It is the phrase to mock any pretensions to unmerited importance. That would be the case for those books on the paintings, with all that writing – (which Blake rightly calls “waff”), particularly the last one of “details”, with its arguments on Representation and “what makes a painting work”. On the other hand, it was my last little effort at house cleaning and tidying away my not very successful painting. A summing up; although “in the great scheme of things” (!) my painting has not convinced anyone of its serious intent. We are all so transient we want to make a kind of house-tidying summary, and so, many people feel a need to write biographies or little life essays, no doubt only intended for the loft. I often think that the arts shade into philosophy, for I think the arts have in common with philosophy that search for “meaning” in life: “what’s it all been about”? We want to escape inconclusion to our little lives!

I’ve learnt so many Shakespeare sonnets. (it’s drole that I need a list to remember which I remember!). They are nearly all about Time which catches us all eventually. We all know about time’s limit to our lives but we ignore it. We know, yet don’t, until suddenly the penny drops; so after all we are not an exception! These paintings – I’ve spent all those days doing them – which came back to me so vividly in seeing these I collected together for this details book. The seemingly carefree time of their painting – mostly Spring, Autumn and Winter because the Summer was taken by the courses -. My ploy against my non-success is to think that I was like the angler, (although I did in fact harm no fish’s mouth). We both sit there looking at what is noticeable around us: just a facet of some day’s existence, like those who follow a favourite football team on a Saturday. I used to conveniently counterpoise my unsuccess with the thought that, “one day I’ll have an exhibition”! That was in order to render the activity more rationally justified! An alternative mental ploy to hide the oddity of it, was to consider the paintings as my “Tibetan monks’ prayer flags”, that the wind moves; done for their own sake, yet still a bit egotistical if only by being like preserved residues of mere contemplation, or like those rather forlorn graffiti that once one saw, “Kilroy was here”, an unknown person borrowing the generalised name “Kilroy”. So I never found it fitting to sign my paintings – maybe I had a greater pretension: that it was nature that had scribbled them! Why did I stick at my “angling” despite never catching anything! Certainly, for little profit. I suppose it was a form of not wanting to leave a job unfinished, once started and maybe also a proof to myself that “life – if not “grim” – was yes “earnest”, as my poor mother liked to remind my nonchalance with her menacing, “Life is grim, life is earnest”: but in the end, my painting was not much different to a birdwatcher’s list of where-seen bird species. But another reason for sticking at it was my debt to Bruna who gave me that year at Rustic cottage to test whether I could keep painting for a year, and then in all her recent years at Brixen, Valentina’s teaching work that also made it possible: big debts.

There used to be (in the 80’s) a Modern “artist” called Richard Long. He would go for Long (!) walks and on the way, very slightly disturb nature’s look – maybe making an arrangement of pebbles and then taking a photo of it, or he might take a photo of ripples from a large stone that he had thrown into a stream etc. I used to think all that a cleverly modest reprimand for painters who had to get their egos into a painted response, conserved in colours on paper. Shocking! Said only half jokingly! Long seemed to have truly heard the words of Prospero at the close of The Tempest. “These our actors as I foretold you, were all spirits and are melted into air, into thin air The cloud capped towers, the gorgeous palaces and solemn temples, the great globe itself, yea, all that it inherit, shall Leave not a rack behind”. So the “artist” Long hit a nerve with his self-effacing modesty. By contrast to Long, I have collected a lot of unseen paintings and detritus to leave behind-. I expect my poor disappointed mother must have wondered about it with her friends, and no doubt somehow blamed herself for it. Maybe landscape is an art that grows naturally out of a positive solitude. That attentive sitting, trying to find the right hieroglyphs with which to honour a place, a weather, a season. One could say that any art shades into philosophy, if that is understood as a search for meaning in life or rather a search for the significant and a summary of what individuals have winnowed out as significant in being alive inside that extreme chance of both individual existence and species evolution: alive and aware, now! After all those geological deposits that make up mountains! Amazing or what! So where once Christians were expected to pray and thank their maker, painting has been a celebratory (and also thankful) search for the “right words” in paint. Maybe having spent the years 5 -19 in boarding schools, I got a taste for solitude – despite never being sad or treated badly, and having plenty of boisterous friends. (Most kids today are so distracted and never have time for the restorative aspect of solitude – quite different to loneliness).

I have liked the thought of Wordsworth who did not want to set a dichotomy between what he called “the common day”, and art.

Paradise, and groves

Sought in the Atlantic Main, why should they be

Or a mere fiction of what never was?

When wedded to this goodly universe

Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old

A history only of departed things,

For the discerning intellect of Man,

In love and holy passion, shall find these

A simple produce of the common day.

I have also liked two sayings of Constable’s: “the self-taught artist has been taught by a very ignorant person”, and, “when setting to paint I try to forget that I have ever seen a painting”. That is near to those Wordsworth words, and his “common day” is also near Constable’s, “there is room for a natural painter”. So I think there is a form of representation that doesn’t flaunt its “art”.

Spoken language is a strange thing. It allows us to communicate (and almost also create) a world to others. We all own our same language (whether it needs translation to another language or not), so “a summer night’s soft touch” is an easily understood metaphor in any language but a painter, though he has seen many paintings of the past, has in the end to make his own sign language and for that to pass to others, there must be some discernible “armature of the real”, (as Francis Bacon calls it, that anchoring fulcrum of any painter’s language), along with a subtle mimicking of a secret body vernacular that we know without knowing it. There’s the mystery of it all!

All other living things do not have the storage range of human language. Our spoken and written language carries over an accumulating past and present: the much longer backward memory of cultural inventions and History's "life", besides the way we find it embodied in all our surrounding environment and present "way of life". Other creatures use their "languages" for other things. Some people, are so preoccupied by the scandal of their transience, that they reach for a pen to write biographies because it's so hard to let go: that tree, that gate, that grandmother, that are locked into our minds - all we have experienced surely shouldn't be wiped away; unthinkable – unconscionable! Poor memory keepers!

With their extraordinary "artistic" engineering, spiders make webs to catch insects to further their existence and so to procreate. That is how the world works. Life simply for its own sake. What Schopenhauer called World as "Wille". Religions offer poor mortals, shocked at their own transience, an eternity, a further existence thanks to "God". (our egotism writ large!). Painting is also a language of storage, a witness to appreciation – that some hope will matter to others, but there are only a few who succeed in making what seems to be, summations of existence that others can appreciate in common – like Constable's miraculous "Hay Wain" or Renoirs "Boating lunch". All the rest of us "artists" make our humble acts of appreciation, still within the single arena of art where we find ourselves pretentiously close to those whom Homer described as the "mighty dead". At best, people do socially useful jobs like bus or train drivers, doctors, teachers or yes even politicians, and maybe having children is both a natural matter and one that like the practice of art (any and at any level) makes us better appreciate existence. Goethe much admired a quality in Shakespeare: "Heiterkeit". The word can be translated in an amalgam of an English and Italian dictionary translations as "cheerfully indifferent serenity of soul". The angler, the amateur musician, or even the passive TV watcher, never asks "where have the hours gone". It's true that even the amateur painter, unlike Long, does leave a detritus behind – coloured paper to be disposed of, but there are worse cases of human detritus! And in the great scheme of things - Heiterkeit!

- This detail is **1/24th of 90 x 95 cms**. A boisterous April day of wind, shadows and sun. Worth experiencing and jotting as a memo!



