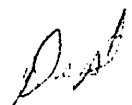


A DIARY: THE MAKING OF A NON-OBJECTIVE PAINTING

by



MARGARETHE MUELLER COOLIDGE MAINE

B. S. Ed. , The University of Georgia, 1967

**A Report Submitted to the Faculty
of the Department of Art in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

ATHENS, GEORGIA

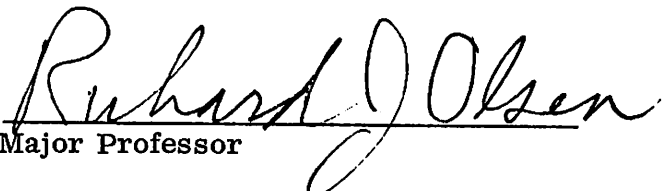
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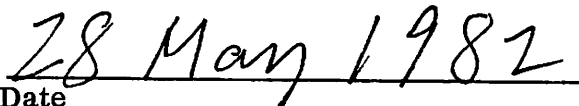
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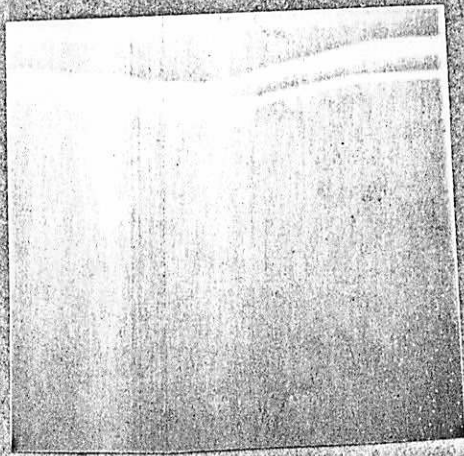

Major Professor


Date

In any writing about art I have ever read, the writer, be it the artist or some other author, speaks mostly of the completed work. Little attention is usually given to why decisions have been made or an even smaller amount of attention goes into the agony or the elation of making a work of art. This paper is exactly about those decisions and feelings.

My art is process-oriented, that is where my way of making a painting becomes the subject matter. Likewise, this paper is process-oriented; thoughts extend from incompleteness in the beginning to more exacting toward the end.

I believe this paper has been very valuable to me. It has forced me to be extremely precise in the way I make decisions and come to a greater understanding of the way I work.



PHASE I : March 29 - March 30

The making of a square canvas and priming...

Gesso dried...high intensity yellow applied...

Tape...line...pink painted over canvas...

Untaped...Thus, the process has begun.

At the beginning, high intensity colors were used because they were easier to over paint...I enjoy letting the colors I first put on appear to be on top, because of this intensity.

Colors first put on...analogous...

Complements and darker colors ...later...

I used my Polaroid, the only camera I own, for the first photographs. After having immense difficulty with the camera and rejecting the poor quality photographs, I employed Bart, a photographer, to work with me on the remaining photography.

PHASE 2 : March 31 - April 2

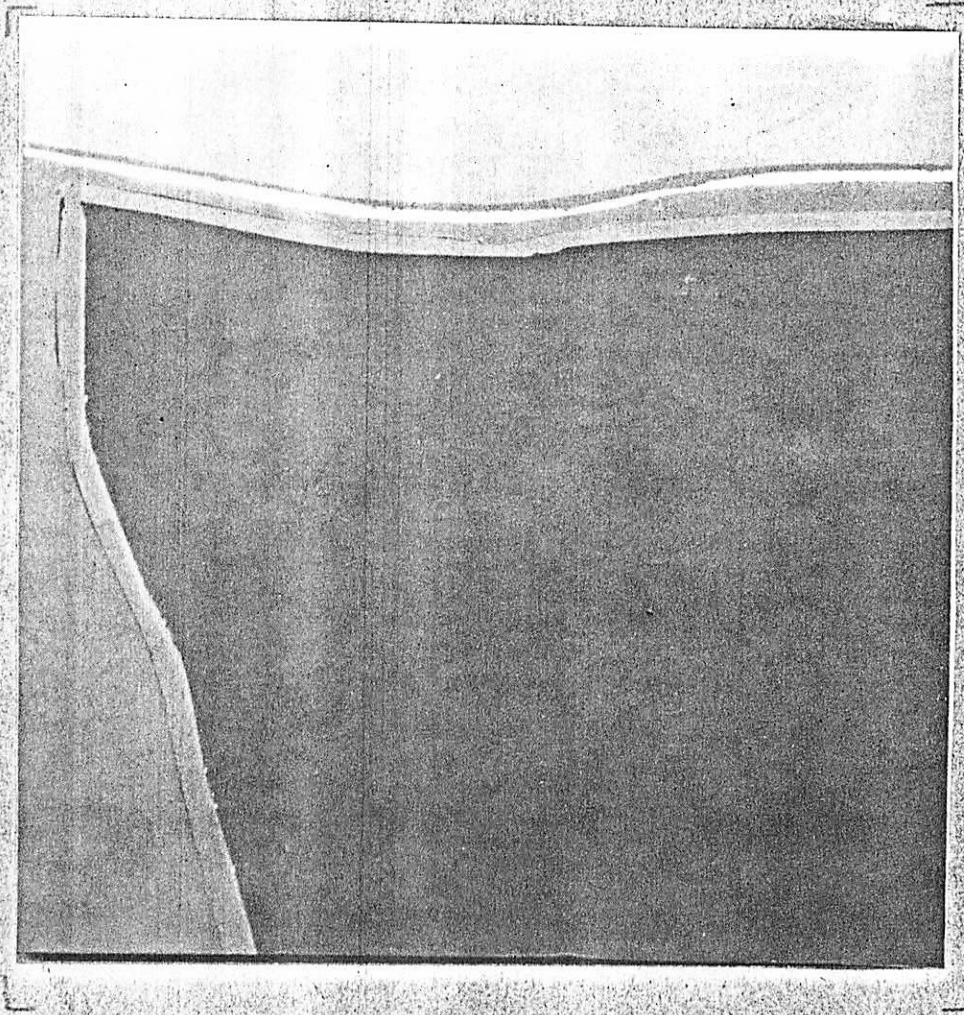
Tape...over the two painted lines.

Orange...paint over the larger area of pink.

Tape... off, leaving yellow lines with pink and orange ground.

For added interest in the surface...gesso sprinkled over the larger orange surface. Tape... This time over the yellow-orange and also around the orange itself. Blue-violet, a near complement of orange... on larger surface and inside tape... Some vibrations are set up.

Outside of tape... Cerulean Blue mixed with some of the already mixed blue-violet of my palette... creation of a different level of depth outside... high intensity of the same blue... another depth... tape pulled... leaving appearance of torn edges and exposing orange, yellow-orange, and pink.



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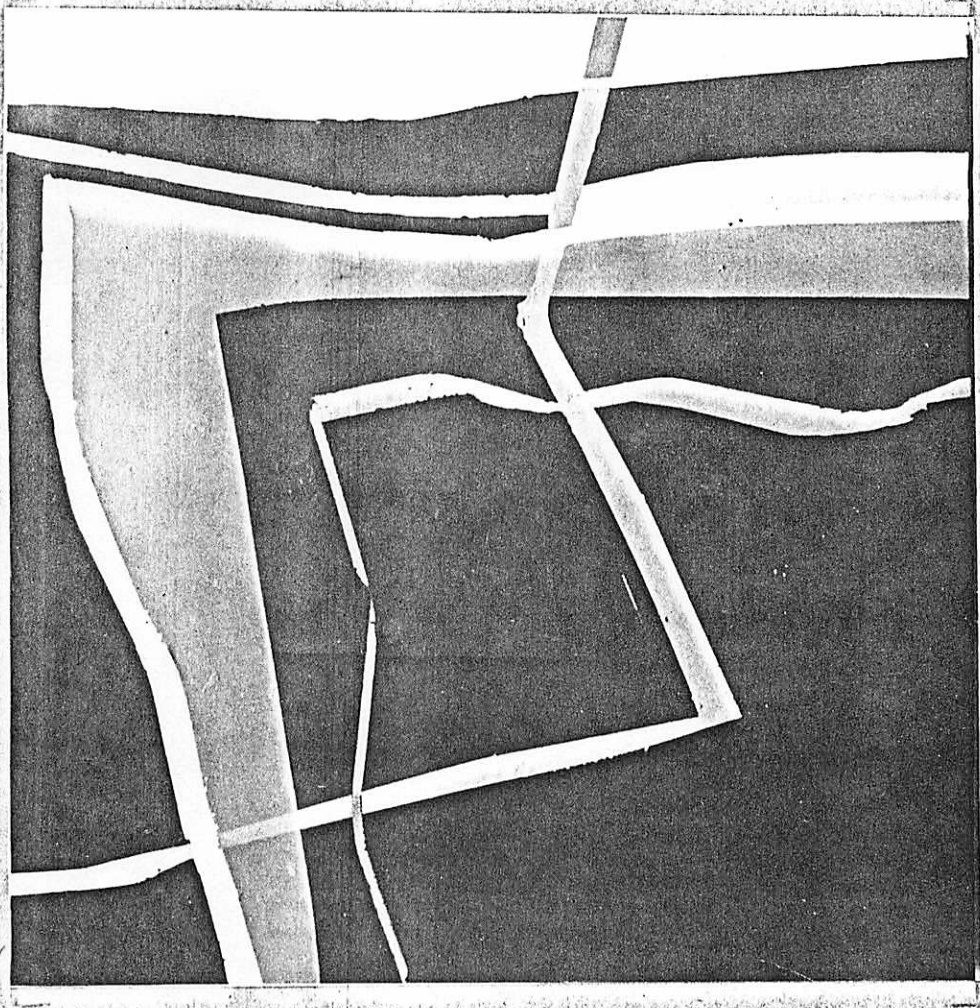
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PHASE 3 : April 2 - April 5

A square section is taped off... lines mostly straight in contrast with the undulating lines which are already appearing.

The bottom and side become two edges. One inch tape with pieces... so the line varies in width...

Undulating lines taped with three-fourth inch tape inside to let the underneath blue show through. Red... Quinacridone and Cadmium Medium Red... some gesso added to lighten... The red was extended over the edges of the canvas.

On the right... pink and yellow-orange lines taped... Painted in with orange made from Hansa and Quinacridone Red... Orange extended out over the edges.

Each area... painted twice... the underlying colors make them seem muddy.

Canvas divided... near upper right edge to center... masked off. Tape...

around edge of red and covering purple-blue... Slightly more intense red used...

More vibrations in that spot. Diagonal line... over blue and orange areas.

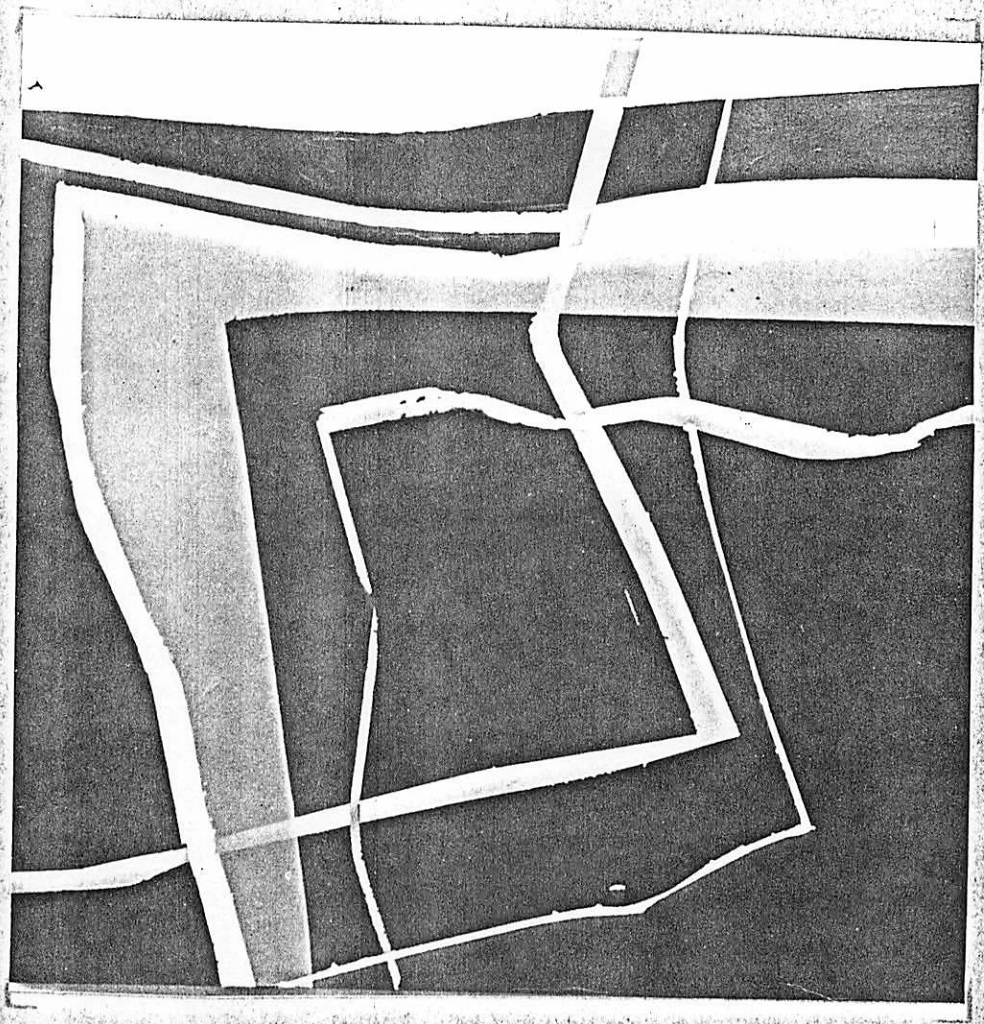
Blue... Pthalo and Cerulean... darker... offers more contrast considering pink

and yellow lines and gives more vibrations... orange... slightly higher intensity...

does nothing... must change color.

A line is taped from top left edge...down beyond the pinkish square...to left and up...at angle to pink...down...tape is placed over the pinks in three places, to make them appear on top...over the violet-blue line in one place, to keep vibrations...painted...high intensity violet...appears to become darker in lightest blue section.

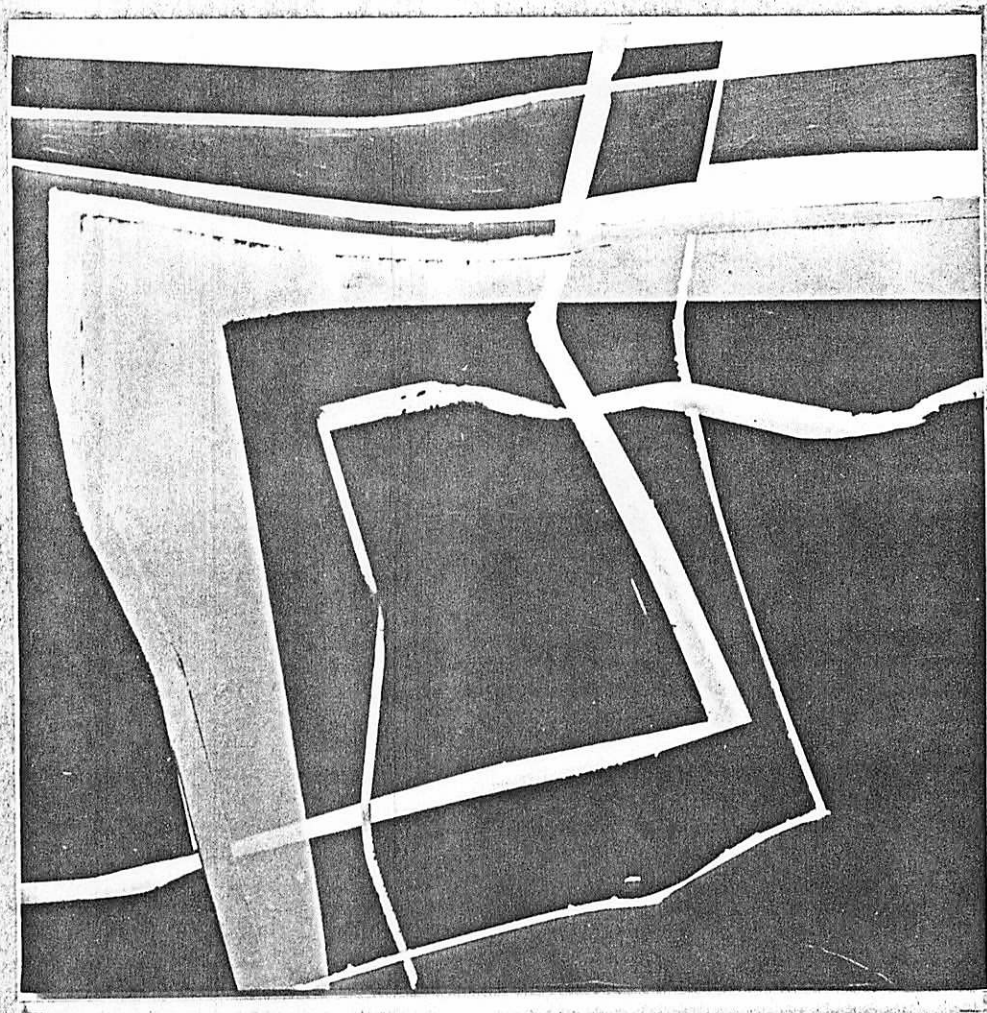
Where the darker blue line and orange stop, must now be changed. Vibrations over red area desired... light purple chosen...sets up vibrations over red area and still different in contrast...seems to dance in movement and color. Now that the darker blue line extends to the violet line, the area of lighter blue behind the line seems to be more isolated.



PHASE 4 : April 6 - April 7

Light blue lines...diagonal to bottom and left side... means of breaking up boring space on right side... thin in contrast to other lines.

The pink square which I like yesterday, today seems offensive and too intruding... pink area taped off... painted with Cadmium Red Light. When I took the tape off...like better in color but not shape. Side of shape taped off at diagonal to violet line... Painted again with Cadmium Red Light. When tape was taken off... better considering line already there. Time will tell. Upper part of canvas...BORING. Still. Taped off portion of orange... painted it dark purple. It now DIVIDES from the rest of the painting. Thinking of upper one-fourth of painting... paint over bottom orange to yellow ... tape off light purple and pink line... extended color almost to tape where line will be taped...



PHASE 5 : April 8 - April 12

Taped as started in Phase 4 ... Quinacridone Red, a bluer red... tried first in tube color... Right now, I have almost two separate paintings, and I hope the Quinacridone will bring it into a better unison. The Quinacridone goes easily over the lighter blue and pink, but not so over the darker purple. The area was painted again... the tape taken off. It helps.

The orange section seems to give a sort of change and helps keep this area from becoming boring.

The red at the top is very horizontal... needs to be broken up to stop horizontalness.

The pink line, which was in actuality underneath the red, now appears on top.

But this area seems to be almost black-white in contrast, not color.

Vibrations appear along the edge and the purple line.

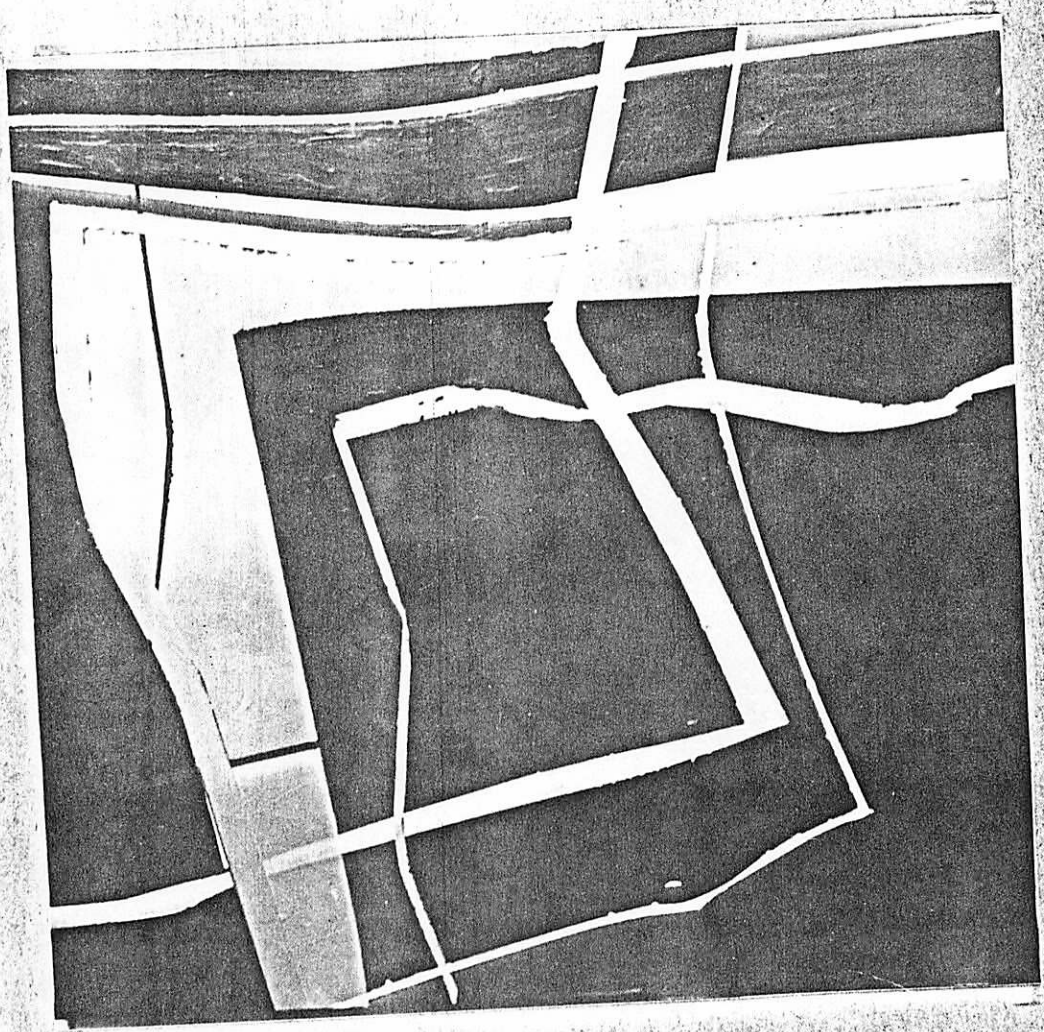
Although I am beginning to see the painting work as a whole it is still too divided.

... Thinking about changing the pink line in the red to have more vibration...

maybe a blue or a green.

What if I make the pinkish orange that separates the blue-violet and the dark blue a more brilliant orange? Will vibrations and afterimages occur there also?

This is done. Now the two reds and this orange seem to be too much in the same value range. Tape applied... The same orange mixed with gesso. Tape taken off... even more vibrations... but still too much the same value... Should be lighter because of the light blue lines and because of the other orange. (This is making me very tense.) Still more gesso... tape taken off much better.



PHASE 6: April 12 - April 16

Now it is some better. My next step...to change the pink within the top red, so as to make this area more vibrant. Also, I would like a very thin line here. ...considering making this red slightly darker, so that there would be a greater distinction between the two reds. Maybe by doing this, the space between the two would become more significant. I can reduce the width of the pink line while I am doing this.

The area was taped...Quinacridone Red was mixed with Permanent Violet Light. Too much violet...Part of this mixture was taken aside and mixed with more Quinacridone. The results seemed better. It is still really red but a darker and bluer one. The pink line is thinner which makes it have a reater importance of its own.

The area was taped. Quinacridone Red was mixed with Permanent Violet Light.

After seeing this red, I am considering leaving this area its original color. I am not sure of the red-purple I just put in. It seems to deaden this area. I may change it back later...I will see. I decided after this statement to tape this area again, almost immediately. This was done and painted once again, with pure Quinacridone...the best red for this area so far.

This thin, pink line was taped and a decision must be made as to color.

First... Pthalo Blue, Dioxazine Violet and gesso. The line begins to vibrate when the tape is taken off. Is it too much? Is it taking away from the rest of the painting? Or is it simply too redundant: Maybe it really should be green? Or maybe just simply lighter? I'll try making it lighter first. (This is a very interesting problem. The area seems to be definitely working. But it seems to be working so much that it is the center of interest.) It is taped up again and the color lightened. Now it seems to be functioning more with the painting as a whole.

Although it is holding together better, it is still too divided. Tape... parallel to the left side of the painting, also one parallel to the bottom. The placement of the tape seems to give some indication that it would bring it into a better unison if a line was painted in here...but how thin or thick? If I go with thin, I can make it thicker easily, Where the tape is along the red area, it tends to divide this large area up too much, because of lines previously painted. Therefore, I will try the tape from small blue line to small blue line. The light orange, between the tapes was concealed so that it will not be painted over, and hopefully, appear to come forward in space.

If I use an orange here, it may vibrate with the purple-blue but not with the red. If I use a bluish color, it will vibrate with the red but not the blue. But maybe, a blue or purple would distract from the other blue and purple lines. Therefore, ...orange. An orange is mixed with Indo Red Orange (too yellow to use by itself) and Napthol Red Light. This, to me, is a better orange for the purpose. The line is painted and must be painted again with the same color as it is too muddy over the blue-purple. The tape is taken off after the second time it was painted. (It was taken off with great fear.) The painting is viewed again. Now, as of this moment, the areas are working together better. The orange vibration of the purple-blue area does not effect the red... Maybe, the purple-blue should be over the orange instead of under it.

The next step... to paint the purple-blue line back over the orange and to rid it of the closure, which now is disruptive. This purple-blue is again mixed on the palette. As the area is painted, it seems too light, but I cannot tell yet as acrylic dries darker. It is dry, and it is too light. The next painted it was too dark and then it was too purple. The color was mixed for a fourth time, and is the right color, finally. (I worry, sometimes, that I am becoming too fussy, but still, it works better with a cleaner line.

Next, on the dark blue is an orange finger print. It hurts this area as it definitely takes away. The blue was mixed again and the finger print taken out. No problems here.

Although the orange line helps hold the two areas together, I have a strong feeling that I would like the painting better if it did not go so much through the red and over the light purple. The line seems to divide the space awkwardly. The entire red area is taped up so that the line is painted out. But it must also be taken out where it goes through the light purple. This is done.

Today, I came to the realization that the light blue line in the darker area could work better. I think if it were lighter there would possibly be even more vibrations and afterimages. The line is taped up and painted with a mixture of Cerulean and gesso. But this is too much like the top of the painting in color. I will try adding some Ultramarine to this mixture. At this point, I took the tape off but it still appeared too much the same. Not only that but I have painted over the bottom of the tape in places. (What a mess!) I easily painted Quinacridone Red over the area I accidentally touched with the brush.

I tried changing the blue at the top by taping below the area and the line there. I added some purple but it is too close to the blue line in intensity. I will try again,

this time not adding as much white. It is now different from the light blue line which goes into this area. It makes where the light blue line hits this area more obvious, before, they seemed too much alike in color.

Going back to the light blue line, although it acts as a completion in color and width of the other light blue lines and does create some vibrations, I believe I may be able to get vibrations and better afterimages here. It is not just the right color with the darker red as the lines seem with the brighter red. Therefore, I taped up this area again. This time I will try a lighter purple-blue. A small amount of Ultramarine was mixed with Permanent Violet Light and much more gesso. I painted the area and untaped it. At this point, I realize that I am getting afterimages in this red but they are coming from the vertical light purple line, also, the light line seems to be giving more of the effect I intended. I think I should definitely leave this area for a while.

My next step is to remove the narrow orange line from the purple. It does nothing but hamper the freedom of the purple's acting with the red. And, I believe that it is disruptive to the composition as it attracts too much attention. Permanent violet Light was mixed with gesso and the line painted... too much gesso... more violet... too dark, only a little... The area is now too picked over... The entire line is taped (with much anticipation) and repainted. (If only this purple will have the same effect on red as the other purple). The tape is taken off, but, alas

my brush went over the tape again and this spot adds nothing. It distracts from the line itself. I am lucky. The purple seems to have the same effect on the red area as did the previous purple. I then painted back into the red area. It seemed a little bright at first but dried darker.

The way the orange line stops abruptly, reminds me of a stump. Someone with an amputated arm, maybe. (very anthropomorphic) The question is, what to do about it. Also, the very light, purple-blue on the dark red seems to present more of a black-white problem than color.

I taped the top light blue line again. On my palette are light blue and light purple already mixed. I mixed the two together... painted the line... untaped the area. The two blues are still too similar. No where else does this monochromism appear... taped again. This must be more in the blue range, but yet different enough in contrast. Cerulean is mixed with the light purple mixture. the line is again painted over and untaped. As a composition, this works better as an addition to the other blue lines, to form a sort of lopsided square within the square canvas.

The yellow -orange rectangular area seems to be too much the same in color as the yellow-orange line... taped... painted with a mixture of Hansa Yellow Light and Cadmium Red Medium. The square will still remain an orange but, maybe,

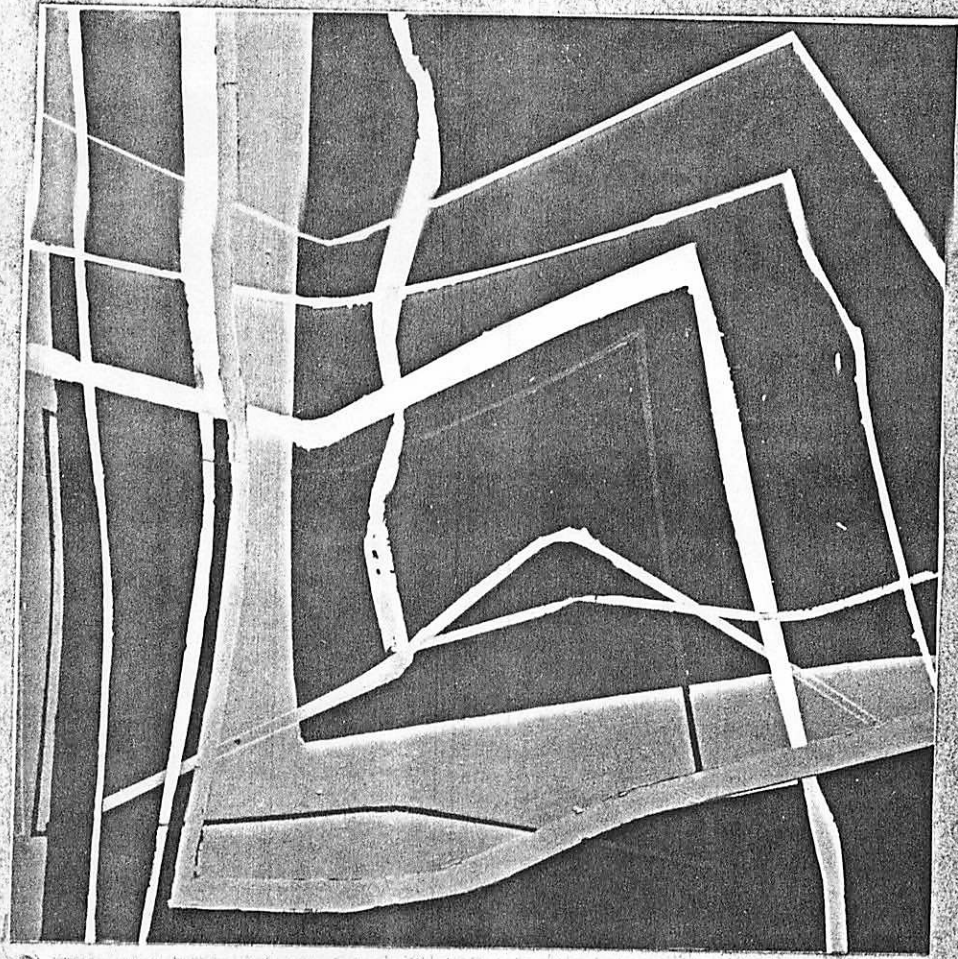
a more severe orange. But this particular orange seemed to be too different and severe.

I scraped the area. Taped up again. I then used the same color mixture, but in different proportions, about one-half on each. I took the tape off and viewed it. Right now, I think it looks better. There seems to be enough difference in this orange and the orange line to be interesting, but not so much that it doesn't function as a part of the painting.

What bothers me now is the way the small pink area below creeps into the yellow line. The pink has a more organic form which is alien to this painting.

I will come back to it later.

Back to the nasty orange line. It must extend more through the red instead of being amputated. I did not like the direction it previously took through the red. It seemed too straight where as everything else is angled.



PHASE 7: April 16 - April 30

Today, I taped the bottom red area to extend the orange line. At first, it curved down and below the purple line but I did not like the way it broke up the red space. It had nothing to do with the surrounding lines. Next, I extended it out straight and made a more definite angle down. This was better because it was a variation of the purple line but downward. But the areas it formed were too small, it seemed, for the entire painting. Finally, I extended the tape out and up following the contour of the purple line. This direction seemed a better bet as it worked with instead of against these lines. Again, I made an orange by using Cadmium Red Medium and Orange Red Indo. I painted the section and untaped. Following the contour of the purple line worked better.

I will use the same orange and extend the line into the other red. This, I hope, will make more of a completion. I will create a line directly under the blue line in hopes that it will also help the blue in this area to be more vibrant. The blue area was taped and more tape put down to create lines. They were painted. I took the tape off and it appeared that the orange line under the blue should be wider, helping the vibrations. This was done but it did not have the desired effect.

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This orange line now brings my attention to a long narrow, slightly pinkish streak in the red. This adds nothing to the painting so I will take it out.

The orange line in the red has a way of extending itself over the purple-blue section without actually being there. Because of this, it may be a good idea to extend the line from the top of that section. Maybe, this would help the completion even more. This small section was taped, painted, untaped. This, to me, seems to function better.

Quinacridone Red and Cadmium Red Medium were mixed to cover the pinkish streaks.

I don't know how I've done it, but I've gotten yellow finger prints all over this section. It will worsen if I tried to remove them while they are still wet, so I've decided to let them dry and paint over them. First, I painted the line, and then the spots.

... too much Cadmium... Then, ... too much Quinacridone. Finally, I came up with a combination which would seem more correct. I used this mixture. Only drying will tell if I have made the right decision. Again... too much

Cadmium. It probably would have been better to repaint the entire section rather than trying to match up. (I am now very frustrated. I feel like jumping in the middle of my painting. Therefore, I will take a break.)

The entire section was retaped and repainted. I should have done this in the first place.

The only spot I now have left to work on is the very organic, pinkish area which is in the yellow line on the right. I taped the line and again painted it with a gesso and Hansa mixture. When the tape was taken off I found that this new line was not exactly a part of the rest of this line in size and therefore, did not function well as a continuous line. I can do two things: either make this part of the line smaller by painting over part of it with the above orange or I can make the other part wider. I chose the first solution, since I believe the slight difference between that one line and the other lines of the canvas may help decrease the monotony of lines being too similar. I taped the section of yellow I wanted to save, and painted the section that showed, with orange paint. Now the yellow line here really works.

Going back to the thin orange-red line. The one idea I have not contemplated is extending the orange lines under the blue line and into the blue area at the top.

Making a horizontal, thin, orange line in the blue section maybe exactly what I need to add more vibrations. I have now taped these lines and the appropriate parts of the blue line. Again, this red-orange is mixed. Now, the red-orange lines appear in two blue areas instead of one. This makes more sense. It also causes more vibrations in the upper area. The only thing left to do is to tape the blue line and paint out the orange line beneath.

To me, this painting is finished. I can only hope that it will have the same effect in different lighting conditions in which it will be exhibited.

Next day... Today, the painting is definitely not finished. Compared to other paintings I will show, this one appears dull.

First, I will change the top red to a more exacting color. It is also too close in color to the Cadmium. Maybe, I will make it a more red-orange. I am also thinking about activating the right hand side of the canvas more. I am also considering another yellow line for variety.

I taped the top red section and painted it with Orange-Red Indo and Naphthol Red Light. When the tape was taken off, there was a greater difference between the two red areas. The top seemed to come forward in space more. As this dried, the reds were still too much the same. The top must be retaped and

painted again. This time I added Cadmium Yellow Light with the mixture. Now, it is too orange...now, more red was added. The area was painted and when dried is more of the desired color.

What I intend to do now is to put a thin yellow line in hopes for obtaining more excitement in the composition. It will follow the light blue and light purple lines but come in from another angle and curve more. The yellow line stopped at the end of the red, but I can tell now that the stop here is too abrupt. I will now add an extension to this line so that it will go underneath the light orange and off of the canvas. This is done. The painting seems better but there is still not enough interest.

I am now considering carrying the yellow line up the left side of the canvas as a completion. This line is in contrast to the thinner lines in width. It starts at the top red and extends to the light orange at the bottom. This line will be on the orange side of yellow. The same yellow was mixed with a very small amount of Quinacridone Red. The line was painted and the tape taken off. I'm unsure about this line. I will try to make a difference in the red on the right side of the yellow line but I have great reservations that the vibrations will have the same effect. Still, I must do something. I taped the area and painted it with a pure Naphthol Red Light. This gives a slightly different red to the area. Now, I have

not only a color change but a plane change.

I will do the same thing to the top orange. Quinadrone Red in Liquited is duller than the same color in Speedball, which I usually use. That plus the yellow which I already have on my palette, was used to make a different orange.

For more interest, I will give more depth to this area by painting the center small blue line a high intensity blue. I hope the vibrations will still be the same. I mixed Cerulean with Violet Light and Titanium White and painted the taped area. It is not very different from the original blue but seems to give variety.

The top thin orange line is too much the same as the area below. More Cadmium Yellow light is mixed with the already made red-orange.

The red orange line, within the red area is too close in color. This is the only place near monochromatic colors to appear in the painting. The rest is bolder. I taped the line again and painted it with the orange already mixed on the palette.

I will now attempt to make the yellow line on the right protrude in space more by adding Titanium to this Cadmium Yellow and repainting it.

Since I have made this line a yellow which is of higher intensity, I begin to see how it may interact with the horizontal line. To help it interact even more, I will deepen the right side of this line, since the left side with the new line will form a squarish shape that is repeated in the canvas in different ways. I decided to stain this line with a mixture of Cadmium Yellow and a very small amount of already mixed-orange.

On the top left, in the red area, I do not appreciate the way the yellow line seems to be pushing the orange line in the blue area. This spot is different from anywhere else in the painting and is also awkward. I painted this line out but I am now also considering removing the top yellow line that angle off over the canvas, for much the same reasons.

Before I concentrate on the area again, I will make the smaller blue line at the top a slightly lighter blue, as I think it will work better compositionally. I mixed Cerulean with gesso and painted the area, which previously became clogged with red paint. This lighter blue line does seem to be a part of the other light blue lines.

The painting is becoming more interesting but could still be better. I am considering lightening a part of the purple line. I may not have the vibrations here anymore, but I think it should be tried for the sake of the composition. Dioxzine Violet and gesso were mixed to form this line. The line is painted and untaped. The painting is finished and anything else would be excessive.