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Plein-air Drawing and Embodied Vision:
Hans Hofmann’s Landscapes, 1928-1935

By

Anna Tome

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts [Art History], Hunter College
The City University of New York

2020

24 July 2020	Howard Singerman
Date	Thesis Sponsor

24 July 2020	Joachim Pissarro
Date	Second Reader

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to Lynda Klich, incredible supporter of Hunter Art History students.

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Introduction

This thesis developed out of a research seminar wherein the Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust allowed access to a trove of black and white portrait and landscape ink drawings from the late 1920s and early 1930s. While the number of known works totals upwards of 1,200, the several dozen we worked on provided a rich sample, displaying puzzling and inconsistent breaks from the representational and offering fresh ways of considering Hofmann's later synthesis of the European avant-garde and American abstraction. They also reveal early investigations into themes important to Hofmann's oeuvre: nature, artistic vision, and the relationship of objects in pictorial space. Mostly graphite and/or India ink on paper, with the exception of his *Lichtdruck* series (meaning "light print," usually referring to lithographs) and a handful of surviving watercolors from 1914 and several watercolors from the late 1920s and early1930s, the drawings mark a finite period in Hofmann's career. There are possible reasons for this: Hofmann was living in an economically depressed Munich after WW1 where oil paint was prohibitively expensive.[1] Drawing was also the principal lesson at the Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst (1915-1933), where students completed several figure drawing sessions a day, five days a week, and began taking summer trips in 1920 to draw *en plein-air*, traveling to Bavarian regions from 1920-22, and

[1] Tina Dickey, *Color Creates Light: Studies with Hans Hofmann* (Canada: Trillistar Books, 2010) 83.

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then internationally, to Austria, Croatia, Italy, and France from 1923-29.[2] Working in ink on paper also allowed spontaneity; Hofmann's busy teaching and travel schedule allowed little time for painting. With the increasing enrollment of American students, including Alfred Jenson and Louise Nevelson, by the late 1920s, Hofmann's international reputation had grown to the point that he was invited to teach at the University of California at Berkeley in the summer of 1930, and at the Chouinard School of Art (renamed California Institute of the Arts in 1961) in the spring of 1931. He returned home to Munich after this, but was invited to teach at Berkeley once more in late 1931. It was during his third visit to the U.S. in 1932, amidst the rise of the Nazi party in Germany, that he decided to permanently immigrate to the U.S. It was not until the summer of 1934, settled in New York and summering in Gloucester, Massachusetts, that he was able to resume a landscape painting practice.[3] Sharing little with his later abstractions that use planes of color to connote space and light, this black and white, quasi-representational period contrasts Hofmann's better-known practice. For the artist who declared that "painting is an architecture in color," the drawings are instead experiments with ink, line, motif, and abstract form in pursuit of *Geistigkeit,* or the

[2] Specifically, they went to Herrsching am Ammersee, Bavaria (1920); Seefeld Tegernsee, Bavaraia (1921); to Hechendorf, Bavaria (1922); and then internationally to Gmund, Austria (1923), Dubrovnik, Croatia (1924); Sicily, Italy (1924), Capri, Italy (1925-27), and St. Tropez, French Riviera (1928-1929)

[3] Lucinda Barnes, "The Nature of Abstraction: Hans Hofmann, *Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017) 18. She includes that this was at the encouragement of Mercedes Matter, a very significant figure in Hofmann's life.

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inner forms that transcend appearance, the pursuit of which he called "the search for the Real." The drawings are characterized by abstracted and geometricized faces, landscapes, seascapes, foliage, homes, and oil derricks (among other traces of industrialization). Representative of real people and places, they are articulated with agile gestures and effusive marks that materialize the subjective vision of the artist and flattened pictorial spaces, restlessly testing the conditions of the medium.

At the end of *Search for the Real* (1948), the only one of Hofmann's several book-length manuscripts that made it to formal publication[4], there is a

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[4] His key manuscript was *Form und Farbe in der Gestaltung: Ein Lehrbuch für den Kunstunterrich*t. First drafted in German 1931-32 during his travels back and forth from the U.S. and Germany, his American student Glen Wessels translated it into English as "Creation in Form and Color: A Textbook for Instruction in Art" that summer. September 1931 correspondence between Hofmann and Spencer Scott, a Publisher at Harcourt, Brace, and Company Inc. in San Francisco show a rejected attempt to publish the manuscript, citing that a "careful reading has convinced us that your translator has not done justice to your work. The English is understandable only to a person who has read your text in German or one who has attended your lectures…perhaps you do not realize how important it is for a real comprehension of your message that your ideas should not be briefly stated in epigrammatic form such as they are now…" [Hans, Hofmann, "Creation in Form and Color, 1931 (Correspondence with publishers about copyright)." Series 1: Correspondence. Box 1, Folder 126, *Hans Hofmann papers*, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C**.,** heretofore referred to as HH (author) & *Hans Hofmann papers* (source)]

Over the following decades Hofmann re-edited the original manuscript, eventually composing what became *Das Malerbuch: Form und Farbe in der Gestaltung* by1948. It was translated into English as "The Painter's Primer: Form and Color in the Creative Process" by Georgina M. Huck. It was mean to be a manual for art students, but the entirety remains an unpublished manuscript and excerpts were not published until the year before Hofmann died, 1975: "Introduction to 'The Painter's Primer.'" *Mulch* 3, no. 2 (Winter–Spring 1975): pp. 29–37.

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glossary of terms, at the top of which is a flow chart (Figure 1).[5] At the top center is a circle enclosing the words "artist's mind," with arrows, labeled "inspiration," affixed to the left and right sides and pointing in opposite directions. Below these are three circles in a horizontal row, connected with lateral arrows. They are labeled, from left to right, "nature," "artist," and "creation." Inside the nature circle are the words "physical matter," "positive space, negative space, color," and "vision." The artist contains "empathy," "plastic interpretation of a) vision, b) medium of expression. The creation bubble encloses "picture plane," "plasticity," "spirituality" and "new reality." This all leads to the final term, sitting at the bottom of the far-right circle: "art."

While the diagram models somewhat dialectic thinking, Hofmann was a very intuitive thinker whose application of his terms was as repetitive as it was improvisational.[6] The terms in what I heretofore refer to as the *nature-artist-*

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[5] Hans Hofmann, *Search for the Real*. Ed. By Sara T. Weeks and Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr. (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1994) 70. This book marked the first formal publication of his writings, containing three essays. It was published on the occasion of his first career retrospective at the Aldridge Museum of Art in 1948.

[6] The use of such a flow chart, whereby "nature" (thesis) is encountered by the artist (antithesis) and synthesize as "creation" illustrates the side of Hofmann that led Irving Sandler call him a "dialectical master" in the catalog accompanying his 1990 retrospective at the Whiney Museum of American Art. Sandler observed as early as 1970 that "to [Hofmann] the process of achieving 'suggested volume' was a dialectical one…'the relation of two given realities always produces a higher, a purely spiritual third." Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism*. (Harper and Row: New York, 1970) 21. Because he wrote spontaneously and with inconsistent use of terms, this particular notion of Hofmann may require further defense. However, Jennifer Samet has more recently emphasized the dialectical nature of Hofmann's thinking: "Hofmann's was a dialectical understanding of art-making in which reality, plus personal expression, becomes supra-reality" and that "Hofmann was a dialectical thinker who reveled in the synthesis of flatness and depth, two-

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creation flow chart appear frequently but are applied flexibly within his writings.[7] However, just as push and pull endured through his diverse bodies of mature work, the underlying theory of *nature-artist-creation*—that nature effects the artist, leading to creation—remained consistent throughout his lectures and teachings throughout his life. The artist, he insists over and over again, should work from nature, perceiving its "invisible tensions" and transforming (or through "metamorphosis," as in *nature-artist-creation*) them into new reality: a work of art with an internal logic that rivals—but never copies—nature in its autonomy and

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dimensionality and three-dimensionality." [Jennifer Samet, *Painterly Representation in New York, 1945-1975*. PhD Dissertation. New York: CUNY Graduate Center, 2010]

[7] As Michael Schreyach has pointed out, "a dive into his unpublished manuscripts reveals a vague yet polarizing, and subsequently contradictory corpus of theories." [Schreyach, Michael. "Towards Pragmatic Painting: Jackson Pollock's Reflexive Potential," PhD. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2005. P 149] His published writings, while serving as a manual for students and painters, are comprised mostly of cryptic affirmations, ultimately bound together by an open-ended blue print. Not only was Hofmann still learning to speak English, let alone write, upon his arrival in the U.S. in 1931, but writing, I conjecture, was actually means for realizing his evolving theories on art and art making.

According to Mary Gabriel, his verbal expressions were also as thought provoking as they were inscrutable: "Moving from student to student, [Hofmann] criticized their work in a peculiar English peppered with German that was nearly impossible to decipher. The tension during such crits was palpable." [Mary Gabriel, *Ninth Street Women* (New York: Hachette Books, 2018) 22]

Jennifer Samet adds that [another student] "Paul Resika has maintained that Hofmann's students were not reading their teacher's writing, despite the fact that typescripts were occasionally distributed in the school. According to Resika, the students did not know what to make of Hofmann's texts" [Samet, *Painterly Representation* 27).

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complexity. “Art should not describe,” he wrote, “it should create a life of its own.”[8]

This thesis will investigate the term “nature” within Hofmann’s writings and teaching practice, examining the ways Hofmann’s personal experiences in nature, analyzed through his *plein-air* landscape drawings, inhabited this system of creation. I conclude by arguing for the importance of nature and the landscape genre to the development of his larger practice.[9] Hofmann’s fidelity to nature as the stimulus for art is one characteristic that differentiates him from some of the Abstract Expressionist milieu, and it remains insufficiently explored.[10] As the artist put it himself, "somebody who says art has nothing to do with nature must be a very stupid person...Art stimulates fantasy.”[11]

Hans Hofmann’s life, teachings, and art were a unique admixture of new and old. In his critiques, he perpetuated Romantic ideals of inborn artistic genius

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[8] HH, Untitled note. c.1933-1950*, Hans Hofmann paper*s, Series 3, Box 6, Folder 4.

[9] The body of work from this period includes a sizable number of portraits of students, which are not discussed in this topic as the question at hand concerns the role of the natural environments, which in some instances applied to the model and in others to objects in the studio.

[10] Infamously, when Hofmann met Jackson Pollock, he offered that Pollock was doomed to repeat himself because he did not paint from nature. Pollock replied, infamously, “I am nature." They were introduced through his former student Lee Krasner; Pollock was never his student as labored to correct people when they assumed as such. Drafts of a letter to Sam Hunter in the Hans Hofmann Papers at the AAA show multiple attempts to correct the art historian when his 1956 book, *Jackson Pollock: the Maze and the Minotaur* falsely asserted that Pollock was his student.

[11] Dickey, *Color Creates Light,* 66.

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and vision and the importance of nature while imparting his encyclopedic knowledge of the Old Masters. At the same time, he voraciously digested contemporary theories of art and painting at a speed unmatched by most teachers of his time, according to students of several generations. One student, Haynes Ownby, stated that, "Hofmann was the only one I ever studied with who talked about relationships and could tell you what was common to both the Old Masters and the New Masters…push and pull, plasticity, color, luminosity."[12] Hofmann lived in Europe until the age of 50, yet the Hans Hofmann School in New York (1934-1958) was so influential to the younger generation of American painters that *Time Magazine* labeled him as the father of the Abstract Expressionist movement.[13] His teaching career was driven by financial need as much as the will to propagate new artistic ideas within Germany, and then, after 1933, American, culture at large.[14] His mature paintings, crafted with the push and pull theory for which he is best known, embody this balance between theoretical rigor and the neo-Romantic privileging of self-expression over copying—and above all the

[12] Dickey, *Color Creates Light,* 61.

[13]Though over half of the American Abstract Artists, a group founded in New York in 1936, had passed through the Hans Hofmann School. [Sandler, *Triumph of American Painting,* 19]. He was also the first artist to be called an "Abstract Expressionist" in by critic Robert Coates in 1946.

[14] In his 1930 essay, "A Review of the Field in Art Education," he chastises American society for its lack of funding or progressive attitudes in American arts education. It is reasonable to think his teaching career was to some degree an effort towards resolving this dearth of culture. [Hans Hofmann, "A Review of the Field in Art Education" *The Art Digest* Number 19 (August 1930): 27.]

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certainty of individual vision—that he passed on to four generations of artists.[15]

There was also the matter of form and material. One of the single greatest influences on Hofmann's painting and pedagogical theories was Cézanne, especially the late Impressionist master's use of color planes to sculpt forms in space and his shift towards discovering an autonomous harmony between objects in the picture plane, relinquishing the need to force all objects into a single perspectival vantage point. Push and pull, Hofmann's great contribution to formalist modernism, demonstrated that strategically posed planes of color could synthesize depth within the picture plane while maintaining the integrity of the medium; that is to say, concede to the material two-dimensionality of paint on canvas in both concept and appearance. Like many modernists, one of Hofmann's lasting concerns was how to integrate individual vision with the specific pictorial consciousness of the 20th century. He found that this could be realized through abstract, synthetic depth. Hofmann's early black and white drawings show the artist contending with these exact issues, trying out way after way to express his artistic vision by experimenting with different pictorial means. Even Greenberg, who felt that "the notion of experiment has been much abused in connection with modernist art" allowed that "Hofmann's painting would seem to justify its

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[15] For more on Hofmann's theories see also Tina Dickey, "Spatial Constellations:: Rythmns of Nature," *Hans Hofmann,* Helmut Friedel and Tina Dickey (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1998), 83 and Cynthia Goodman, *Hans Hofmann* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986).

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introduction if anything does."[16]

Applying Hofmann's *nature-artist-creation* diagram as the conceptual framework for this text, each chapter will be devoted to one of its three parts: nature, the artist, and creation. I will read the drawings as primary evidence of his early explorations into these subjects, and in turn use his theories on nature, the artist, and creation to understand the drawings in relation to his later work. Chapter 1, "Nature: Hofmann *en plein-air*" traces Hofmann's early training to his founding of the Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst in Munich in 1915, demonstrating the centrality of *plein-air* drawing in his classes from 1920 onwards. I also examine his writings on nature and the influence of Cézanne on Hofmann's attitudes towards the subject. Chapter 2, "The Artist: Empathy, Vision-as-Experience, and *Gestaltung*" explores Hofmann's understanding of the artist and artistic subjectivity in relation to two popular theories circulating in Germany during his time. *Einfühlung,* translated into English as Empathy, is most simply understood as the experience of an intuitive, instinctive emotional projection onto (or association with) inanimate objects. *Gestaltung,* though sometimes translated as "design," has no direct English translation. Rather, it suggests a manner of conceptualization, composition, construction, or creation in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.[17] Both of these theories fundamentally informed Hofmann's

[16] Clement Greenberg, "Hans Hofmann," *Hans Hofmann*. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art; Munich: Prestel-Verla g, 1990) 124.

[17] I will further discuss the histories and discursive fields of each term as they relate to Hofmann in Chapter 2.

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understanding of the artist and artistic subjectivity, and I will illustrate how this subjectivity finds form in his *St. Tropez* series (1929-1930). Chapter 3, "Creation: Plasticity, Spatial Experience, and the (de)Construction of the Picture Plane" deals with two key elements in Hofmann's idea of "creation:" the picture plane and plasticity. At this particular time, the term plasticity connoted a heightened material and intellectual consciousness of the construction of the medium at hand. In regards to painting and drawing, this awareness affected the creation of pictorial space and the subsequent approach to the picture plane. Hofmann's interest in the plasticity of drawing, which was inextricable from his larger plastic question of how to reconcile three-dimensional experience with two-dimensional representation, appears throughout his California and Massachusetts landscapes (1930-35). With their loosened gestures and radically flattened picture planes, they show Hofmann searching for the essence of both his medium and the surrounding landscape. Experiences in nature, I argue, fostered the growth of Hofmann's artistic subjectivity, which in turn opens our reading of the *creation* bubble in *nature-artist-creation* to include the artist's spatial, bodily experiences in the natural environment. The writings of the German sculptor and theorist Adolf von Hildebrand, whom Hofmann first encountered as a young student in Anton Azbé's class in Munich around 1902 (and later assigned to his own students) ground this notion in Hildebrand's visual-kinesthetic theory.

My research process involved visits to three of the four public archives holding Hofmann's personal papers, financial records, lecture transcriptions, student notes, correspondences, and photographs**:** The Hans Hofmann Papers,

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University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library; Hans Hofmann Papers, Museum of Modem Art; Museum Library, New York; and the Hans Hofmann Papers, Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C. Photographs, unpublished manuscripts, and personal notes and scraps impart the importance of nature to Hofmann.

While bodies of research on the drawings are comparably thinner than those on his paintings—and still building—we do well to remember Hofmann's quote that "a work of art goes through many phases of development, but in each phase it is always a work of art. Therein lies the importance of the sketches."[18] While he was speaking about sketches as studies for paintings, we can think of his landscape drawings as studies for his practice in general. If one chooses to follow this quote, then we can also think of them as works in their own right. Irving Sandler has noted how as a teacher, "Hofmann's instruction was focused on drawing" and that, "Carl Holty recalled that for a time in the middle twenties, Hofmann was so engrossed with the beauties of drawing…that he went so far as to remark on one occasion that once we had gotten into the whole world of drawing, we wouldn't even want to paint for a long time."[19]

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[18] Hans Hofmann, *The Search for the Real*, 17. Additionally, Glen Wessels remembered that [Hofmann] "said you must go through the sketching period. And that he 'drew, and drew, and drew for 60s years." [Glen Wessels, *Education of an Artist*. Oral history/transcript. Interviewed by Suzanne Riess. Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, 1967) 147.

[19] Irving Sander, *The New York School: The Painters & Sculptors of the Fifties* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979) 8.

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This examination of Hofmann's drawings also takes his medium—the ink, paper, mark, and line—as constituent elements of a constructed reality. The medium an artist chose was of great importance to Hofmann, for the "artist's technical problem is how to transform the material with which he works back into the sphere of the spirit."[20] The third element in the "creation" bubble of *nature-artists-creation,* "spirituality," did not refer to a religious spiritualism, but a metaphysical state—for, as Hofmann later wrote in *Search for the Real*, "metaphysics is the *search* for the essential nature of reality."[21] For Hofmann, the spiritual in art was the moment in which the inner expression of the artist was fully integrated with the materials of his choosing until they were transformed into a "self-sustaining spiritual reality"—a work whose interior logic paralleled (but never copied) nature in its complexity.[22] One is reminded of Allan Kaprow's recollection of Hofmann's teaching: that "since the painting surface, being flat, is only a metaphoric field for activity, its nature as a metaphor must be preserved."[23]

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[20]Hofmann, *Search for the Real*, 40. In personal note he expounds more philosophically on the spiritual in a manner reminiscent of the Hegelian *Geist* that transcends individual existences but manifests individually, socially, and historically: "And the spirit, which receives and gives, and which manifests itself in us on the basis of our material existence. Life. As living phenomena owe are only transition, for Life is eternal as spirit and therefore there is not death. We die only in our material existence…Life as a phenomena [sic] of the flesh is a material manifestation of the spirit, which repeats in its rhythm with slight variations throughout the whole of existence." [HH, "Drafts and Notes" Circa 1933-1950, *Hans Hofmann papers*, Box 6, Folder 4.]

[21]Ibid, 40.

[22]Ibid, 40.

[23] Sandler, *New York School,* 5.

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"Self-sustaining spiritual reality" was another way of maintaining that art, like any good work of fiction, must convey an alternate reality whose apparent fabrication makes it all the more convincing. This "new reality" from *nature-artist-creation* was the future of art that Hofmann worked tirelessly to explore with his own work and to instill in his students, and it is imprinted in his early drawings.

Research Precedents

Even though many of the black and white drawings were included in Hofmann's first major career retrospective held at the Addison Gallery of Art in 1948, the first in-depth essay devoted solely to them was not published until 1978: Barbara Rose's "Hans Hofmann: From Expressionism to Abstraction" traces his evolution from figuration to abstraction, as evidenced by the drawings.[24] Nuancing Greenberg's quote that Hofmann "needed to sweat out Cubism,"[25] Rose finds that the artist needed to explore Cubism because he came out of a German figurative tradition, and it was the only way to arrive at abstraction:

> Drawing constantly and consistently for over a decade, Hofmann worked his way through the academic disciplines that his Germanic background and his thorough knowledge of the modern movements provided him....

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[24] Rose also wrote a shorter, earlier piece on the drawings for the catalog of a show of Hofmann's India ink drawings for André Emmerich Gallery in 1977. [Barbara Rose, "Hans Hofmann Drawings: 1930-44," *Hans Hofmann Drawings*. New York: André Emmerich Gallery, 1977.]

[25] Clement Greenberg, *Hofmann*. Paris: Éditions Georges Fall, 1961.

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> Matisse and Mondrian could only become his true inspiration after he had forgotten Kokoschka, Corinth, and a whole Germanic tradition of academic figurative painting. Fortunately, Hofmann was able to reject what was academic in Expressionism *into* Cubism through the drawings, which gradually become less like Kokoschka and more like Picasso.[26]

At same time, she sides with Greenberg in attitude, finding the European avant-garde Hofmann became closely acquainted with during the Paris years (1904-1914) to be more of a burden than a useful education:

> An essential function of the drawings was to aid Hofmann in simplifying and reducing nature, a step on the road toward abstraction. According to Hofmann, 'simplification is the essence of abstraction from which objective values are not necessarily eliminated.' Thus it was through drawing that Hofmann mastered the art of simplification on which abstract art is based. He needed a long period of gestation, perhaps because his equivocal relationship with the European [German] Expressionist tradition created an extra hurdle.[27]

For both Rose and Greenberg, drawing was a means of erasing knowledge in order to arrive at abstraction, recalling Cézanne's aspiration to "to give the image of what we see, forgetting all which has appeared before us."[28] Implicit in both Rose and Greenberg's understanding of Hofmann and Cubism is a popularized narrative of Hofmann as synthesizer and translator of European avant-garde for American students.[29] This began almost as soon as he arrived in the U.S. in 1930 as a visiting

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[26] Barbara Rose, "Hans Hofmann: From Expressionism to Abstraction," *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 3 (1978): 111.

[27] Ibid, 111.

[28] "What He Said to Me: The Motive." By Joachim Gasquet. Trans. From an article in L'Amour de L'Art for December 1921. *Hans Hofmann Papers*, Series 3, Box 8, Folder 22.

[29] Subsequent historians have taken differing positions. The 1940s witnessed the rise of polemicists like Clement Greenberg who argued that Hofmann's

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teacher at the University of California at Berkeley.[30] In fact, his works on paper from 1928-31 were the subject of two shows the same year he arrived in the U.S., one staged in August Haviland Hall at U.C. Berkeley in July, and the other at the Legion of Honor, San Francisco in August. In the catalogue, Worth Ryder, Berkeley professor and a former student of Hofmann's, wrote:

> The first decade of the twentieth century, a period of utmost importance in the history of art, found him associated with a group of artists in Paris which was destined to determine most of what is vital and significant in contemporary art. Of this group Picasso and others remained to carry on their profession in France…in 1915 he founded the Hofmann School in Munich—today the most notable academy of modern art in Central Europe…With the works of Paul Klee, Matisse, Kandinsky, and others, he positions of Hofmann's paintings and drawings can only be evaluated in the future. Certainly they are among the great works of contemporary art.[31]

Ryder was instrumental in bringing Hofmann to the U.S. and exhibiting his works

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pioneering push and pull led painting into the era of flatness that defined the inevitable climax of Western art. Harold Rosenberg instead asserted that Hofmann helped build out space for painting as "an arena in which to act"—the action being an emphatic and radical break from art as capitalist society had thus far defined it. By the 1970s, Irving Sandler had deemed Hofmann a "dialectical master" who neither broke away from nor advanced Western art, but methodically attempted to reconcile its problems. But still, in 1978, Barbara Rose maintained that "as times passes the seminal role of Hans Hofmann in the development of Abstract Expressionist, as an international style that fused elements derived from the major European modern movements becomes increasingly clear." [Barbara Rose, "Hans Hofmann: From Expressionism to Abstraction," *Arts Magazine* 53, no. 3 (1978)]

[30] Amidst the growing power of the Nazi party in Germany and their anti-avant-garde actions, Hofmann migrated permanently to the U.S. after obtaining his Visa in 1934 and applies for citizenship in 1938. His wife Maria "Miz" Hofmann is finally able to move to the U.S. in 1939.

[31] Glen Wessels, Hans Hofmann Exhibition Palace of the Legion of Honor Catalog Essay, *Hans Hofmann Papers*, Series 7, Box 11, Folder 2.

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upon arrival, and his text serves to justify these efforts. It also established the beginning of a long-running narrative of Hofmann as importer of the European avant-garde. Because of his indelible impact on the Abstract Expressionist generation, there was both evidence and impetus for postwar American art historians to indirectly connect the movement, through Hofmann, to European ideas seeded earlier in the century.

Turning away from his postwar American affiliations, more recent scholarship has focused on the early drawings as an autonomous practice, examining them within the context of Hofmann's life and his surroundings in the Mediterranean (1928-1930), the Bay Area (1930-1931), and Gloucester and Provincetown, Massachusetts (after 1933). A 2017 show at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, *Hans Hofmann: Works on Paper*, begins with watercolors made upon his return to Munich from Paris in 1914 and progresses all the way until the early 1960s, when he made spare, minimal color compositions in oil on paper. The project included research by Diana Greenwold, who argues that Hofmann's years in California (1930-31) ought to be studied for their impact on the artist with equal attention as his time in Europe. She compares his California drawings to brush-and-ink works of the Japanese expatriate Chiara Obata.[32] In the same catalogue, Karen Wilkin asserts that Hofmann's drawings reveal a private and less controlled side of the artist that allowed him to experiment more freely

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[32] Diana Greenwold, "Where Things Can Grow and Will Grow": Hans Hofmann in California, 1930-31, *Hans Hofmann: Works on Paper* (Jacksonville, Florida: University of Florida and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

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than in painting.[33] The 2018 exhibition *Hofmanns Wege* at the Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern was devoted entirely to Hofmann's early drawings, starting with his earliest figurative works made in Munich in 1989. Henrike Hans evaluates Hofmann's unique approach to his life drawing lessons under Moritz Heymann, and later Anton Ažbe (both in Munich), observing that his tendency to include the studio architecture and furniture around the nude figure in his compositions foreshadowed his sensitivity for the relationship of forms.[34] Britta E. Buhlmann contributed scholarship on Hofmann's *St Tropez* series, affirming their close relationship to the avant-garde interests of the late 19th and early 20th century.[35] In the same catalog, Chika Jenkins examines the *St. Tropez* series vis-à-vis Adolf von Hildebrand's concept of relief sculpture, parsing Hofmann's extraordinary breadth of compositional inventiveness into different approaches to Hildebrand's concept of relief. Mindy Friedman focuses on Hofmann's unique modulation of line in the drawings as mode for spatial creation that informs his later color paintings. Steering an altogether different tack, Sila Ulag connects the conceptual interests of the drawings to Synthetic cubist *papier collé*.

The 2018 Berkeley Art Museum show, *Hans Hofmann: The Nature of*

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[33]Wilkin, Karen. "The Unknown Hans Hofmann: Works on Paper." *Hans Hofmann: Works on Paper* Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017.

[34] Henrike Hans, "Hans Hofmann Life Drawings," *Hofmanns Wege / Hofmann's Way*: *Frühe Zeichnungen / Early Drawings* (Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern and Edition Cantz, 2018) 18-29.

[35] Britta E. Buhlmann, "Hans Hofmann—The Landscapes around St. Tropez," *Hofmanns Wege / Hofmann's Way*: *Frühe Zeichnungen / Early Drawings* (Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern and Edition Cantz, 2018) 88-96.

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Abstraction compiles the most up-to-date research on the artist and presents the strongest case for the fundamental role of nature in the artist's oeuvre. Lucinda Barnes calls nature Hofmann's atelier in her essay "The Nature of Abstraction: Hans Hofmann," writing that "like his studio interiors, Hofmann's immediate environment in Provincetown—the surrounding landscape, and, in particular, his studio on Miller Hill—represented the physical and intellectual place of inspiration and creation: his 'atelier.'"[36] She compares his landscape paintings made after he established summer courses for the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts in Provincetown in 1935 to abstract paintings of the 1940s and beyond, suggesting a parallel between the compositions.

Rather than color and plane, the landscape drawings approach pictorial creation through ink and mark. Line both freed and forced to Hofmann explore the scope of his visual perception and artistic vision. His question was twofold: how does the artist mentally envision, experience, and digest what they see, and how should this be signified within a given medium? Although Hofmann continued to paint from nature (including working *en plein air*), from nudes in the studio, and even from still life compositions, his work became increasingly abstract from the 1940s onwards. This thesis aims to test his conjecture on nature's role by examining its earliest and most direct applications.

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[36] Lucinda Barnes, "The Nature of Abstraction: Hans Hofmann" *Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017) 15-41.

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Chapter I
Nature: Hofmann *en plein-air*

As stated above, much of the literature on Hofmann since he came to recognition in the 1940s has focused on his extraordinary influence as a pedagogue and as a critical painter and colorist in the history of Abstract Expressionism. Fewer scholars have honed on the particular importance of nature within Hofmann's self-engineered system of artistic theories.[37] From his first Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst prospectuses and unpublished English language texts in the early 1930s until his last published essays in the late 1950s, nature endures as a central figure in Hofmann's idiosyncratic manner of thinking and writing about art. Numerous undated manuscripts and unpublished notes at the Archives of American Art and unpublished essays at the Museum of Modern Art Library corroborate a classically Romantic belief nature as the incubator for the creative self. Reading his later published works, including *Search for the Real* (1948) and "Nature and Art: Controversy and Misconceptions" (1957), as part of a larger mass of unpublished ideas, the role of nature in making art becomes integral to understanding Hofmann as an artist.

This chapter will investigate Hans Hofmann's relationship to nature

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[37] However, it seems to be a growing field of interest. In the period between the beginning of my research and the culmination of this thesis, Lucinda Barnes published an essay "The Nature of Abstraction" for the 2019 Berkeley Art Museum / Pacific Film Archive retrospective, *Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction,* in which she discusses his frequent practice of teaching in plein air and how his practice of landscape painting influenced his later abstract compositions.

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during his development as an artist and educator during the 1920s and 1930s. This influence would continue until his final days when he retired from teaching in 1958 and was able to paint full-time until his death in 1967. While Hofmann was uniquely engaged with nature for an artist affiliated with the Abstract Expressionist movement, it is important to remember that he was born and trained amidst the traditions of the late 19th century European avant-garde, whose German Romantic roots conditioned him to look to nature as inspiration. While his insistence on nature as "the source of all inspiration" comes out of a history of ideas, namely, Romanticism, the Sublime, and Neo-Kantian aesthetics, Hofmann was determined to adapt these concepts for the 20th century. He believed resolutely that the artist should subjugate nature into their own artistic expression, not make art about nature's overpowering affect, as his unpublished primary source materials testify.

Section I: Hofmann's Early Training and Influences

Hans Hofmann was born to Theodor and Franziska Hofmann in Weissenberg, Bavaria in 1880. His father, an engineer for the state, moved the family to Munich when Hofmann was 6, later helping his son secure a job as the assistant to the director of Public Works at age 16 where he patented his own inventions.[38] By 1898, he had shifted attention towards art, moving into his own

[38]Many scholars have correlated his early science background with his rigorous approach to thinking about art. Among several inventions he purportedly made, Ellen Landau notes at least two: "he invented an electromagnetic comptometer and a radar-like warning signal for ships." [Ellen Landau, "'Space and Pictorial Life' Hans Hofmann's "Sharad Red and Germinating Yellow.'" The Bulletin of

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place at 47 Georgenstraße during the artistic golden age of the Schwabing district in Munich—a place Kandinsky called a "spiritual island in the great world"—and beginning his first formal art lessons from the artist Moritz Heymann in 1898.[39] Figurative drawings from these classes are the earliest surviving works by the artist. Henrike Hans notes that "the drawings are not limited to portraying the model, its position, or motion. Instead they also take the studio setting into account, without actually detailing the space."[40] An untitled figure study from this time (Figure 2), for example, includes not only the platform on which the model is posed and the stool upon which they would sit, but also a structure in the

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the Cleveland Museum of Art. Vol. 72, No. 5 (Sep., 1985) 310-322. Footnote 10.]

Tina Dickey specifies that the first device was a "precursor to the calculating machine" and the second was "probably never tested in landlocked Bavaria." He also developed a "portable freezing unit" [Dickey, *Color Creates Light*, 35.]

[39] Hofmann's place was down the street from Kandinsky's former studio (but it remains unconfirmed that they ever met). Other local luminaries during this time included Thomas Mann and Rainer Maria Rilke. [Barnes, "The Nature of Abstraction", 15.]

For a more in-depth history of Hofmann's early education and influences, see Peter Morrin, "The Education of Hans Hofmann" *Hans Hofmann Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings: Volume 1: Essays and References* (Surrey: Lund Humphries, 2014).

[40] He adds that "Hofmann also pursued an academic style of composition, setting up his models on the central axis of the paper and rendering them from a slightly higher angle. Using a pencil, he drew the figures in controlled lines so that the bodies are obviously separate from the space. Sparingly used accent, reinforced in a few places with hatching, denote physical characteristics. Hofmann did not strive to portray individual anatomy nor did he attempt a sculptural delineation of the model—the usual academic accomplishments. Instead, he mainly concentrated on proportions and accentuating contours." [Hans, "Hans Hofmann Life Drawings," 25.]

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foreground—perhaps the student's stool or easel. As Hans describes, "Hofmann used the spatial situation to reinforce both the portions and the division of the paper."[41] Instead of articulating the shadow behind the model with neat cross hatching, Hofmann already shows a loosened touch with ribbons of graphite line cascading from behind the figure. The figure was elemental to his earliest education, and became a fixed part of the curriculum of both his Munich and New York schools. However, because fewer figurative works survive after 1904, there is weaker visual evidence of the relationship of figuration to his artistic development in the 1920s and 1930s and his shift towards abstraction. Rather, the larger proportion of landscape drawings from the period indicates that the genre provided a more fruitful outlet to explore his artistic subjectivity and pictorial space.

In 1902, Hofmann enrolled in the Slovenian-born Anton Ažbé's classes at Georgenstraße 16, while also continuing studies at Heinrich Wolff and Ernst Neumann's school for graphic arts (in which he was enrolled in from 1900 until 1904), usually taking night classes as he worked as a city clerk by day. It was in Ažbé's atelier (earlier attended by Kandinsky around 1900) that Hofmann was exposed to the Pointillist concept of *Farbikistallisation* ("the crystallization of color": where undiluted colors on the canvas combine in the eye of the observer) and *Kugelprinzip* ("sphere principle": where artists interpret space through

[41] Ibid, 25. Hans adds that Hofmann would return to the nude in the 1920s as well as the 1930s when he was teaching in California, where "he offered life drawing on weekday evenings."

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volumes, the appearance of which are determined by the direction of planes).[42] During this time, the Berlin-based dealer Paul Cassirer showed Hofmann's Seurat-inspired portraits of his girlfriend Maria (known as "Miz") to a wealthy department store owner, Phillip Freudenberg.[43] Freudenberg became Hofmann's patron, sponsoring his relocation to Paris with Miz. There, Hofmann attended the Ecole de la Grande Chaumière and soon became a *Dômer,* one of the young artists who frequented the famed Café du Dome. He purportedly befriended numerous Parisian artists: Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, Andre Derain, Sonia and Robert Delaunay, and Jules Pascin, an acquaintance from Moritz Heymann's school in Munich; as well critics and collectors: Wilhelm Uhde, Friedrich Ahlers-Hesterman, Walter Bondy, and Leo and Gertrude Stein. He also met the American modernist painter Arthur Beecher Carles, whose daughter Mercedes would later figure importantly in his life.[44] It is known that the Delaunays, especially Sonia,

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[42] Dickey, *Color Creates Light,* 38.

[43] Ibid, 39. Cassirer was also the first dealer to give Hofmann a solo exhibition in Berlin in 1910. Cynthia Goodman notes that "Matisse is said to have visited Freudenberg and seen the collection of Hofmann paintings he had received as one of the conditions of his continued patronage; Matisse's 'enthusiasm had the convenient effect of encourage Hofmann's patron to continue his support." [Cynthia Goodman, "Hans Hofmann: A Master in Search of the 'Real,' *Hans Hofmann* (New York: Whitney Museum of Art)].

[44]At the encouragement of her parents, Mercedes Carles (later Mercedes Matter) enrolled in the Hans Hofmann school in New York, where she became his student, muse, daughter figure, and lover. For more on her relationship to and influence on Hofmann see: Lucinda Barnes, "When Vision Became Gesture: Hans Hofmann in the 1940s." *Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction*. Oakland, University of California Press and Berkeley, 2019. Barnes posits that Mercedes and her husband, the Swiss artist Herbert Matter, had a significant influence on Hofmann's gestural tendencies from the 1940s on.

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became close friends of Hofmann's; he and Sonia even designed a series of scarfs together.

Beyond the fecund social atmosphere of pre-war Paris, Hofmann also had the opportunity to see contemporary art he might have never seen at the Alte Pinakotech in Munich. The year after his arrival the Salon d'Autonme of 1905 opened, where he saw Cézanne firsthand. Scholars have noted the crucial painterly influence of Cézanne on Hofmann, especially in terms creating volume through interacting planes of color. For the purposes of this study, which is focused on Hofmann's relationship to nature as it appears in his early ink on paper landscapes, we can turn to the archival evidence, especially Hofmann's personal transcriptions of Cézanne's writings on nature. Possibly typed out for use in lectures or lessons, these transcriptions provide concrete evidence of his artistic inheritance. For example, an English translation of a French interview between Joachim Gasquet and Cézanne, called "What He Said to Me: The Motive" is saved in Hofmann's personal papers at the Archives of American Art.[45] Originally published in the French journal *L'Amour de L'Art* in 1921, it is a brief discourse between the artist and the poet/critic in which Cézanne expresses ideas closely related to Hofmann's interpretation of what nature meant to the artist:

> Cézanne: The artist is only a receptacle of sensations, a registering apparatus. A fine apparatus indeed, but fragile and complicated, especially in its relation to others…But if he interposes himself, if he dares, poor

[45] In addition to this piece, Hofmann had numerous essays and lectures by Juan Gris, Mondrian, and others, which he appeared to transcribe by typewriter from their original publication, perhaps as a method of practicing his English, or as material to assign to his students.

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> thing, consciously to mingle himself with that which he ought merely to translate, it infiltrates his own littleness, and his work is inferior.
>
> Moi: The artist, in short, you regard as inferior to nature?
>
> Cézanne: No, I don't mean to say that. Art is a harmony in parallel to nature. Those imbeciles who tell you that the painter is always inferior to nature! He is parallel to her. If he does not intervene consciously—mark me well. He should quiet within himself all the voices of perceived opinion. He should forget, forget, be silent, make of himself a perfect echo. Then, on this sensitive plate, all the landscape will be inscribed.[46]

The notion that "art is… parallel to nature" appears throughout Hofmann's unpublished notes and manuscripts, and is the counterpart to his dictate that the artist should "paint from nature."[47] Hofmann was so moved by the concept of art as parallel to nature that he eventually adopted the word "parallel" into his own ideas, writing that "the creative process lies not in imitating, but in paralleling nature—translating the impulse received from nature into the medium of expression, thus vitalizing this medium. The picture should be alive, the statue should be alive, and every work should be alive."[48] In "The Motive," Cézanne was expressing a nuanced understanding of artistic perception that had a great influence on

[46]Joachim Gasquet. "What He Said to Me: The Motive." Trans. From an article in *L'Amour de L'Art* for December 1921. [Includes handwritten English translation from the French and hand-typed English transcription but the translator is unidentified] *Hans Hofmann Papers*, Series 3, Box 8, Folder 22.

[47] Besides the school prospectus, the earliest appearance of this phrasing was in *Creation in Form and Color: A Textbook for Instruction in Art* (1931) [Trans. by Wessels from the original German *Form und Farbe in der Gestaltung: Ein Lehrbuch für den Kunstunterricht*

[48] Other Cézanne quotes and ideas appear throughout Hofmann's lesson plans and manuscripts that relate more to color, vision, composition. However, it's important to clarify that Hofmann did not emulate Cézanne's ideas wholesale.

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Hofmann. To insist that the artist is a "registering apparatus" that is "complicated, especially in its relation to others" was an implicit rejection of a belief that the artist could fully apprehend nature through the senses, or that nature could be captured through dutiful rendering of natural light and shading.[49] For Cézanne, the physiognomic perception of the artist was corrupted by its inherent "fragility" and its contingent relationship to consciousness. Hence, artists should not try to replicate nature, but to "translate" it by quieting the conscious mind and making himself "a perfect echo." In this heightened state of perception, the artist could allow nature to enter one's senses in a subjective and pre-cognitive fashion.[50]

While enrolled at Ažbé's school, it is on record that Hofmann was also exposed to the writings of Adolf von Hildebrand, a thinker affiliated with *Einfühlung* (literally, "in-feeling") or Empathy, as it came to be known in English after 1908, a concept that had a significant influence on Hofmann's development.[51] As a critical term, it was first used by Robert Vischer in 1873 to evaluate how

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[49] Hofmann echoes this idea later, writing that "Nature limited our senses wisely, because only on the basis of this limitation are our sensory impressions spiritually attainable to us as experiences." [HH, "First Concept," 1930-1955, *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Box 7, Folder 37.]

[50] By 1948, Hofmann concludes that "throughout his life Cézanne struggled for synthesis, Renoir mastered it in a high degree through instinct." [Hofmann, *Search for the Real*, 48] He felt that "the Impressionists…rediscovered the full plastic significance of the picture plane as a two-dimensional entity. The reason for this re-discovery was a search for the entity of light, expressed through color, which resulted in re-establishing the two-dimensionality of the picture plane." [Ibid, 46]

[51] Tina Dickey, *Color Creates Light,* 38.

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inanimate forms such as works of art and architecture could elicit emotion or associative feeling in the beholder.[52] By the early 20th century, studies in *Einfühlung* came to encompass theories that explored human capacity to experience external objects with internalized feelings. Hofmann was preoccupied with the integration of internal vision with a given subject, which manifested itself as a "relationship of spatial or pictorial elements" that "produces in us projection of movements that are intellectual." [53] The particular way these questions dogged Hofmann will be explored further in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

Section II: The Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst

The outbreak of World War I forced Hofmann to return to Munich instead of Paris after a 1914 vacation with Miz in Corsica.[54] Stuck in Munich throughout the war, he was unable to retrieve his belongings and paintings from the Paris

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[52] Michael Schreyach notes that "It has been suggested that Robert Vischer….understood empathy to reflect a psychological demand to bridge the essential "otherness" of nature." [Schreyach, "Hans Hofmann's Theory of Pictorial Creation." *Towards Pragmatic Painting,* 157]. This suggests that the primacy of projection in Empathy theory is an attempt to solve an ontological problem: what cannot be known about nature might be imagined through our mental projection.

[53]Hofmann, "Empathy" in <u>SUPRASENSITORY EXPERIENCES,</u> in "Draft, Part VI – "Mind", circa 1952, *Hans Hofmann Papers*. Box 6, Folder 22.

[54] He successfully applied to be exempted from the draft due to a lung issue, so he did not serve in the war. [*Hans Hofmann Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings: Volume 1: Essays and References*. Surrey: Lund Humphries, 2014.]

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years.[55] When the patronage of Freudenberg ceased upon his departure from Paris, Hofmann found himself in financial need, which led him in 1915 to establish the Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst (Figure 3); the school ran from 1915-1933, and was followed by the Hans Hofmann School of Fine Arts, which he opened in New York in the form of private lessons 1932, and formally established at 137 West 57th Street in 1934. Despite his far-reaching influence as the teacher of several generations of European and American artists, his self-image, unsurprisingly, was not that of a teacher, but rather an artist; he admitted privately that "I am not a teacher in the usual sense…I am a painter which had to teach for his livelihood."[56] Accordingly, his pedagogical theories have often been interpreted as extensions of his painterly interests. However, the early school prospectuses and surviving photographs from his summer classes on the Mediterranean and in Berkeley, California evidence how his teaching practice informed his art, at least before he moved to New York. The Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst prospectuses (Figures 4 & 5) and surviving photographs (Figures 6-12) reveal two things about Hofmann's practice during the 1930s: that art should synthesize

[55] This is why no works from the Paris period survive. Scholars infer they were either sold off or destroyed.

[56] Hans Hofmann, "First Concept," [unpublished handwritten manuscript] *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Box 7, Folder 37.] Full quotes reads: "I never considered myself "the Founder" of any particular school. I would consider it a limitation in a world of inexhaustible creative possibilities. –As an artist I never have belonged to any group. I am not a teacher in the usual sense either. I am a painter which had to teach for his livelihood to assure artistic independence. In this function I became the imitator and disseminator of certain creative ideas that have contributed to the cultural evolution of our time."

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classical methods and contemporary issues, and an active *plein-ai*r practice was part of realizing both. The 1915 prospectus (Figure 4) exemplifies Hofmann's idiosyncratic interest in Renaissance ideals and modern ideas. Lucinda Barnes notes that Hofmann "encouraged study and sketching from the masters in museums. More importantly, [he] quickly distinguished himself as a direct link to the formal innovations of Fauvism and Cubism and for his emphasis on individual artistic experience and creative impulse."[57] The first *Lehrfächen,* or course subject in the 1915 Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst (Figure 4B), called "DRAWING FROM NATURE", reads:

> DRAWING FROM NATURE: The 2 and 3-dimensional mastery of form: silhouette, area, volume, movement and countermovement, the 2 and 3-dimensional rhythm; Dynamics of the masses; formal tension and function: the spatial problem, spatial tension and plastic, the functions in the room, the *Gestaltung* of the living and organic form in its relationship to the formal and gestural whole, i.e., to the composition.[58]

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[57] Barnes, "The Nature of Abstraction," 15.

[58] The original German reads: ZEICHNEN VOR DER NATUR: Die 2 and 3 dimensional Beherrschung der Form: Silhuette, Fläch, Volumen, Bewegung und Gegenbewegung, die 2 und 3 dimensionale Rythmk; Dynamik der Massen; formale Spannung und Funktion: das Raumproblem, Raumspannungen und Raumsplastik, die Funktionen im Raum, die Gestaltung der lebendigen und vegeistigten Form im ihrer Beziehung zum formalin und gestigen Ganzen, d. i. zur Komposition. [Translation by the author] [HH, "Prospectuses, 1915-1933," Hans Hofmann papers, Box 4, Folder 1.]

In the phrase "vor der Natur", "Vor" can mean "in front of nature," as in the artist views the nature in front of him, or "before nature," suggesting a pre-existing mental image that precedes experience in nature: the *Urbild*. The phrase is recycled in following prospectuses, and the first English version of his Summer 1933 Schule Für Bildende Kunst prospectus (Figure 5) translates it as "criticism before nature." William Chapin Seitz's 1963 catalogue for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, includes a translation of the prospectus with "vor der Natur" as "from nature." [Seitz, *Hans Hofmann*, 56.] Wishing to more closely preserve the original German, and to underscore the spatial aspect of being "in

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As seen in this lesson plan, there is an integration of classical means and modernist interests. Students were required to master two and three-dimensional rendering, as well as contemporary ideas, such as *Raum,* or spatial awareness, compositional rhythm, and pictorial *Gestaltung*. Hofmann was known to don his European artistic inheritance proudly, sharing a staggering visual memory of art history and inspiring his young students to take on the mantle of the Old Masters.[59] His school records contain numerous Old Master facsimiles gridded with geometric shapes. Indeed, Hofmann's adept merging of classical lessons and contemporary theory prompted Irving Sandler to call him "both a radical and a traditionalist" and this early excerpt from his teaching practice exemplifies the traditional scaffolding that held his progressive ideas together.[60] Mastering silhouette, volume, and area by

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front of" nature, in some cases below I opt for "in front of nature." Here, "from nature" is the English translation that was approved by Hofmann, as it appears in the 1933 English language prospectus. In other cases, I translate "vor der nature" as "in front of nature" as it more closely reflects the essential meaning of the phrase.

[59]Irving Sandler cites Thomas Hess on the school: "In the best meaning of the term, the Hofmann School is an academy—a temple in which mysteries and standards are preserved"… Indeed, the two artists [De Kooning and Hofmann] believed themselves to be the heirs of modern European art, and it is significant that both were born and educated in Europe." [Sandler, *The New York School,* 5].

Mary Gabriel writes on his appeal to students: '"Hofmann made art glamorous," Larry said, "by including the same sentence with the names Michelangelo, Rubens, Courbet, and Matisse, the name *Rivers*—and his own, of course. It wasn't that you were a Michelangelo or a Matisse, but that you faced somewhat similar problems. What he really did by talking this way was inspire you to work." [Gabriel, *Ninth Street Women,* 268.]

[60] See Irving Sandler, *The New York School,* 5. Ellen Landau recounts that "Sandler has also pointed out that Hans Hofmann was a 'conservationist,' rather

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drawing from nature epitomizes a classical artistic training, as well as a humanistic world view in which the perceivable world is both knowable *and* representable through measurement and observation. However, this is combined with the mastery *Raum*, *Gestaltung*, and the plasticity of the medium—all distinctly early 20th century concerns.

The front page (Figure 4A) of the same prospectus decrees:

> Art does not consist of objectively reproducing reality. The most complete representational replication of reality is a dead form, photography or panopticon, if the impulse of artistic *Gestaltung* is absent. Form as art indeed receives its impulses from nature; it is not bound, however, to representational reality, but rather to the artistic experience of objective reality.[61]

With this assertion that "art does not consist of objectively reproducing reality" Hofmann cemented a tenet that would define his teachings and practice for the

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than a conservative, in his use of the traditions of modern art." [Landau, "Space and Pictorial Life," 312] Michael Schreyach takes a more critical position on the presence of classical influences in Hofmann's pedagogy: "Hofmann's vision was severely limited, alongside these, bounded by the pedagogical motifs of the life class, the class in advanced composition, the outdoor painting class. In the academic tradition, before Modernism, these motifs were steppingstones to the grand historical paintings and the large and religious themes. By Hofmann's time they had become vestigial, ends in themselves, steppingstones to the depiction of reality so long as reality was supposed to consist of pots of flowers of gueridons, sailboats and bathers, girls in armchairs, the fisherman's shack of Rockport."

[61]The original German reads: "Die Kunst besteht nicht in der gegenständlich objektivierenden Nachbildung der Wirklichkeit. Die vollendetste gegenständliche Nachbildung der Wirklichkeit ist als Form tot, Fotografie oder Panoptikum, wenn ihr die Impulse der künsterlichen Gestaltung fehlen. Die Form im Sinne der Kunst erhält ihre Impulse zwar durch die Natur; sie ist jedoch nicht an die gegenständliche Wirklichkeit gebunden, sondern vielmehr an das *künstlerische Erlebnis*. [Translation by the author] [HH, "Prospectuses, 1915-1933," *Hans Hofmann papers*, Box 4, Folder 1.

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next five decades.[62] It also recalls Cézanne's 1874 letter to his mother in which he wrote that, "I have to work all the time, not to reach that final perfection which earns the admiration of imbeciles.—And this thing which is commonly appreciated so much as merely the effect of craftsmanship and renders all work resulting from it inartistic and common."[63] Following this concept, art should instead result from experiencing nature, and, returning to the *nature-artist-creation* chart (Figure 1), turn the "physical matter" one observes into "positive space, negative, space, and color," which is defined as "vision." This concept is expressed more abstractly elsewhere in Hofmann's notes, as the "invisible tensions of nature" stimulating the inner *Spannkraft,* or "tension" (also translated to English as "vigor," "resilience" and "elasticity") of the artist, resulting alternately in "vision," "true art," "the spiritual," and *Gestaltung*. The drawings from the period of 1928-1933 exhibit his labored exercises in creating work that did not simply reproduce reality, but imbue the landscape with all of the above."[64]

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[62] This is also reminiscent of Piet Mondrian, who wrote that "the appearance of nature is far stronger and much more beautiful than any imitation of it can ever be; if we wish to reflect nature, fully, we are compelled to find another plastic. Precisely for the sake of nature, of reality, we avoid its natural appearance...I see reality as a unity; what is manifested in all its appearances is one and the same: the immutable" [Piet Mondrian, Dialogue on the New Plastic" *Art in Theory 1900-1990*, 285-286]

[63] Paul Cézanne, "Aix, circa 19 October, 1886," Letter to Emile Zola. Trans. Marguerite Kay,. Ed. John Rewald. *Paul Cézanne: Letters* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1976), 141-2.

[64]The final objective of the prospectus declares that the "artist therefore masters the spiritual medium of visual art," which can be achieved through embracing raw inspiration to foster original designs. I discuss this further in Chapters 2 & 3.

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Paired with the fact that only drawings, none of them abstract, survive from these years, the title of this first lesson, "DRAWING FROM NATURE," affirms the role of both drawing and nature to his practice at this time. Alan Kaprow, his student in the late 1940s, wrote that "drawing was to painting as nature in the long run was to Art, a preparation for the source."[65] The prevalence of working from and drawing nature in Hofmann's early period, then, can be understood as a long preparation for his painting. As was common practice, the Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst would retreat to bucolic Bavarian escapes, or Mediterranean coastal towns such as Capri or. St. Tropez to study *en plein-air*. The commitment to *plein-air* also has a precedent in Cézanne. He wrote in a letter to Emile Zola:

> But you know all pictures painted inside, in the studio, will never be as good as those done outside. When out-of-door scenes are represented, the contrasts between the figures and the ground is astounding and the landscape is magnificent. I see some superb things and I shall have to make up my mind only to do things out-of-doors.[66]

To draw *en plein-air* was still common in the first quarter of the 20th century, and Hofmann led his students outdoors with easels, producing his own drawings from these trips. Located on the French Riviera, St. Tropez was a particularly popular place for artists, and numerous painters visited for decades before Hofmann: Paul Signac, Pierre Bonnard, Albert Marquet, Paul Klee, and Henri Matisse. Paul Signac, a student of Georges Seurat, repeatedly visited St. Tropez in the early

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[65] Sandler, *The New York School*, 5.

[66] Paul Cézanne, "Aix, circa 19 October, 1886," Letter to Emile Zola. Trans. Marguerite Kay,. Ed. John Rewald. *Paul Cézanne: Letters* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1976), 111-13.

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years of the 20th century, and his early views of the bay provide a context for looking at Hofmann's sketches. *Port of St. Tropez* (1901-02) (Figure 13) is a consummate Pointillist image.[67] A 1950s catalogue essay depicts Signac's arrival in St. Tropez as fate:

> In 1892, while cruising aboard the Olympia, he made landfall on the Mediterranean port of Saint-Tropez, that "mirage city" which became our artist's haven long before the Mont Parnassian invasion. The sailor with his unfettered spirit of optimism and adventure, his discipline of "trim ship," the "seaman's eye," spotting the landmark, alert to the changing nuances of light and weather, all are transmitted to the brush.[68]

This excessively romantic portrayal of Signac as artist and explorer, locating his subject in that "mirage city" reveals two things about artists in St. Tropez in the first quarter of the 20th century: it had a bohemian aura of artistic freedom, and more importantly, it provided a rich environment, with "changing nuances of light and weather," for any artist interested in drawing from nature. Kenneth Silver's 2002 book, *Making Paradise: Art, Modernity, and the Myth of the French Riviera*, gives a selected history of 19th and 20th century avant-garde artists working along the Mediterranean coast. He too infuses the sight with a romantic mystery, a particular aura of freedom that emboldened creative experimentation. In his section on Cubist artists he specifically mentions a drawing from Hofmann's *St. Tropez*

[67] Hofmann actually made pointillist paintings at this same time: an early self-portrait and portrait of Miz Hofmann, both painted in 1901, demonstrate early exercises in the style. Seurat was important to Hofmann, who claimed he introduced Delaunay to his work. [William C. Seitz, *Hans Hofmann* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1948), pp 7.]

[68] Peter A. Wick, "Paul Signac Exhibition," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Vol. 52, No. 289 (Oct., 1954).

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series (Figures 16, 18-30):

> The works Hans Hofmann made …at St.-Tropez… subject the local landscape to a Cubist grid structure [and] are meant to convey the complex nature of the site. Standing on the Citadel above Old St.-Tropez—a classic artist's vantage point, from which Matisse, Picabia, and André Dunoyer de Segonzac also created views—Hofmann looks down on the spit of the land where the town sits, to the water of the bay, over to the far shore (toward Beauvallon and Ste.-Maxime), and beyond to the Maures mountains; there is almost no room left for any indication of sky. In order to convey all this information, Hofmann imposes a unifying, imbricated template. We feel his struggle in the number of times he traces, and retraces, the profile of various 'zones'—trees, fields, the water's edge—until some of these outlines become clotted, and the areas they demarcate autonomous shapes.[69]

Silver's assessment that it is "meant to convey the complex nature of the site" echoes Cézanne's notion of the sensitive artist who does not represent, but internalizes nature. He adds that "the supercharged quality derives from, and is meant to convey, the complex nature of the site."[70] Following Barbara Rose and Clement Greenberg's assertion, he finds that Hofmann had digested Cubism in the 1920s and applied its structures it to the scene. Silver's use of "struggle" is apt, as Hofmann famously called painting "an almost physical struggle." Like Cézanne, who was responding to Mount St. Victoire, Hofmann was searching for inspiration

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[69] Kenneth Silver, "Côte d'Azur Cubism," *Making Paradise: Art, Modernity and the Myth of the French Riviera,* 80-82. The quote continues: "One can well imagine the sense of modernist mastery and high purpose that Hofmann would have conveyed to the students by insisting that they rise above the coast's obvious chromatic charms, in favor of more demanding search for spatial essences. This was the future Abstract Expressionist, after all, for whom "space is alive; space is dynamic; space is imbued with movements expressed by forces and counter-forces."

[70] Ibid. 82

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from the Mediterranean seascape, not simply to render light and space using existing pictorial devices. Compare *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [XI/b6]*, 1929 (Figure 19) for example, to Paul Signac's. The sea is still, the air is lifeless, and the foliage is globular and block like. There is no natural light. Rather, shading is dictated by a logic interior to the work, much like an analytical cubist still life, in which interlocking planes are lit from a synthetic light source to fluctuate between two and three-dimensional space. The resulting image little resembles the fecundity of nature, but can instead be seen as series of squares, circles, and dots composed in a shape that resembles the bay. The final composition feels closer to a "profound visual experience" to borrow Hofmann's words, stimulated by sitting in nature, than an impulse to depict nature itself.

With the comparative strength of the dollar currency in the late 1920s, more American students were enrolling in the summer courses at the school. Given Hofmann's growing American audience, his students Worth Ryder and Glen Wessels worked to land him a guest professorship at the University of California, Berkeley in 1930.[71] Hofmann continued to work with students outdoors, evidenced

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[71] They had both made it their mission to bring Hofmann to America, but wanted to do so on terms they felt would be conducive to Hofmann's success. This meant bringing him back to the University of California Berkeley where they both had studied and taught, and where they could shield him from the bureaucracy that Wessels was certain would discourage Hofmann. [Glen Wessels, *Education of an Artist*. Oral history/transcript. Interviewed by Suzanne Riess. Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, 1967]. Interestingly, Hofmann was not the only progressive European educator invited to teach in the Bay Area the Summer of 1930. André Lohte of Paris was scheduled to teach at the California School of Fine Arts (later called the San Francisco Art Institute) but had to cancel. [Dickey, *Color Creates Light*, 95.]

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by an archival photograph from 1931 (Figure 6). In his private writings Hofmann admitted that, "because teaching is not really a vocation on my part, I have made the best of it in making it the greatest pleasure for myself by giving myself completely as an artist and as [a] human being."[72] Indeed, by allowing his *plein-ai*r teaching practice to support his own drawing, Hofmann was able to play with his existing ideas on *plein-air* observation and artistic *Gestaltung* to a degree that would influence, as I will argue in Chapter 3, his later approach to the picture plane.

Section III: Writings on Nature

Despite its prevalence in Hofmann's notes and drafts, only one published text was devoted solely to the subject of nature: "Nature and Art. Controversy and Misconceptions" was a short piece included in a small brochure for his solo exhibition at Kootz Gallery in 1957:

> From [nature's] ceaseless urge to create springs all life—all movement and rhythm—time and light, color and mood—in short, all reality in Form and Thought. Man himself is nature and so are all his means with which he creates. The laws of creation are not obvious and must therefore be creatively digested by intuition and impulse. Nature has given man a sensitive mind that can think and feel; that can probe into the hidden laws and the inner life of everything. [73]

[72] HH, "First Concept," Box 7, Folder 37*, Hans Hofmann Papers*.

[73] "Nature and Art. Controversy and Misconceptions," 26 October 1957. In *New Paintings by Hans Hofmann* (solo exhibition brochure), n.p. New York: Kootz Gallery, 1958. Quote continues: It enables him to create—that is, to impregnate physical limitation from within, making the limitation the precondition for and the sum total of all interrelated creative factors. This will create new cosmos. The sum total of three-dimensionality is two-dimensionality or: the sum total of the

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Once again, Cézanne's notion of art as *parallel* to nature emerges as the template for Hofmann's theory on the subject. The idea that the "laws of creation are not obvious" emerged in manuscripts from the 1930s and 1940s as "invisible laws" that influence the way we experience nature in order to achieve plastic creation. Invisible to the naked eye but perceivable through experience in nature and then "creatively digested by intuition and impulse," the influence of such "invisible laws" on creative expression is modeled after Cézanne's discussion of the artist as a "receptacle." We cannot understand nature only through the senses, but rather through an intuitive and experiential situation whereby the artist does not only think, but also feels.[74] "Nature and Art" also imparts beliefs that date back to the 1915 prospectus. Writing that, "when impulse and imagination are absent, then nature serves only the amateur, the dilettante, and the academician," Hofmann reaffirms the prospectuses' assertion that "nature's purpose in relation to the visual arts in to provide stimulus—not imitation."[75]

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highest dynamic results in a balance which becomes static. / Sensitive control of the potentiality of the medium of expression allows the creation of monumentality, of a macrocosm within a microcosmos, which can be further extended into the realm of thought at ideas—that is, into the realm of the spiritual unlimited. This is then creation. Man cannot escape nature. No really great work does. A picture has a life of its own and reveals this life in the enlivenment of its substance—it's coming into existence calls for the creator—its enjoyment asks in return for a parallel profound sensitive response."

[74] He writes elsewhere that "a work of art cannot be understood with the help of the intellect but only through the sensorial faculties of our cognitive system." HH, "The mind as Initiator of Creation." Series 3.1.1, Box 6, Folder 4, *Hans Hofmann Papers*.

[75] HH, "Nature and Art. Controversy and Misconceptions," *New Paintings by Hans Hofmann*. Exhibition brochure. Kootz Gallery, 1958.

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In all of these writings, the most important aspect of nature is not what is seen, but what is felt. The conditions elicited by nature, "intuitive feeling" "impulse" and "imagination," compel the artist to represent not nature, but themselves. In the 1952 manuscript for *Das Malerbuch* (the updated version of *Creation in Form and Color: A Textbook for Instruction in Art*, 1931), Hofmann breaks nature into three discreet subjects (Figure 14): "Nature must be experienced in three different ways to be of use for pictorial creation: 1.) in an objective way… 2.) in a visual sense … 3.) in a plastic sense." The plastic sense "engages the artist faculties of subjective feeling into things—the faculty of Empathy."[76] It is the emotional experience of the artist, activated by nature, that facilitates the artist's plastic sense, or ability to create new forms.[77]

Also implicit in the writings is that "nature" stands in for all stimuli, not strictly the landscape. The "objective way" noted above is defined as something "that justifies the study of anatomy and of geometry in certain limitations."[78] Both figure drawing and still life studies remained a fixture in his schools, allowing one to interpret "nature" more broadly as any entity outside of the artist. However, for

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[76] HH, "Draft, Part II a) nature as objective experience," circa 1952 [possibly for *Das Malerbuch*] *Hans Hofmann Papers*, Series 3, Box 8, Folder 18.

[77]He writes that "as a living entity nature stimulates in us the urge to create… My own work is initiated by inner vision in the capacity to sense the mysteries in nature and reveal it through the act of creation." [HH, "First Concept," *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Box 7, Folder 37.]

[78]HH, "Draft, Part II a) nature as objective experience," circa 1952 [possibly for *Das Malerbuch*] *Hans Hofmann Papers*, Series 3, Box 8, Folder 18.

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the purposes of this study, which is focused on the early 1930s, landscapes are the primary visual evidence of the role of nature, for Hofmann left little to no figurative studies from this time.[79]

In spite of, or perhaps given, the fact that Hofmann's fealty to nature is inherited from 19th century precedents, throughout his life's work he opens up the role of nature for artists, expanding it into an element that provokes artists and carries them into new creative realms, not through its cognitive or visual associations, but through a potentially inspired state that is parallel and can generate new visual forms that do not yet exist anywhere, least of all in nature.[80] Nature, encompassing any and all entities in the outside world, was the stimulus for the creative life of the artist.

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[79] The figurative ink drawings made shortly after, during the 1940s, reveal the effect of the pictorial exploration of the landscapes that will be discussed in Chapter 2 and 3. Specifically, the mapping of subjective experience onto inanimate objects, experimentation with the plasticity of the medium through flattened space and gestural, non-signifying marks.

[80] Hofmann’s friend Robert Delaunay also wrote on nature as primary inspiration in his essay “On the Construction of Reality in Pure Painting,” arguing that “the eternal subject is to be found in nature itself; the inspiration and clear vision characteristic of the wise man, who discovers the most beautiful and powerful boundaries.” He deduces that Seurat’s discovery that the contrast of color can affect a simultaneity of contrasts—multiple color interactions generated from single contrasts—was a major step towards pure painting, a step that came from the representation of nature. [Robert Delaunay, “On the Construction of Reality in Pure Painting,” Art in Theory 1900-1990 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992) 153-154. Originally published Der Sturm, Berlin, December 1912.]

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Chapter II

The Artist: Empathy Theory, Vision-as-Experience, and *Gestaltung*

Returning to Hofmann's *nature-artist-creation* chart (Figure 1), this chapter will unpack Hofmann's idea of the artist as the composite of "Empathy > Plastic interpretation of a: vision b: medium of expression" to the extent that it is manifest in his early landscapes, further investigating the role of nature in his theories and art. By the 1920s, Hofmann's Schule für Bildende Kunst had garnered a reputation for offering a more dynamic educational experience than at the staid Beaux-Arts institutions still operating in Europe.[81] While he still incorporated traditional methods of figure drawing, composition, and shading into his lessons, this was contextualized by the enthusiastic cultivation of a modern artist; one who transformed their lived experience, or "reality," with "objective or visual perception" into a unique artistic expression. This, as Chapter 1 proposes, could

[81]According to student Ludwig Sander, "word had already gotten around that if you studied with Hofmann you'd get a good job teaching somewhere [Dickey, *Color Creates Light,* 87] Between 1925 and 1927 there were more American students because of the strong dollar. But there were also increasing amounts of American veterans and expats, like Vaclav Vytlacil and Worth Ryder, living in Munich since 1919, who over time became students and avid supporters of the Hans Hofmann Schule. Hofmann writes that "my school in München which opened in the Spring of 1915 (during the war) was at once an explosive success. It was the first school if this kind in Europe to be internationally known as a school of modern art." [HH, "Untitled." *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Series 3.1.4, Box 8, Folder 7] Tina Dickey notes Hofmann was actually one of four art schools opened in Europe between the wars: Bauhaus (est. Weimar, 1919), André Lohte's Acamdémie Montparnasse (Paris, 1922), and Ozenfant School of Fine Arts (London, 1938). [Dickey, *Color Creates Light,* 72].

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happen through experiences in nature.[82]

This interest dates back to his first Spring 1915 prospectus (Figure 4A) in which he insists that:

> The artist therefore has to master the spiritual means of the fine arts – *these* are the form and the fundament of the fine arts – and he has to form *his* mental image of nature, i.e. his experience, in front of nature or freely.[83]

"The artist," Hofmann writes, "has to form *his* mental image of nature, i.e. his experience, in front of nature or freely." It is interesting that Hofmann chose *Erlebnis,* one of two German words for experience. *Erfahrung* indicates experience related to practical or empirical knowledge; Hofmann's use of *Erlebnis* (root word *leben* "to live") emphasizes a so-called lived experience. Harold Rosenberg would later explain that, "it was a question of making students realize that they were entering this new order, *living* [author's emphasis], and not simply

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[82] Here, "nature" could include a studio model, still life, or landscape. The point was for artists to find the moment when "the objective and visual perception goes from the physical recognition into the artistic experience." Meaning, the artist sees an object, which appears as 2-Dimensional, imagines it's 3-Dimensional reality, and integrates the vision and experience into an artistic experience, which is necessary for the creation of "new reality" or "spiritual art," etc. Again, my focus is on the nature in the more literal sense in order to understand this phenomenon as it occurs in his landscape drawings. [HH, "PLASTIC EXPERIENCE OF NAUTRE III," *the Supersensitory Origin of Painting*, 1953. Trans. Peggy Huck. *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Series 3, Box 6, Folder 13.]

[83]The original German reads: "Der Künstler beherrsche deshalb die geistigen Mittel der bildenden Kunst, *diese* sind die Form und die Fundamente der bildenden Kunst und gestalte *sein* geistiges Bild von der Natur, d.i. sein Erlebnis, vor der Natur oder frei." [Translated by the author] [HH, "Prospectuses, 1915-1916," *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Series 2.1, Box 4, Folder 1]

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acquiring some new skills."[84] This reliance on lived experience, as opposed to acquired knowledge, to "master the spiritual means" was taught in Hofmann's earliest critiques. While students at the Munich school studied from the model for at least four hours a day, during one-on-one critiques, held at an unusually high frequency of twice-weekly, students were discouraged from copying the "appearance" of the model, and instead told to search for the "reality" of their subject. Appearance (also called "an after-image" or "copy") and "reality" (sometimes referred to as "the spiritual") were diametrically opposed for Hofmann.[85] This opposition could be resolved through new experiences, be they in front of the model or out in the field drawing, in which the artist generated their own mental images that deviated from the objective appearance of their subject. This idea of subjective mental images is consummately modern, defining the movements circulating in Europe during Hofmann's early artistic development: namely, Fauvism, Expressionism, Symbolism, Cubism, and Surrealism. As noted in the introduction, scholars have postulated that the ink on paper period allowed Hofmann to synthesize these avant-garde movements, or even "sweat out Cubism," as Greenberg famously quoted Hofmann as saying.[86] With their own

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[84] Harold Rosenberg, "The Teaching of Hans Hofmann," Arts Magazine 45, no. 3 (December 1970/January 1971) 18.

[85] Dickey, *Color Creates Light,* 78, 79. Dickey adds that in these critiques "Hofmann made up for his language difficulties with the English-speaking students with energetic gestures."

[86] See also: Barbara Rose, "Hans Hofmann: From Expressionism to Abstraction," Arts Magazine 53, no. 3 (1978): 110–14 .

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"mental images" the artist could then achieve "plastic interpretation" of "a: vision" and "b: medium of expression." That is, they could create new visual forms in a manner sensitive to the medium at hand, be it ink, paint, color, line, or a combination thereof. This happened, Hofmann advertised, "in front of nature or freely."

Chapter 1 examined the literal manifestations of the words "in front of nature" in Hofmann's plein air teaching and drawing; here, I will explore what it meant for artists to "freely" create their own mental images. The end goal, "spiritual mastery" of their chosen medium, was not to be confused with the religious,[87] but instead referred with a metaphysical ideal achieved by "the emotional and intellectual synthesis of relationships perceived in nature, rationally, or intuitively."[88] The synthesis of emotions and intellect was the result of a phenomenon in which the artist turned to nature to elicit emotional and physical experiences that broadened their intellectual perception, which led to the creation

[87] Ellen Landau writes that "He had introduced this concern with metaphysics, (defined by him as the search for the essential nature of reality) in his Munich School prospectus. He made clear in the essay that spirituality, in an artistic sense, should not be confused with religious meaning. He offered his own definition of this term: the emotional and intellectual synthesis of relationships perceived in nature rationally or intuitively. He maintained that "the spirit in a work of art is synonymous with its quality. The Real in art never dies because its nature is predominantly spiritual." [Landau, "Space and Pictorial Life: Hans Hofmann's "Smaragd Red and Germinating Yellow,'"318]. For further interpretation of the role of the spiritual in Hofmann's oeuvre, see: Agee, William C. "Spirit, Spirituality, and the Cosmos." In *Hans Hofmann: Magnum Opus*. Edited by Britta E. Kaiserslautern, Germany: MPK Museum Pfalzgalerie; Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2013.

[88] Hofmann, *Search for the Real,* 72. These ideas also come from his close reading of Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art,* 1912.

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of new forms that conveyed the synthesis of emotion and intellect, subject and object, and image and medium. If the resulting artwork expressed the authentic experience of the artist while maintaining a visual cohesion that reflected the essential qualities of his medium—such as the flatness of the picture plane—then a higher, "spiritual" state of art was achieved. This chapter considers Hofmann's particular notion of artistic subjectivity at work in his early landscapes, illustrating how his plein air practice served as a tool to sharpen his own subjective mental images of nature while engaging the particular aspects of plein air drawing. Hofmann remained ever aware of his materials (India ink and paper), the unique conditions of sketching (spontaneity, immediacy, and seriality), the devices at his disposal (the flatness of the page, negative and positive space), and surrounding environment (nature).

In the landscapes, we can see how nature, Hofmann's enduring stimulus for art, becomes a field in which the artist can "experience" what he sees. This interest does not only come from Cézanne or his involvement with the avant-garde in Paris. His earlier studies in Munich exposed him to *Einfühlung* (Empathy), and as a disciplined autodidact he would have been versed in ideas of *Gestaltung,* both of which I will also explore in relation to the drawings. Underscoring the role of individual expression, the 1915 prospectus ends:

> These insights prescribe clearly the tasks for the year of apprenticeship and therefore the further development of the artist that eventually has to take place independently of schools and trends, out of his personality.[89]

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[89] The original German reads: "Durch diese Erkenntnisse sind die Aufgaben der

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The school, then, would provide the student with certain tools, but their real task lay beyond the class. Personality and personal experience were the driving forces in artistic development, explicitly foreshadowing the interests of the Abstract Expressionists thirty years before they would come to fame. The text ends with a declaration that in a work of art devoid of *künstlerisches Erlebnis,* (artistic experience), "the impulse of artistic *Gestaltung* is absent."[90] In keeping with the contemporary artistic currents c. 1915, this phrase indicates a pictorial system whose meaning is greater than the sum of its parts, due to the added nuance of personal experience. Having only received limited years of training at Moritz Heymann's design school, classes from Anton Ažbe in Munich, and lessons at Hofmann himself was to some degree self-taught and engineered his theories largely through self-education and cultural or social osmosis. His life own story embodied the early 20th century shift away from established methods and institutions of art techniques and towards the prominence of individual subjectivity.[91]

Lernjahre klar vorgezeichnet und damnit auch die weitere Entwickelung des Künstlers, die sich dann unabhängig von Schulen und Richtungen, aus der Persönlichkeit heraus, vollzeihen muß" [Translated by the author] [HH, "Prospectuses, 1915-1916," *Hans Hofmann papers,* Box 4, Folder 1]

[90] Hans Hofmann, "Prospectuses, 1915-1916," *Hans Hofmann Papers*, Series 2.1, Box 4, Folder 1.

[91] William Chapin Seitz, *Hans Hofmann* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1963) 15. Seitz's text also supports the idea that discussion of the artist leads to an inquiry of perception, especially for Hofmann, who believed that true artists were born and not taught. For an in-depth history of this shift, see Howard Singerman, "The Teaching of Modernism," *Art Subjects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 67-96.

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Section I: Empathy

The emotional experience and subjective mental images Hofmann writes about come from his introduction to *Einfühlung*.[92] *Einfühlung,* a compound of the German prefix "ein-" (one) and "fühlung" (contact) that combine to mean "in-feeling," appeared in English as "Empathy" in 1906, which combines the Greek prefix *em* ("in") and the root *path-* (to feel). At its core, *Einfühlung* deals with emotional experience of, or projection onto, inanimate objects, and its direct English translation, "in-feeling," underscores the internalization of the outside world that Cézanne spoke of and Hofmann applied to his writings on nature and his *plein-air* practice.[93] Projection also required imagination, underscoring

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[92] Ellen Landau observes, "Hofmann summarized the Abstract Expressionist aesthetic: 'When I paint, I improvise, speculate, and my work manifests the expected and unique. I deny theory and method and rely only on empathy or feeling into." [Landau, "'Space and Pictorial Life' Hans Hofmann's "Smaragd Red and Germinating Yellow,'" 310-322.]

[93] *Einfühlung* was officially translated into English by James Ward as "Empathy" in 1906, but it was originally translated in 1901 as "aesthetic sympathy" by James Mark Baldwin, genetic psychologist. [Susan Lanzoni, "From Einfühlung to Empathy," *Empathy: A History* (New Haven, Yale University Press: 2018) 48.] The idea of "sembling" connects Empathy to Gestalt psychology, which is occupied with the patterns of interpretation or the "sembling" meaning from images.

Seminal texts include Robert Vischer, *On the Optical Sense of Form* (1873) and *The Aesthetic Act and Pure Form* (1874); Conrad Fielder, *Observations on the Nature and History of Architecture* (1878), *On Judging Works of Visual Art* (1876), and *Modern Naturalism and Artistic Truth* (1881); Heinrich Wölfflin, *Prologmena to a Psychology of Architecture* (1886) and *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888); Adolf Hildebrand *The Problem of Form in the Visual Arts* (1893); Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (1907). The field itself

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Einfühlung's role in legitimizing the subjective experience of the artist and its spectral influence in modernism.[94]

Hofmann understood *Einfühlung,* which he referred to by its English translation, Empathy, in all of his English language texts, as "the capacity of the subconscious mind to feel into the inner behavior of things to relate quality with quality."[95] Meaning, an artist subconsciously correlates a mental image, emotion, spatial experience, or any correlative quality with an inanimate object. The act of relating or projecting is an experience unto itself, making Empathy the moment when "vision becomes experience."[96] A drawing session could turn the visual appearance or idea of a tree into a lived experience that stimulated emotions and

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was split among widely differing interests: the psychological interpretation of form, how inanimate forms come alive in the mind of the beholder, the aesthetics of the historicization of form, the humanization of inanimate form, etc. The common link was an interest in perceptual psychology, which came out of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Alexander Baumgarten. [Mark Jarzombek, "De-Scribing the Language of Looking: Wölfflin and the History of Aesthetic Experientialism, *Assemblage* No. 23 (Apr. 1994) 28-69].

While there is no evidence that Hofmann assigned these texts to his students, as he did with Hildebrand, Goodman asserts that he quoted Worringer in his classes [Cynthia Goodman, Hans Hofmann (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986)]

[94] Lanzoni notes that studies of the interior mind dominated psychology until World War 1, further correlating the rise of modernism and Empathy. [Lanzoni, 50] After World War II, Freudian psychology dominates [Jarzombek, 33].

[95] HH, "Foreword by the Author" [context unknown] *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Series 3.1.14, Box 8, Folder 7.

[96] Full quotes reads: "Vision becomes experience when farther extended into the psychic realm of Empathy."

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mental images. As Hofmann writes, "the tree is petrified in inexperience."[97] "Experience," thus, "is based upon the effect of the appearance on us. The resultant effect is something entirely different from the appearance."[98] A seascape for example, could affect one psychologically, emotionally, or physically, constituting an experience, which affects what the artist sees and what the artist creates: the visual layering of an inner, fantasy world onto an outer, "real" world. Empathy had a reflexive effect: not only could an artist subconsciously project a personal feeling or experience onto an object, but this experience produced an image in the artist's mind independent of its natural appearance, which would then be transferred to the page. Ellen Landau applies this phenomenon of a spontaneous, synthetic image—one arising from the unique contact of the artist with surrounding objects or nature—to the plasticity of the medium, arguing that for Hofmann, "the medium would respond analogically to the artist's feelings."[99]

A comparison between a watercolor made right after Hofmann returned to Munich from Paris after the outbreak of World War in 1914 and his black and white *St. Tropez* series, made over a decade later in the French Riviera over several summer trips with his school, illustrates the unfolding exploration of this inner

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[97] HH, "NATURE AS EXPERIENCE: II," *the Supersensitory Origin of Painting*, 1953. Trans. Peggy Huck. *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Series 3, Box 6, Folder 13.

[98] HH, Untitled manuscript from "Fragments, 1930 -1955." *Hans Hofmann Papers*, Box 8, Folder 7. He adds that "we find the experience of space in the subjective spiritual projection of the impulses in which space in disclosed."

[99] Landau, "Space and Pictorial Life," 315.

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vision and how it was facilitated by drawing. *Untitled* (1914) (Figure 15), an 8 x 10 ½ inch watercolor on paper, captures a wooded landscape in Herrsching, Bavaria. Azure brush strokes construct a horizon line that gives way to an obtuse downward facing angle that consumes the lower right quadrant. Reticent washes of green, vermillion, and violet build an earthen foreground, totally ambiguous in shape, dimension, and shrubbery. Evocative color and simplicity of composition recall the Expressionist landscapes of Emil Nolde. Vibrancy of color and open volumes of space recall the Fauves, especially Matisse.[100] It was not until 1928 that Hofmann made his next surviving landscapes, referred to as his *St. Tropez* series.[101] Incredibly inventive in their compositional variety, the post-Cubist black and white drawings signify a marked departure from the watercolor landscape. Devoid of color, they deploy a glut of line and mark to record Hofmann's vision-as-experience; his own mental image of the scene. *Navires Aux Golfe de St. Tropez [III/3]* (1929) (Figure 16) for example, is a frenetic, nearly cartoonish portrayal of the busy Mediterranean port town. The dimensionality of foreground objects, mostly trees and buildings, is suggested by sparse lines filled with nimble scores of

[100] While Mary Gabriel attributes many of the tales of Hofmann and the Paris avant-garde as mainly hearsay, Tina Dickey confirms that of all the artists Hofmann purportedly knew in Paris, he and Matisse definitely drew side by side. Picasso also gifted and personally inscribed to Hofmann a copy of a drawing catalog in the mid-40s, which is housed in Hofmann's personal library in the *Hans Hofmann Papers*.

[101] The summer school travelled to Bavarian regions until 1924. Following the 1923 Nazi raids in Munich, they began planning summer sessions in Italy and France. Between 1925 and 1927 American. [Dickey, *Color Creates Light,* 83]

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dots. It is decidedly unnaturalistic; nor is it Symbolist, Expressionistic, Neo-Impressionistic, or Cubist. Rather than using symbolism to communicate private meaning, color to express emotion, or interacting planes to create multi-dimensional space, the drawing appears to use line and mark to explore Hofmann's emotional or projected experience of the scene. Where shading might signify "tree," Hofmann uses geometric forms, dots, lines, and planes to map his subjective mental images onto a known, commonly visited landscape. As he reportedly lectured to American audience in late 1920s: "A proverb says: He sees not the wood for the trees. The wood is ornament, the tree groups are complexes, the trees are subordinate volumes, the trunk, branches and leaves are, metaphorically, the planes and the flowing line separates and binds the whole as well as the part."[102] The whole forest is a projection, its constituent forms coalescing into a legible whole. The very ideas of "wood," "tree," and "leaves" are reduced to visual elements. The word "ornament" underscores the façade-like nature of appearance, reflecting his belief that appearance and reality are opposed. By this logic, his geometricized rendering of *Navires Aux Golfe de St. Tropez,* itself an approximation, is more real than the most realistic copy because it reveals his vision-as-experience in real time. The proverb's correlation of nature with volumes not only recalls Cézanne's advice to apprehend nature as cones and rods but the notion that "line separates and binds the whole as well as the part" also

[102] Tina Dickey, *Color Creates Light*, 93. Quote originates from Glen Wessels' oral history *Education of An Artist,* 1967.

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introduces Hofmann's interest in *Gestaltung:* when an image's whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Section II: *Gestaltung*

The second theory that influenced Hofmann's concept of artistic experience and expression at this time was *Gestaltung*. The term, which appeared in his school prospectuses and other writings starting in 1915, conveyed, among other things, the idea of a pictorial unity that transcended the sum of its parts. Roughly translated into English as "design" (if not generally left in the original German), the term was also prevalent in the Bauhaus curriculum, the school adding the name "Hochschule für Gestaltung" in 1925.[103] "Design" remains a rather one-dimensional translation, as the term signified various positions within European art in the 1910s and 1920s: individual expression, the instinctive interpretation of forms, and the nature and formation of patterns of interpretation.[104] Hofmann internalized this, often repeating the refrain that "things exist only in relation." *Gestaltung,* according to Howard Singerman, could be

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[103]Howard Singerman, "The Teaching of Modernism," *Art Subjects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 75.

[104] Singerman explains further: "Gestaltung evoked, not something learned or drilled like the pattern forms of the *Musterzeichner,* or even something planned out like *Entwerfen*, but an innate, necessary, and expressive vision. For Hermann Muthesius in 1913, it was a fully psychological term, a universal human drive and an immanent process ('*Gehirntätigkeit immanent*") of the brain. [Singerman, *Art Subjects,* 76.]

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understood as "form-formation"—a multi-disciplinary study of the formation and interpretation of abstract forms, be it artistic, psychological, or pedagogical: "The work of art as *Gestaltung* was both made and read as a record of vision, as the image of the constructedness of vision, and as a mold for it, a kind of training."[105] Hofmann himself said that "the greatest works of art are those approached through "the consciousness of the experience." When he includes "Plastic interpretation of a: vision b: medium of expression" in the "Artist" bubble, it is actually another way of describing *Gestaltung*: a consciousness of subjectivity applied to the use of the medium.

The early landscapes reveal a marked interest in both interior mental images and the consciousness of this experience. In *St. Tropez, Vue Sur les Montagnes de St. Raphael [IX/4],* (1929) (Figure 18) Arboreal foliage is sculpted into cylindrical segments and rippling hills are molded into steps of curved rectangular blocks. The artist's subjective mental image is projected onto a popular vista of St. Tropez, but he still resists the total distortion of an Expressionist or Fauvist image, with a circular cadence of lines cohering the image and recording a clockwise visual scanning of the landscape. Not only does the mapping of mental images work to integrate outside appearance and with inner experience, but also an encircling compositional rhythm unifies the geometricized forms within, both embodying *Gestaltung*.

Hofmann's *Gestaltung* can also be understood in relation to the adjacent

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[105]Ibid, 75.

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field of *Gestalt* psychology, which emerged in 1910 as the study human of perception through *gestalts,* or patterns of interpretation.[106] The concept of *Gestaltung* and the field of gestalt psychology connected only marginally, but, relevant to this discussion, both attempted to discern the shape of individual interpretation and experience.[107] An annotated copy of Gyórgy Kepes concentrated precis on *Gestalt* visual theory, *Language of Vision* (1944) is in Hofmann's personal library and while it post-dates the drawings, his annotations have not been studied in depth and provide deeper insight into the artist's understanding of gestalt psychology and the possibilities of *Gestaltung* in art.[108] Kepes determines

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[106] The study of Gestalt psychology first emerges in Germany in 1910, cemented by early studies at the University of Berlin where its founding fathers, Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Kohler all found themselves studying human behavior through gestalts, or patterns of interpretation, the in 1920s. [Roy Behrens, "Art, Design, and Gestalt Theory." *Leonardo* (Vol. 31, No. 4) 1998, pp. 299-303 (MIT Press)] Earlier predecessors include Immanuel Kant, Hermann Ebbinghaus, and Ernst Mach.

[107] One specific moment in which the fields intersected was when Kepes taught with Moholy-Nagy at the New Bauhaus in Chicago. [Roy Behrens. "Art, Design, and Gestalt Theory." *Leonardo* 31, no. 4 (1998): 299-303] The book was also highly influential in art education in the early 1950s. [Singerman, *Art Subjects,* 73].

[108] The frontispiece acknowledges "[the authors] indebtedness to the Gestalt psychologists Max Wertheimer, K. Koffka, and W. Kohler" and the first chapters are devoted to summarizing their findings. In the preface by S. Gideon, "Art Means Reality", he declares that "[Gyórgy Kepes] main object is to demonstrate just how the optical revolution—around 1910—formed our present-day conception of space and the visual approach to reality. He shows how this development was differentiated in many ways of expression, from cubism to surrealism, forming together the multi-faceted image of this period. He shows why modern artists had to reject a slavish obedience to the portrayal of objects, why they hated the 'tromp-l'oeil.'" [S. Gideon, "Preface," *Language of* Vision (Chicago, Paul Theobald: 1944) 7].

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that plasticity in the arts is the unification or synthesis of objects in the mind's eye and details the various gestalt laws by which this occurs: "similarity or equality;" "closure;" "organization;" "rhythm."[109] Analyzing the way in which we read images, Kepes determines that perception is itself an act of creation, and that the image in the eye the beholder, the "plastic image," exists independently of what exists in a printed or painted image.[110] This separation of the image from its signification creates an internal / external dichotomy; Kepes defines the internal as "the dynamic tendency to integrate aspects of the environment" and the external as "the external optical forces that determine the physical experience ... of the plastic image."[111] This distinction originates in *Gestalt* psychology and is predicated on the fact that, as Kepes writes, "the beholder, who cannot bear chaos, cannot bear contradiction…consequently searches for order, for a unified whole which can bind the apparently opposing or contradicting virtual spatial directions of the visual units into a spatial unity."[112] Differing from Empathy theory's interest in the

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[109]György Kepes, *Language of Vision* (Chicago, Paul Theobald : 1944) 15. Kepes also asserts that "non-representational art clarified the structural laws of the plastic image."

[111]György Kepes, *Language of Vision* (Chicago, Paul Theobald : 1944) 16. The book effectively sums up the implications of Gestalt theory for the layman: "The stages of development through which the structural use of associations has passed to correspond to those in the search for the laws of plastic organization. Meaning-unity was first disintegrated into meaning-facets. Later, these meaning-facets were understood in their interconnections, evaluated as forces and fields, tested in their tensions, dynamic equilibrium, and reorganized into a new meaningful whole."

[112] György Kepes, *Language of Vision* (Chicago, Paul Theobald : 1944) pp. 209.

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different conditions for mental projections and "in-feeling," Gestalt psychology surmises that mental projections arise from a subconscious need for order.

It seems that this fusing of the inside/outside dichotomy greatly interested Hofmann. He vigorously annotated a section called *The Psychological motivation of integration,* (Figure 17) in which the author, using André Breton, contends that the reading of visual language occurs through the fusing of subconscious and conscious experience. A specific phase Hofmann underlines is Breton's: "The future resolution of two states (in appearance contradictory), dream and reality into a sort of absolute reality."[113] Hofmann was attracted to Breton's idea of "fusing," combining different types of perceptions—not separating them.[114] Both Kepes's distinction between the internal as "integration" and the external as "optical forces that determine the physical experience" and Breton's fusing of internal

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[113] Ibid, 210. Michael Golec discusses Herman von Helmholtz's alignment of mental processes with the unconscious inferences of perception and Gestalt psychology's concept of pattern formation resulting from direct experience in "Natural History of Vision" [Michael Golec, A Natural History of a Disembodied Eye: The Structure of Gyórgy Kepes's "Language of Vision," *Design Issues,* Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring, 2002), pp. 3-16.]

[114]Despite his interest in the subconscious, Hofmann is in no sense a Surrealist: Clement Greenberg writes in "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" that "Picasso, Braque, Mondrian, Miró, Kandinsky, Brancusi, even Klee, Matisse, and Cézanne derive their chief inspiration from the medium they work in." This line is footnoted with the comment: "I owe this formulation to a remark made by Hans Hofmann, the art teacher, in one of his lectures. From the point of view of this formulation, Surrealism in plastic art is a reactionary tendency which is attempting to restore "outside" subject matter. The chief concern of a painter like Dali is to represent the processes and concepts of his consciousness, not the processes of his medium." [Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *The Partisan Review,* vol. 6, no. 5 (Fall 1939)]

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(subconscious) and external (conscious) are thus reframed by Hofmann:

> the physical eye sees only the shell and the semblance—the inner eye, however, sees to the core and grasps the coherence of things. The thing, in its relations and connections, presents us effects that are not real but rather supersensory…Therein lies, as far as we are concerned…the essence of the thing. By means of our inner perceptions, however, we grasp the opposing forces and the coherence of things…..[115]

This quote, taken from William C. Seitz's interviews with Hofmann for the catalog for his 1963 MoMA retrospective, conveys Hofmann's intuitive interpretation and synthesis of concepts from Empathy and *Gestaltung*: namely, the dualism of outside forms and inner perception (Kepes's inner vs. external dichotomy), *Gestaltung's* interrelated nature of objects in the visual field, and Empathy's idea of an experience elicited by vision (or, as Hofmann says, "effects that are not real but rather supersensory"). Most of all, the power of the artist's *Spannkraft* (inner resilience or tension) emerges when "inner perceptions" facilitate true perception of "the coherence of things." Another way to think of Hofmann's understanding of *Gestaltung* is as a search for the form(s) of individual experience that occurs when confronted with the outside world: "the form-formation" of "in-feeling." Because of the psychological impulse to cohere or "relate quality with quality," the external world could awaken the inner world of the artist, nature becoming an environment in which they instinctively relate inner experience with outside objects, resulting in

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[115] Hans Hofmann, interviewed by William Chapin Seitz for *Hans Hofmann* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1963) 14. Jennifer Samet contends that as a whole, text displays "an unfortunate blurring between Seitz's analysis and Hofmann's own words." [Samet, *Painterly Representation,* 17].

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the creation of subjective mental images.[116]

This understanding of *Gestaltung* as the *experience* of forming mental images (and the subsequent discovery of the self) was further explored by Carl Einstein in his unpublished text from the mid-1930s, "Gestalt and Concepts."[117] However, Einstein breaks away from a gestalt psychology's search for existing forms and patterns and argues that through experience, we can create new ones. Charles Haxthausen explains that for Einstein, "*Gestalt* is not synonymous with 'form' 'structure', or 'figure … *Gestalt* denotes the opposite of these attributes; it signifies the raw, unmediated subjective experience of inner and outer phenomena prior to any articulation in form or concept; it signifies process as opposed to fixity, thinking as opposed to knowing."[118] Like Kepes, Einstein finds that the

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[116] Interestingly, Hofmann inscribes the very end of Kepes's book, which culminates by drawing a connection between Gestalt visual theory and advertising practices, a note of surprise and dismay, noting that the whole text served to justify a visual language of advertising. Michael Golec points out that the *Language of Vision* relied more upon a cognitive registering of visual stimuli, a view that "undercut vision, releasing the eye from the material body that paradoxically must be the site of a realist approach to vision." Kepes does this to a direct end, positing that we create relationship between disparate things, "reconciled in the mind as image, a physio-mental syntax of sorts." In that sense, the Language of Vision is suggesting a more extreme version of the early Gestalt theories Koffka and Whertheimmer. [Golec, 3-16.]

[117] The text was part of an unfinished and unpublished manuscript, believed to be written in the early 1930s, around the same time Einstein completed his book on Georges Braque (1934). Einstein does not specifically discuss the meanings of the term *Gestaltung*, but the concept of a gestalt and its possible impact on art and culture.

[118] Carl Einstein and Charles W. Haxthausen, "Gestalt and Concept (Excerpts)." *October* (Vol. 107, Carl Einstein, Winter 2004) 169-196.

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mind simplifies or reduces the observable world as way to pace the processing of stimuli.[119] Generalization, or an approximation of reality, "serves the defense of the conscious ego."[120] He alleges that "man defends himself against overwhelming impressions and experiences … by rationalizing and conceptualizing them ... effect[ing] a diminishing reduction of the Real in its complexity."[121] Einstein concludes from Gestalt psychology founder Walter Koffka's assertion that "the whole is different the sum of its parts" that any whole relying on form, structure, or figure, is not only different than the sum of its parts, but also inferior. His aim is to challenge notions of a gestalt as the semblance of any thought pattern or system, even if their purpose is to be revealed as mere systems. The recapitulation of existing ideas, or the "*gestalt* depleting deadliness of knowledge" diminishes the possibility of an authentic *Gestalt*.[122] Like Hofmann, he finds the "Real" to be diametrically opposed the rational and its attendant systems of representation. As stated previously, this was known in Hofmann's lessons as "copying," or sometimes more dramatically as "the helpless stammering of the dilettante or .. the

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[119] But for different reasons than Gestalt psychologists, who set about determining patterns of interpretation. For Einstein, the ontological limits of "the Real" are beyond our logical comprehension.

[120] Einstein and Haxthausen, 171.

[121] Ibid, 170. This also relates back to Cézanne's concept of the artist as a "receptacle."

[122] Logic, Einstein argues, is an assault on "concrete Gestalt."

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vacuous bravado of the virtuoso."[123]

Relating back to the direct experience of nature of *plein-air* drawing, the subsequent "in-feeling" of the outside environment, and the real-time "form-formation" of the artist's mental images is what Einstein advocates in place of "*gestalt*-depleting logic:" experience and action. He proposes that "what matters now is concrete experience."[124] The importance of "concrete experience" mirrors Hofmann's use of *Erlebnis* (lived experience) and his modernist embrace of individual expression as opposed to the "afterimage of reality."[125] To add "experience" to *Gestaltung's* multifarious meanings is to emphasize Hofmann's interest in the emotional and subconscious awareness of the construction of

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[123] HH, "NATURE AS EXPERIENCE: II," *the Supersensitory Origin of Painting*, 1953. Trans. Peggy Huck. *Hans Hofmann Papers,* Series 3, Box 6, Folder 13.

[124] Einstein and Haxthausen, 174. Quote continues: "Man must hurl himself again and again into logically senseless and irrational processes, so that all meaningful unity is unceasingly destroyed."

[125] This anti-copying notion appears elsewhere at this time: the Austrian educator Franz Cizek (1865-1946) said on the idea of self-expression: "The slightest thing which is produced as a result of inner experience, is worth more than the cleverest copying…The teacher must avoid every form of compulsion." [Howard Singerman, "Innocence and Form," *Art Subjects,* 107)

Relatedly, Einstein was heavily influenced by Worringer's *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (1907), in which the latter argues that the creative will towards abstraction in art is diametrically opposed to naturalism, which is informed by the field of Empathy thinking. Empathy here is defined as a formula where "aesthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment" and abstraction as "the highest, purest regular art-form." Similar to Einstein's emphasis on experience over logic, Worringer rejects naturalism in art as "as a pre-assumption of aesthetic experience" because it presupposes a single experience of beauty based on resemblance to the natural world. [Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy* (New York: International Universities Press, 1953) 4]

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nature's complexity, which, through Empathy becomes artistic vision. The equation of experience and artistic vision is central to understanding the importance of nature for Hofmann, because nature is a field in which this experience could occur through prolonged observation of nature until its hidden forces revealed themselves.[126] The landscapes record the spontaneous unfolding of this artistic experience in real time.

Section III: Vision-as-Experience

Informed by Hofmann's understanding of Empathy theory, whereby vision becomes experience, and his insistence that *Gestaltung* is contingent on *kunsterliche Erlebnis*, we can think of Empathy and *Gestaltung* as closely interrelated within Hofmann's idea of the artist. They are certainly interrelated in the *St. Tropez* series, where the "in-feeling" of inanimate objects (the port of St. Tropez, the old Citadel, the Maures mountains, and the bell tower of the Notre-Dame-de-L'Assomption of St. Tropez) is not only made visible, but expressed by "plastic interpretation of the medium of expression."[127] In other words, instead of

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[126] As Bartlett H. Hayes stated in the introduction to Hofmann's *Search for the Real*: "Just as in vision, each planet was in actual tension with every other in the system—in relative tension that caused it to swing in an unseen orbit, obeying unseen laws, even into translucent infinity. If one looked long enough, these relationships and hidden forces appeared even more real than the array of the stars themselves." [Hofmann, *Search for the Real,* 8.] Forces, what Hofmann calls the expression of tensions (the interplay of movement and countermovement), express action. [Ibid, 42.]

[127] HH, Flow chart with Nature, the Artist, and Creation. From *Search for the Real,* 1948.

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rational pictorial representation of subconscious experiences (such as the Surrealists espoused), Hofmann relies on viscosity of ink on parchment and the physical spontaneity of mark marking while working in plein air to synthesize inner reality with outside appearance. The abstraction of inner experience (and the *act* of expressing it) would become the ethos of the Abstract Expressionists, but the early landscapes exhibit a synthesis between a growing interest in the shape of this inner experience and an acute consciousness of the forms themselves—the "form-formation" of *Gestaltung*.

These concerns intersect at the physicality of Hofmann's mark. The physicality of his mark has been noted by scholars, supported by his well-known quote that painting is an "almost physical struggle."[128] Ellen Landau nuances this heroic "struggle," reframing it as the moment "when vision becomes gesture":

> Throughout his career, action implied for Hofmann "responsibility to the mind and to something beyond it." In a brilliant disquisition on art at the metaphysical, phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty skillfully described how such an association might occur, just "in that instant when vision becomes gesture," the moment that (quoting Cézanne) an artist becomes able to "think in painting." Hans Hofmann's extraordinary aptitude along these very lines was absolutely critical for Abstract Expressionism's resounding success.[129]

Hofmann and the Abstract Expressionists were indeed able to "think in painting." While the Merleau-Ponty quote comes from his famous last text *Eye and Mind*, his

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[128] William Chapin Seitz, *Hans Hofmann* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1963) 37.

[129] Ellen Landau, "When Vision Became Gesture: Hans Hofmann in the 1940s," *Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2017) 83.

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1945 essay, *Cézanne's Doubt*, also relates here, in that he posits that Cézanne was so acutely aware of what Kepes called "the external optical forces that determine the physical experience"[130] that he doubted his ability to fully apprehend nature's complexity. In the context of Hofmann's graphic mark, it implies a circumvention of mental reasoning so that both conscious and subconscious thought might express themselves with a physical immediacy unmitigated by logic. This is prevalent in the landscapes, where Hofmann is "thinking" in drawing through the semi-automatic nature of his mark making.[131] While Hofmann's later paintings have been associated with the automatism of the Surrealists, this earlier stage of his career deals with a "semi-automatism," or partially automatic mark making.[132]

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[130] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," 1945. Trans. Joachim Pissarro.

[131] William Seitz said in 1963 that "it has been said that Hofmann is an 'automatic' painter…yet his automatism has never been mere psychic catharsis." [Seitz, *Hans Hofmann,* 8.] While Seitz's note about psychic catharsis carefully differentiates Hofmann from the Surrealist, as does the writings of Robert Motherwell on the differences between the uses of automatism in Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism (see Robert Motherwell, "The Modern Painter's World" *Dyn* 6 (November 1944) it seems that more recent scholarship is interested pushing this farther: Michael Schreyach finds that "the quality of being automatic implies actions performed involuntarily; the quality of spontaneity involves acting voluntarily or freely." [Michael Schreyach, *Towards Pragmatic Painting,* 9.] By this current reading, automatic action removes human subjectivity, while spontaneity embraces it; there is an inherent disagreement of terms.

[132] Lucinda Barnes presents an alternate way of thinking about the question of automatism vs. spontaneity, and the fact that the Surrealists believed automatism expressed the subconscious: She writes that" the spontaneous and calligraphic methods of surrealist automatism are particularly evident in Hofmann's paintings of the early 1940s. Rather than as a means of exploring the unconscious, Hofmann used surrealist techniques to free color and form, ultimately with the aim of transforming individual expression." [Lucinda Barnes, "The Nature of Abstraction," 26.] By this reading, medium, specifically color and form, has its own consciousness that can be explored via automatism.

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In most of his black and white landscapes Hofmann drew with the square end of a matchstick dipped in ink, distancing logic and digital precision and closing the divide between conscious and unconscious expression.[133] While the Surrealists believed automatism could express the subconscious, Hofmann mitigated his subconscious "in-feeling" with the self-aware "form-formation" of *Gestaltung* in order to "plastically interpret" the medium of drawing.

Returning to *Navires Aux Golfe de ST. Tropez [III/3]* (1929) (Figure 16), Hofmann's interiorly felt experience of the landscape is easily legible, as is his "plastic interpretation." For example, both foreground and background objects are reduced to loosely legible calligraphic marks. Expression is more attuned to the fluidity of ink than the nature of the forms it represents. Hofmann drew a different vantage point of *St. Tropez* more times than others: *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista*. The four surviving examples of this particular view show Hofmann's propensity for seriality in the landscape sketches. The diverse compositional treatment of the same vantage points foreshadows his incredible capacity for compositional invention that came to define his abstract paintings.[134] In *Vue Sur les*

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[133] Nearly all of the drawings are ink applied straight onto parchment. Only a few reveal traces of graphite pencil sketches before the ink was applied.

[134] The repetition is in this particular set is reminiscent of the Impressionist practice of painting the same view at different times of day, and the sequentially darkening backgrounds of *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista*, *[XI/b6]* (Figure 19), *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [VII/6]* (Figure 20), *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [I/6],* 1929 (Figure 20) make one wonder whether they were painted at different times of day.

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Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [XI/b6], 1929 (Figure 19), *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [VII/6],* 1929 (Figure 20), *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [I/6],* 1929 (Figure 21) Hofmann's Cubist influences are readily apparent, but when read more closely through the theories of Empathy and *Gestaltung*, the series also reveals an inventive melding of "in-feeling" with an overall compositional awareness. There is a controlled syncopation of dark and light tones. The tight alternation between positive and negative space, especially in Figures 20 and 21, not only hints at a background and foreground, but also moves the eye clockwise around the composition. At the same time, thick black outlines filled with scribbles, lines, or dots simultaneously provoke and resist dimensionality, flattening the overall pictorial depth.

Another manner in which the drawings attempt to give form to the internalized experience of nature (or as the final part of the "artist" bubble *nature-artist-creation* (Figure 1) asserts, the "plastic interpretation of vision and medium of expression") is through a profusion of dots and lines that bear no inherent meaning. In *Untitled [St. Tropez]* (1929) (Figure 28) straight brusque lines are scattered through the upper "sky" area of the drawing, tightening the pictorial tension but delineating nothing. The use of short abstract lines to suggest planes and activate pictorial space recalls Kandinsky, such as his famous *On White II* (1923) (Figure 31), in which three short lines float in negative space, disrupting the symmetry of the composition and affecting the way all other forms relate to one another. Hofmann's abbreviated lines do not serve the representational schema but remain in service to pictorial *Gestaltung,* articulating his ineffable *künstlerisches*

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Erlebnis.

In *Untitled [St. Tropez],* 1929 (Figure 26), a whirl of dots unfurls throughout the same upper "sky" area as Figure 28, as well as the negative space in earth bound foreground area. The repetition of these distinct marks obfuscates the relationship of the India ink and graphite markings to the natural world they represent. In addition to suggesting Hofmann's subconscious experience of the scene, the abstracted rendering of trees and buildings, which are outlined according to their natural shape and then filled in with random squiggles and dots, recall the gestalt phenomenon of "closure," whereby we imagine a complete form even when elements are absent. They also call to mind Walter Benjamin's "absolute mark," a mark whose shape does pertain to the object itself, but rather, the shape of the object in our minds.[135] In this sense, Hofmann's cubes, tubes, and cylinders little resemble the medieval villas, cerulean blue light, or the lapping waves of St. Tropez. Instead, they more closely resemble the processing of these objects in the

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[135] Walter Benjamin, "Painting, or Signs and Marks," *Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913-1926* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2004) 84. "The problem of painting becomes clear only when we understand the nature of the mark in the narrower sense, while feeling astonished that a picture can have a composition even though this cannot be reduced to a graphic design. The fact that such a composition is not an illusion…becomes clear from the following consideration: if the picture were only a set of marks, it would be quite impossible to name it. The actual problem of painting can be discerned in the statement that a picture is indeed a set of marks; that, conversely, the marks in the narrower sense exist only in the picture; and further, that the picture, in so far as it is a set of marks, is only a set of marks in the picture. But on the other hand, the picture may be connected with something that it is not—that is to say, something that is not a set of marks—and this happens by naming the picture. This relation to what the picture is named after, to what transcends the marks, is what is created by the composition."

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eye of the mind of the viewer.

The *St. Tropez* landscapes also demonstrate the transformation of the artist's subject into a plastic creation. We see a perfect example of the proverbial "forest" from his lecture in *Untitled* (1929) (Figure 24). Geometric shapes (cubes, cylinders, and circles) and motifs (loose cross hatching, squiggles) comprise an inventive, cohesive, and totally fictional visual façade "covering" what we know to be a tranquil Mediterranean paradise (see again Paul Signac, *the Port of St. Tropez,* Figure 14). For Hofmann, the success of plastic creation is also related to the chosen medium and the specific materials deployed. As mentioned in the introduction, he believed that, in addition to their unique experience, the artist's materials should also be synthesized with the inherent qualities of their chosen "expression medium." The *St. Tropez* series exemplifies how the materials at hand—ink, parchment, and the surrounding landscape—are synthesized with the elements of drawing—line and positive or negative space—to restlessly search, drawing after drawing, for ways to merge materiality and medium specify to expand the plastic means of drawing. Rather than using line and shading to affirm the notion of "tree," visually signified by its leaves, trunk, and vertical orientation, by using geometricized forms and repeating motifs, Hofmann seems to be asking the question: what, plastically speaking, connotes "tree"? Absolute marks and the repetition of certain forms and motifs convey both Hofmann's living, breathing subjectivity and the inherent plasticity of the medium.[136] The act of drawing

[136] Relatedly, Greenberg describes Hofmann's later paintings as "breathing": "His paint surfaces *breathe* as no others do, opening up to animate the air around

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physically enunciates a process of actively unfolding consciousness. The marks on the page record in real time Hofmann's expanding perception of the appearance and "inner reality" of the objects in front of him. Without color and without traditional pictorial space, Hofmann pushed his use of line, mark, and plane to express his emotional experience, foreshadowing a similar approach to color and receding pictorial space. This all served to strengthen the muscles of his inner vision and plastic sensibility.

As Merleau-Ponty argued his 1948 series of French radio talks, *Art and the World of Perception*, "The work of art resembles its object of perception."[137] The artist projects his inner vision onto the outside world (an inescapable condition for painting after Romanticism) but the outside world, after the birth of phenomenology, is merely a projection itself, constituted by the layering of concepts such as the self, art, and nature. Nature, it turns out, is not an entity to passively observe, but a field in which the artist's vision becomes an experience best explored and expressed through abstracted forms. Chapter 3 will explore this in greater depth as it relates to Hofmann's early experiments with the picture plane.

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them." [Greenberg, "Hans Hofmann," *Hans Hofmann,* 129.]

[137] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Art and the World of Perception" [radio talks] 1948. Related to this chapter's discussion, he also stated that "the dubious relationship of likeness is—among thing—an unequivocal relationship of projection."

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Chapter III: New Reality

"Creation," Hofmann wrote, "is dominated by three absolutely different factors: first, nature, which affects us by its laws; second, the artist who creates a spiritual contact with nature and with its materials; and third, the medium of expression, through which the artist translates his inner world."[138] The quote brings us back one final time to Hofmann's *nature-artist-creation* flow chart from *Search for the Real* (Figure 1). The third circle on the far right, labeled "creation," encloses five words, stacked vertically with downward pointing arrows correlating each one: "picture plane," "plasticity," "spirituality," "new reality," and, finally, "art." Creation encompassed both the plasticity of the medium and the nature of the picture plane. If achieved, the artist accessed a spiritual state that materialized a new reality, resulting in true art. This chapter will consider how Hofmann's experiences in nature affected his approaches to the picture plane and the plasticity of the medium, working towards the "new reality." Specifically, I will look at his first years in the U.S., from 1930-1935, a period that remains understudied. His arrival in California in 1930, his travels by automobile, his relocation to New York in 1933, and subsequent summers in Gloucester and Provincetown, Massachusetts, generated landscape sketches that tested the inherent plasticity of the medium and

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[138] William Chapin Seitz, *Hans Hofmann* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1963) 15.

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explored new means of pictorial creation.[139] They also directly precede his shift to abstraction in the mid-1930s and his first focused return to painting in 1934. In analyzing the effect of these new environments on the artist, I will expand my inquiry about his experiences in nature and pictorial space to include Hofmann's physical movement through the natural world. I conclude that Hofmann's ideas about artistic subjectivity, informed by Empathy theory and *Gestaltung* allow us to consider the movement of the artist's body in space as a variable factor in the creation of pictorial space when looking at his landscape drawings. Based on a close formal reading of the drawings as expressions of visual-kinesthetic experience, I posit that the "spiritual" in Hofmann's art matrix also suggests a collapse of the Cartesian mind/body divide.

Part I: Picture Plane

A discussion of Hofmann's concept of the picture plane requires an examination of a widely read book he often paraphrased: Adolf von Hildebrand's 1893 text *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts*. Hofmann owned and annotated the 1901 German language second edition and his writings from 1915 onwards conveyed many similar ideas, sometimes nearly verbatim.[140] Hildebrand, a

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[139] Figures 37 through 46 comprise a representative group from several hundred surviving drawings from the period. I had access only to drawings housed by the Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust or in public collections. Many others are in private collections with whereabouts unknown.

[140] Adolf Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der Bildende Kunst*. Strassburg: J.

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sculptor, was writing amidst the rise of Gestalt psychology and Empathy theory.[141] As discussed in Chapter 2, the former worked to identify patterns of psychological interpretations of visual forms, and the latter, the projection of emotion or imagined physical experience onto inanimate objects. In an effort to dissect these issues in the context of fine arts, Hildebrand argues against an art that is "a mere mechanical counterfeit of Nature," alleging that artists should conceive "Nature as a relation of kinesthetic ideas to visual impressions, all combined and interrelated in a totality."[142] He heads towards this conclusion by differentiating between pure visual perception and mixed visual-kinesthetic perception.[143] This subtle

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H. Ed Heitz, 1901. [annotated] *Hans Hofmann papers*, Series 8.1, Box 16, Folder 15.

[141] He writes, for example that "the awakening of an idea of an object unifies a part of the visual production and separates it thus from the rest. This explains why a number of mere spots and flecks, when they happen to be associated with our idea of an object, begin to take form and suggest to us an image of the object. Such an image possess a high degree of unity just because this idea of the object is evolved out of these flecks to make up the pictorial idea." This quote expresses the aesthetic interests of Empathy theory: how objects came to live in the eye of the beholder. His discussion of unity recalls gestalt psychology's interest in a psychological tendency towards visual unification. [Adolf Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture* [Reprint of the 1907 English edition] (New York: G.E. Stechert & Co, 1945) 63.]

[142]Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form*, 41 & 44.

[143]Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form,* 31. Relatedly, E.B. Tichener was an early American psychologist running experiments on whether thinking processes could occur without images. He tested both kinesthetic sensations and word and image associations in patients, concluding that sensations were felt more strongly than concepts. His studies underscore the interconnectedness of kinesthetic sensation and perceptual ideas within this later phase of Empathy theory in that it affirmed the projection of kinesthetic experience onto either inanimate objects or another person as fundamental to perception and aesthetic judgments [Lanzoni, "From Einfühlung to Empathy," 53]

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distinction, arising from the physiognomic observation that visual perception is both a composite of the visual fields from the left and right eye, and also informed by kinesthetic experiences, complicates the ways that line, plane, and color traditionally suggest space and volume in the picture plane. He finds that objective rules of representation cannot apply equally to every object. More precisely, objects seen at a distance are perceived in purely optical terms: what the author calls a *Fernbild,* or "distance picture."[144] Perceived at a distance from a single position, a *Fernbild* lacks spatial depth, appears flat, and can be taken in at once.[145] However, the up close image, or *Nahbild*, is only partially perceived through the "pure vision" that defines the *Fernbild*. Hildebrand provides the example of a sphere, which, seen from afar, or seen with one eye closed—that is, purely optically—appears to be a two-dimensional disc. It is our embodied experience, and our visual-kinesthetic memory—pure vision *plus* kinesthetic experience— that allows us to understand it as a three-dimensional object.[146]

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[144] Ibid, 28.

[145] The full quote reads: "Unforeshortened lines and planes are, as has already been noted, a complete and satisfactory expression for certain kinesthetic ideas. And this is because our vision is in its very nature two-dimensional; so that by a single intuition we perceive all the flat elements of the natural scene imagined…To perceive in visual images the third dimension, however, we must imagine ourselves as changing our point of view and as getting merely a succession of disconnected shifting views of the object more or less in profile. Therefore imagining a natural scene otherwise than as a visual projection, the expression of kinesthetic ideas by foreshortening, light, shade, color, etc., is unsatisfactory just in so far as its unity is spoiled by its demands for shifting." [Ibid, 31]

[146] Ibid, 31. Meaning, we must move around the object to compile a sequence of visual scans (*Abtasten*) in order to actually perceive its three-dimensionality.

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For Hildebrand, purely visual and mixed visual-kinesthetic vision are different but interrelated entities. Hofmann was exploring the pictorial interrelation of purely visual and mixed-visual kinesthetic vision as early as 1930, in drawings such as *Untitled* (Windshield) (1930-2) (Figure 41). Here, the rendering of the autombile's windshield recalls the *Nahbild,* a tactile, upclose object. Devoid of a horizon line or recessed space, the windshield dominates the foreground and displaces the *Fernbild,* or distance-picture. In the background, Hofmann replaces the spatially suggestive *Fernbild* with a flat plane of caligraphic lines. The windshield, conversely, is foregrounded and drawn from an angle that conveys its three-dimensionality and registers the closeness of the vehicle to his own body. The sloping curve of the windsheild frame invites us to peer in, as if a window to the scene, but the dense vegatation diffuses into squiggles abutting the back plane, pushing the eye back to the foreground. The privelging of the visual-kinesthetic over the purely visual is evident: what can be experienced kinesthetically—the windshield, touched and felt up close by Hofmann—is rendered most clearly; what requries projection devolves into loosened lines. However, it is important to note that such a rendering is not remotely what Hildebrand had in mind when he wrote *The Problem of Form*. Being a sculptor, he argued for relief scultpure as the ideal means to synthesize pure visual and mixed-visual perception, for it essentially comprises multiple and varying two-dimensional views layered upon another, and also, on a more literal level, achieves three-dimensionality within an overal two-

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dimensional constraint.

Relevant to Hofmann, however, is how the distinction between pure vision and mixed visual-kinesthetic vision—and the subsequent *Fernbild* and *Nahbild*—leads Hildebrand to further differentiate between "actual form" (which is visual-kinesthetic) and "perceptual form" (which is purely visual); the former unchanging and eternal and the latter, precise, specific and created in in the mind of the beholder. Following contemporaneous Empathy theorists, Hildebrand concludes that true art exists "only as an effect," that is to say, in the mind of the beholder, so the artist must find the best means to suggest actual form and not merely rely on objective representation.[147] Here, we see the source of Hofmann's insistence on the "real" over "appearance": he took Hildebrand's assertion that a represented image truly exists in the mind of the beholder and applied this to the artist's perception of nature, calling art made from their subjective mental images the "real."[148] Visually, Hofmann's means of achieving this were radical compared to Hildebrand's conclusions. It is hard to imagine that Hildebrand, working in the

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[147] Ibid, 45. If one wished to accurately depict the third dimension, it would require successive images of all the possible views of an object one could perceive while moving around it in space—a genuine experience of the object's dimensionality; what Hildebrand calls "actual form." (As opposed to "perceptual form," which is subject to changing illumination and points of view.)

[148] There are further ways that Hildebrand's ideas influenced Hofmann. To start, overall pictorial unity is important to Hildebrand, as this achieves a state of beauty, eliciting pleasure in the viewer. Hildebrand also insists that art is superior to nature, for it organizes infinite chaos into a controlled form that is more legible and aesthetically pleasing to look at." Hofmann's pronouncement that the artist has "mastery over nature" follows in suit.

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1890s, would even be able to read Hofmann's abstracted landscapes as art.[149]

Following Empathy theory's interest in projection, Hildebrand further asserts that "the perceptual form [in art] is richer in content than the actual form by reason of the subjective relationships existing between its elements."[150] He details how the gentle convex curve of the human chest appears flat when viewed in relation to "rounding shoulder muscles."[151] The perceptual form, or the image in the eye of the beholder, is "richer in content" because it is contingent upon changing factors such as light, position in space, and the relationships between forms within the painting. There is a trace of *Gestaltung* here: the image in the eye of the beholder that results from the contingent relationships of objects to one another in the picture plane and cannot be perfectly replicated. Instead, it should be implicated, or teased out. To work towards total realism in painting or sculpture diminishes a viewer's possible "perceptual form," while capturing the essence of an object opens up the possibilities of projection: "artistic sense consists in a clear comprehension of these values of form as opposed to a mere knowledge of the actual form."[152]

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[149] It is good to remember that Hildebrand was working within the field of Empathy and aesthetics, driven to discover what art forms and means derive pleasure and inspires belief in the viewer. The book was conceived even earlier, in 1876, in letters between Hildebrand and theorist Conrad Fielder. [Mallgrave, Harry Frances and Eleftherios Ikonomou, "Introduction," Empathy, Form, and Space, pp 35]

[150] Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form,* 41.

[151] Ibid, 66.

[152] Ibid, 42.

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This rejection of an objective representation of has been illustrated here at length; in other writings Hofmann examined the perceptual nuances based on the relationship between objects in the picture plane. Hofmann's dictum that "things exist only in relation" has a precedent with Hildebrand, who writes that "the single parts of which it is made up can have no meaning in themselves alone, but gain their significance only through that peculiar connection which constitutes their total unity."[153] In other words, objects become dimensional through their relation to other objects, not through their relation to a single perspectival point.

Hofmann's later pictorial ideas, especially push and pull, derive from and radically advance Hildebrand's spatial theory that objects emerge indirectly, through their relation to things around them, rather than directly through representation. Hofmann seemed aware of this from his first American landscapes. In *San Francisco Bay [IV]* (1930-31) (Figure 37) and *Hills [XXXI]* (1931) (Figure 38) for example, utility poles are articulated with only two or three lines, their identity and dimensionality becoming clear through the perpendicular lines of the wires extended from their tops and undulating outline of the road beneath them. The unity of the figure emerges through its relation to the background. *Untitled* (1935) (Figure 42) provides a first-person view of the artist behind the wheel of his Buick. The landscape is rendered with such descriptive restraint that it is impossible to discern which objects are close and which are far, giving the impression of multiple views at once. The flurry of marks is well justified by

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[153] Ibid. 37.

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Hofmann's statement that "in nature space is charged with a whirlwind of inner disturbance, and so it shall be with the picture." Nature, to the extent that it encompassed anything outside of the artist's inner, subjective world, was a field in which their visual-kinesthetic experience would reveal the distortion of "pure vison."

Hildebrand's conflict between close-up images (*Nahbild*) and distant images (*Fernbild*) undermines the veracity of perspectival pictorial space. This theory would have confirmed for Hofmann that a contemporary viewer does not project an authentic experience of space while looking at an image with perfect *perspectiva artificialis,* for their own kinesthetic experiences contradicted the artwork's visual simulation. This informed his idea of a flat picture plane, as well as his idea of plasticity.[154]

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[154] For an in-depth discussion of the influence of Hildebrand on Hofmann's ideas of the picture plane in painting, see [Michael Schreyach, "Hans Hofmann's Theory of Pictorial Creation." *Towards Pragmatic Painting: Jackson Pollock's Reflexive Potential,* 105–30]. He contends that Hofmann subscribed to Hildebrand's concept of an imagined space behind the picture plane and that he applied this by layering several parallel planes to convey motion. See also Chika Jenkins, "Forming Modernism in St. Tropez," *Hans Hofmann: The California Exhibitions*, 1931 (New York: Hunter College Art Galleries, 2019) 27-32 and Chika Jenkins, "Synthesizing Different Views: Aspects of Relief and Beyond in Hans Hofmann's *St. Raphael Mountains Series,*" *Hofmanns Wegge / Hofmann's Ways* (Kaiserslautern and Esslingen: Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern and Edition Cantz, 2019) 141-155. While Schreyach asserts that Hofmann is interested in puncturing the flatness of the plane with intersecting geometric shapes, Jenkins applies Hildebrand's theories on relief to Hofmann's *St. Tropez* series.

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Part II: Plasticity

The second factor of creation Hofmann's nature-artist-creation matrix was "plasticity." For Hofmann, plasticity was an awareness of the "expression-medium," or the material qualities of both the support—the flatness of the page—and the media applied to it—in this case, the viscosity of ink and the fluidity of the line. In the black and white works, Hofmann often used the square end of a matchstick, dipping it in ink and drawing in such a manner that fluid accreted on the surface of the paper. It is applied so thickly in some cases that the ink has cracked over time. Building upon the material quality of the medium, plasticity connoted a seamless integration of the image(s), or "pictorial message" with the picture plane. This happened "when nature was embodied in terms of the qualities of the expression-medium."[155] If the artist created a picture parallel to nature in its complexity that was also seamlessly integrated with the material qualities of the medium, including the flatness of the picture plane, then the work of art had become plastic. Accordingly, the California and Provincetown landscapes reveal a reciprocity between exuberance of mark and fluidity of line that illuminates the tension between ink's descriptive capabilities and the medium's emotionally expressive potential.

Hofmann's ideas on plasticity were also derived from Mondrian, whose

[155] Seitz, *Hans Hofmann*, 18.

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theories he read and taught.[156] Mondrian, he once said, "was the architect of modern painting," often praising his ability to condense and abstract nature.[157] Hofmann's use of the term plastic appears after Mondrian's "neo-plastic creation" and "pure plastic creation," which referred to an evolution in painting towards an absolute purity of color and form. "Neo-Plastic," a concept explored in essays published in *DeStijl* in the late 1910s and early 1920s, asserted that contemporary artistic expression pared down reality into irreducible absolutes, which required a purity of materials: straight lines, right angles, and unmixed, "natural" color. One of Hofmann's most oft-repeated quotes is a purposefully enigmatic recapitulation of this: "the ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary, so that the necessary may speak." Formal elimination is readily evident in Hofmann's abstract paintings, especially from the early 1960s onwards, but his landscape drawings reveal an earlier stage of Hofmann's plasticity in which he still appears to be searching for the essence of the mark to express his Empathic experiences and subjective mental images of nature**.** *Untitled* (1931) (Figure 31) exemplifies such a

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[156] *Hans Hofmann papers* contains a hand typed and annotated transcription of Mondrian's essay "Toward the True Vision of Reality," possibly used to practice English or to disperse to students. Hofmann's personal library also contains the 1951 edition of *Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc., 1951). On a biographical note, Dickey adds that "Harry Holtzman, who befriended the Dutch artist after making a special trip to visit in in Paris in 1943 (Holztman eventually collected and edited Mondrian's writings and became the executor of his estate) was a student and close friend of Hofmann's during the 1930s." [Dickey, C*olor Creates Light,* 146-47]

[157] Joan Marter. "Negotiating Abstraction: Lee Krasner, Mercedes Carles Matter and the Hofmann Years." *Woman's Art Journal,* Vol. 28, No. 2 (Fall-Winter, 2007), pp. 37.

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search. What appear to be homes, silos, fences, and a road are each articulated with disconnected, tenebrous lines. The roof of the building in the upper right quadrant of *Untitled* (1930-31) (Figure 40) is constructed with a few lines as possible, as are the trees in front of it.

Hofmann's approach to plasticity also included Hildebrand's particular notion that "plastic interpretation is not intended to present a picture of an isolated perception [but] contain[ing] those signs of the perception which are necessary for exciting our ideas of the movement."[158] Because an "isolated perception" is inevitably contradicted by the expanded visual-kinesthetic experience, which informs our capacities for Empathy, plastic art must use "signs of perception" to stimulate imagined spatial experiences. Plasticity, then, is also an attempt to reconcile the two-dimensional representation with the three-dimensional world. For Hofmann, these plastic questions will manifest decades later with his *push and pull* dictum, which allows that the artist's use of paint, color, and abstract form could simulate spatial depth and movement (by ostensibly provoking Empathic projection) without forcing a "picture of an isolated perception." In addition to the plastic use of ink on paper to play with foreground and background legibility, the California landscapes, as I will explain shortly, also show a search for "those signs of the perception that are necessary for exciting our ideas of the movement." In his effort to collapse the perceptual distance between the two-dimensional picture plane and three-dimensional experiences, I argue that Hofmann's line expresses his

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[158] Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form,* 110.

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own bodily movement through space in order to signify mixed visual-kinesthetic vision and "excite … ideas of movement" in the viewer—albeit in a much more experimental manner and in a totally different form than Hildebrand initially theorized. Thus, reading the artist's body in these landscapes (which challenge the very notion of landscape through the experimental use of ink, line, and plane) is to read his creations at this time as highly plastic art, which itself circles back to the equation of "Creation" and "plasticity" from the *artist-nature-creation* chart.

In colloquial use, plastic, from the Greek *plastikos*, "to mold," connotes constructed-ness and synthesis: an object that is flexible, yet durable; synthetic, yet permanent. We can thus think of Hofmann's plasticity c. 1930-35 as an attempt to test the flexibility and durability of the medium by synthesizing the indubitable flatness of the material plane with the variability of his spatial experiences. Building upon his conception of the artist as discussed in Chapter 2, plasticity for Hofmann was also an attempt to fuse the subjective, inner world of the artist with the objective, outside world. It was also an effort to locate the moment when representing one's subjectivity could elicit a subjective experience in the viewer—an idea, that, circa the late 1920s, constituted a very contemporary notion of art.

Part III: Spatial Experience

Returning to Hofmann's "creation" bubble, I have thus far covered his understanding of mixed visual-kinesthetic vision (via Hildebrand) and the idea of plasticity as the material synthesis of perceptual, artistic, and formal concerns. This

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leads us to the "spiritual," which Hofmann defined as "the emotional and intellectual synthesis of relationships perceived in nature, rationally, or intuitively."[159] If, as I argued in Chapter 1, nature was the primary field for discovering emotional subjectivity, and, as I posited in Chapter 2, drawing gave it form, then Hofmann's different spatial experiences in nature provided a variable in this equation. It was a means for testing the plasticity of drawing (through varying visual-kinesthetic experiences and the emotional projections elicited) in order to locate the nexus of the "spiritual." Accordingly, I will probe his visual-kinesthetic perception a bit deeper, looking at landscapes made after the purchase of his first car in 1931 as expressions of what Claudia Bell and John Lyall call the "Accelerated Sublime," a term that identified the effect of transportation technology on the experience of the Sublime. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's famous last essay, "Eye and Mind" (1964) underpins this inquiry with its assertion that vision is contingent on bodily experience, and his view of painting as a phenomenological expression of the Cartesian mind/body divide. With Hofmann's spatial experiences as a variable factor in pictorial creation, I hope to illustrate how the profusion of landscape drawing in the early 1930s provided an outlet for (de)constructing the picture plane in order to later arrive at abstraction.

"Spatial experience" in Hofmann's writings refers specifically to the space within the picture plane. As he would say to students, "your paper has actually

[159] Hofmann, *Search for the Real,* 72.

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been transformed into space."[160] However, Jed Perl has expanded Hofmann's concept of spatial experience beyond the picture plane, interpreting push and pull as "a dream simultaneously rooted in the dynamic relationship between a person and an environment."[161] Ellen Landau also corroborates Hofmann's interest in experience outside the picture plane, writing that "Hofmann believed that one of the most important creative faculties an artist can have is an awareness of space in its every form and manifestation."[162] Wessels, too, recalls Hofmann's awareness of the artist's body in space:

> He would say when you approached the blank canvas, first you must know where you are before you can say anything. What is your relationship to that out there? Are you to the left; are you to the right; are you looking straight at it? Everything depends on the first few basic lines you put down to describe the kind of space."[163]

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[160] Ibid, 42.

[161] Jed Perl, "The Painter and the City," *New Art City* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005) 24.

[162] Landau, "Space and Pictorial Life," 315. In terms of expanded ideas of space and dimensionality, she also argues that while Hofmann was in Paris "there was much talk in the cafes and journals around 1905 about the four-dimensional time-space continuum and Albert Einstein's newly published theory of relativity, in which the brilliant young scientists maintained that movement in time alters reality." Indeed Hofmann wrote in his 1930 essay for *The Art Digest*, "A Review of the Field in Art Education," that "With the acceptance of the Theory of Relativity by Einstein the fourth dimension has come into the realm of natural science. The first and second dimension include the world of appearance, the third holds reality within it, the fourth dimension if the realm of the spirit and imagination, of feeling and sensibility." This so-called fourth dimension, explored at length in Wassily Kandinsky's Concerning the Spiritual in Art (1912) can be read as a metaphysical art, a transcendental plane which is the substrate for all artistic expression and whose presence can neither be confirmed nor denied, for it simply exists always. Dore Ashton has called it a "subjective metaphysics," arising from Kandinsky.

[163] Glen Wessels, *Education of an Artist*. Oral history/transcript. Interviewed by

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This quote points to the importance of *Raum*, the growing aesthetic interest in spatial relationships of forms that was evident in Hofmann's 1915 prospectus. But while it has been widely established that Hofmann was interested in spatial relationships within the picture plane, Wessels's quote also emphasizes that he was aware of the how the artist's physical orientation towards the canvas affected pictorial space.

When Hofmann arrived in California in 1930, he was drawing frequently, still making portraits and landscapes. He was also traveling. A 1930 photograph (Figure 32) shows him at Upper Angora Lake in Northern California with Fred Hack, Janet Chase, Warren Cheney, and Molly Bennett during the same summer of his first two American solo exhibitions at Haviland Hall, U.C. Berkeley and the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. He returned to Berkeley the following summer after guest teaching at the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles, bringing with him his proud purchase: an "old, blue, Buick" (seen in the background of Figure

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Suzanne Riess. (Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, 1967) 155. Wessels confirms this also applied to figure drawing lessons: "His system of using the model was to arrange an environment, and the student had to draw not only the figure in relation to other things because Hofmann kept saying, 'Things exist only in relation.' This same post in another environment would become a different compositional problem and so forth…This was rather unusual in those days before the traditional way to use the model was simply to stand the model on the podium in the middle of the room and you just drew the figure in a closed form; you did not relate it to anything. The idea that forms exist in relation was not part of the formal art instruction in the typical school of the time. I had never had it before Hofmann, and I don't' think a great many people did either."

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45).[164] A 1931 photograph (Figure 33) captures the artist proudly standing atop a rock in Carmel California, taken while driving up the California 1 Highway from Los Angeles to Berkeley. Compositionally, his figure cuts a perfect perpendicular angle to the rock upon which he stands, as well as the horizon line of lapping waves behind him. Even this impromptu snapshot suggests a careful compositional eye towards the relationship of his body to space.

Glen Wessels remembers the impact that the arrival in California had on the artist: "He responded to the California landscape in a peculiar way…. he said, "This is a feminine landscape. In Germany we have masculine hills…it is very hard for one to fasten onto one positive thing here. This landscape undulates and flows."[165] Wessels noticed the traces of Empathy theory here, explaining that, "again we see a little bit of anthropomorphism. I think this was always

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[164] Wessels also remembers: "He always wanted to own an automobile and he could not drive…He bought this big old blue Buick, and he was determined that he was going to be modern and drive, and he had never driven a car. [Glen Wessels, *Education of an Artist,* 127.]

[165] Glen Wessels, *Education of an Artist*, 145. The full quote expresses both a problematically sexist anthropomorphizing of the landscape and the abiding influence from Empathy theory: "When he first saw the Berkeley Hills, for instance, he said, "This is a feminine landscape. In Germany we have masculine hills. These are feminine hills." He said that he had never seen such a gentle land. When he began to draw and paint around here, he said, "You know, I am not used to drawing only a womanly landscape. I am used to angles; I am used to a more masculine type of landscape." This is the way he expressed it."

A piece also ran in a local newspaper the previous year about Hofmann's reaction to the California landscape called "Beauties of West Thrill Teacher of Art" [Hill, H.R. "Beauties of West Thrill Teacher of Art" (includes artist's statements) Oakland Post-Enquirer, 28 May 1930.]

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characteristic of this thought and teaching that he projected himself and his feelings into inanimate objects that he was working with, and felt them as a human being would feel them, not as something out there, but as something of which you partook, with which you related yourself."[166] Hofmann also compared his new surrounds to other parts of Europe. Wessels recalled that, "Hofmann and I discussed the Pacific Ocean as a new Mediterranean."[167] In 2017, Diana Greenwold published the first essay devoted solely to the impact of California on Hofmann. In addition to suggesting Hofmann's landscapes shared an affinity with those of Bay Area artists Erle Loran and Chiura Obata, she correlates the Mediterranean climates of California and St. Tropez, suggesting that the familiar in environment provoked similar drawings.[168] She notes that while in the East Bay, he specifically sought out oil derricks, which, in light of Wessel's account, could be seen as a search for a "positive thing" to "fasten onto."[169]

One way of considering the change of Hofmann's spatial experience between Europe and the U.S. is through Claudia Bell and John Lyall's theory of the "accelerated sublime." They postulate that with certain technologies, including

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[166]Wessels, *Education of an Artist*, 146.

[167] Ibid, 160. As ever, the artist projected a new reality onto the scene: "He quiet seriously accepted this idea that the cultures of the Orient and the South Seas would eventually fertilize those of the western United States seaboard; that we would have a new civilization built up around the Pacific Ocean."
[168] Diana Greenwold, "Where Things Can Grow and Will Grow": Hans Hofmann in California, 1930-31, *Hans Hofmann: Works on Paper* (Jacksonville, Florida: University of Florida and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017)

[169] Ibid, 27.

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the automobile, "Tourists get to sites more quickly; when they are at the sites, they consume those sites more rapidly. Their bodies are hurled about the site faster than ever before… "[170] For Bell and Lyall, the accelerated sublime occurs when overt changes in acceleration affect bodily experience (as opposed to a sustained high or low speed): "the contemporary motorist is therefore more aware of the rapidity of the motion … When the body changes speed or changes direction, it is being accelerated. These forces act on the body."[171] Their table (Figure 36) illustrates the different effects of accleration on the body, with "car at speed on rough road" eliciting "Acceleration, Decelleration, and strong cornering forces." A cornering force is an opposing lateral force exerted on a vehicle making a sharp turn. The concept of the acclerated sublime alleges that bodily experience is directly proprtional to the machinery: "in the same way that travel at first slowly increased in speed, and then more rapidly increased (and later increased its overt acceleration components), the body of the tourist is subjecting itself to the same increases in speed and acceleration."[172]

By this logic, we could read the shift from the abstracted, yet descriptive line in the *St. Tropez* series to the dynamic, loose gestures of the American

[170] Claudia Bell and John Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism, and Identity* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2001) 105.

[171] Ibid, 105. They also reference historian Alexander Wilson's notion that "the faster we travel the flatter the earth looks: overpasses and cloverleaf interchages are almost two dimensional from a car window," supporting the idea that accelerated kinethetic experience may correlate to a flatttened picture plane.

[172] Ibid, 105.

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landscapes as the effect of "cornering forces" experienced in the old blue Buick. For example, the line in Figures 38-42, is not simply opened up and looser, but seemingly susceptible to instinctive, directional forces of hand movement. In *Hills [XXXI]* (1931) (Figure 38), for example, three lines in the lower left quadrant form right angles, indicating nothing but an instinctive movement through the foreground space of the page. *Untitled* (1931) (Figure 1939) also deploys loosened foreground gestures that fill pictorial space and suggest motion without representing anything. In *Untitled,* 1935 (Figure 43) absolute marks are dispersed across the page with an inconsistent pacing that suggests intervals of speed in application. Accelerated movement through space and on the page offered a new approach to the picture plane. The acceleration of the body while driving, and subsequently, visual-kinesthetic perception, further extricated the artist from the nettings of *perspectiva artificialis*.[173] Without the stillness endemic to a *plein-ai*r practice, the subjectivity of vision becomes susceptible to the variable of time. The physical variation of Hofmann's calligraphic gestures suggests the bodily memory of accelerated movement quickening the speed of his visual-kinesthetic perception. The lines convey motion, not by representing movement, but by expressing it; they record an active energy that feels like a record of movement and action that is not related to knowing or describing, but, as Einstein urged,

[173]Hofmann was most likely in the passenger's seat during these particular excursions; he was still learning to drive then, and never became good at it. Wessels or other students and traveling companions usually drove him. That "old blue Buick" was purportedly also a lemon. [Dickey, 102]

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experiencing and feeling. Anticipating the viewer's empathic capacities to "feel-into" the image, to use Hofmann's phrasing, motion is expressed through dynamism of line, not a gestural figure.[174]

Harold Rosenberg makes a related argument for Hofmann's paintings:

> In painting, the primary agency of physical motion (as distinct from illusionary representation of motion, as with the Futurists) is the line, conceived not as the thinnest of planes, nor as edge, contour or connective but as stroke or figure (in the sense of 'figure skating'). In its passage on the canvas, each such line can establish the actual movement of the artist's body as an esthetic statement. Line, from wiry calligraphy to foot wide flaunts of the painter's brush, has played the leading part in the technique of Action Painting, though there are other ways besides line of releasing force on canvas.[175]

Rosenberg's equation of action with gesture became a widely accepted position on the Abstract Expressionists, and the landscapes reveal Hofmann working in this vein almost fifteen years prior. While the European landscapes embodied a synthesis between emotional subjectivity and *Gestaltung*, the American landscapes reveal a synthesis between the depiction of movement and the material qualities of ink. This reinforces Hofmann's idea that [pictorial] "movement develops from sensation"—which includes the sensations of the artist, the plastic expression of

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[174] For Seitz, it is not only the illusion of depth but the illusion of *motion* that Hofmann achieves while still maintaining the illusion of flatness: "unlike perspective depth, which is based on systematic diminution of size, plastic depth, created by variable factors such as position, relative size, and the competition of colors, is visually dynamic. So out of a feeling of depth, a sense of movement develops." [Seitz, *Hans Hofmann*, 39.]

[175] Harold Rosenberg, "Hans Hofmann: Nature into Action" *ARTnews* 56, no. 8 (May 1957) 35.

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these sensations, and the viewers empathic experience of those expressions. [176] For example, the lower left foreground of *Hills [XXXI]* (1931) (Figure 38) is filled with lines that do not articulate up close forms, but instead a carve path through pictorial space. Read as impressions of his movement through the hills, they project the idea of motion based on a memory of it, collapsing the divide between cognitive and physical ideas of space. Looking at *Untitled* (c. 1935) (Figure 43) and *Untitled* (c.1935) (Figure 44) we see what Hofmann sees—the sand dunes, harbor, and railroad tracks surrounding Provincetown —but we also see the physical movements of his body; his arm moving frenetically back and forth across the surface of the paper, building up a net of thick black lines in the center (Figure 43) and top left quadrant (Figure 44) of the composition. We are remined of Merleau-Ponty's quote:

> The painter 'takes his body with him,' says Valery. Indeed, we cannot imagine how a *mind* could paint. It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings. To understand these transubstantiations, we must go back to the working, actual body—not the body as a chunk of space or a bundle of functions but that body which is an intertwining of vision and movement.[177]

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[176] Full quote reads: "There are movements into space and movements forward, out of space, both in form, and in color. The product of movement and counter-movement is tension. When tension—workng strength—is expressed, it endows the work of art with the living effect of coordinated, though opposing foces" [Hans Hofmann, *Search for the Real,* 66.]

[177] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" (1964) 2. http://www.biolinguagem.com/ling_cog_cult/merleauponty_1964_eyeandmind.pd Accessed 03/01/2020. The body-subject in this case study is less physiognomic and more theoretical. It takes Merleau-Ponty's philosophical reintegration of the mind/body divide as an aide for reading Hofmann's pictorial vision c. the late 1920s (As opposed to, to name one of many examples, an emphasis on the body-based Schopenhauer's bifurcation of ocular and visual sight using physiognomy)

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This is exemplified by a record of movements across the page. For example, the erratic marks populating the top and bottom fields of *Untitled* (*c*. 1931) (Figure 40) reveal a repetition of Hofmann's hand moving up and down the page, a record of his movement in real time. They do not connote any object or render spatiality. Rather, they feel as if the artist is grasping blindly within the white space of the picture plane to locate its boundaries. This grasp for the ontological limits of the picture plane through physical gesture is perhaps the most literal expression of this notion that Hofmann's plasticity was the attempt to integrate two-dimensional representation and three-dimensional experience.

Hildebrand also expressed that "there can be no doubt that our general sensations of space are very closely connected with our ideas of movement."[178] As early as 1803 Maine de Biran wrote on the relationship of vision to the physical state of the body.[179] In 1886 Heinrich Wölfflin stated that, "our own bodily organization is the form through which we apprehend everything physical."[180]

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[178] Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form,* 72.

[179] Jonathan Crary, "Subjective Vision and the Separation of the Senses," *Techniques of the Observer* (Boston: MIT Press, 1992), 73. Crary argues that "from the beginning of the nineteenth century a science of vision will tend to mean increasingly an interrogation of the physiological make-up of the human subject, rather than the mechanics of light and optical transmission. It is a moment when the visible escapes from the timeless order of the camera obscura and becomes lodged in another apparatus, within the unstable physiognomy and temporality of the body" [Ibid, 70.]

[180] Mallgrave and Ikonomou, *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics,* 43. Original source is his doctoral dissertation**,** *Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture* (1886).

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Jonathan Crary contends that the modern condition of vision-as-object (and vision as subjective) rather than vision-as-knowledge opens up the field to physiological quality of human subjectivity, no longer limiting it to the light and color-based mechanics of optical sight.[181] This concept takes a more nebulous shape in the 20th century. For example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty transforms vision-as-object to one of embodied vision in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), arguing that looking towards bodily experience can rectify what is lost in cognitive perception.[182] His rationale is based on the fact that the body "sees" but cannot see itself; there is thus a huge blind spot in the phenomenological field of vision. From a philosophical standpoint, reintegrating cognitive, optical, and physiognomic vision allows the body to be seen as an intersection of history, time, and space—to "see" itself:

> A human body is present when, between the see-er and the visible, between touching and touched, between one eye and the other, between hand and hand a kind of crossover occurs, when the spark of the sensing/sensible is lit, when the fire starts to burn that will not cease until some accident befalls the body, undoing what no accident would have sufficed to do.[183]

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[181] Crary, *Techniques of the Observer,* 70.

[182] Ross Clark discusses the preeminence of the ocular in *Eye and Mind*, arguing, as other scholars have, that the ocular is preferenced over other senses. [Ross Clark, "Ontology and Painting: Merleau-Ponty's Eye and Mind and its relation to the ocular." *postgraduate journal of aesthetics* (Vol. II, No. 2, Spring 2015). pp 2-19., 1] Clark's particular reason is relevant to Hofmann: he believes that Merleau-Ponty was not focused on the ocular at the rejection or ignorance of other senses, but because the ocular is the sense we use for painting, an effective example to use in the essay's attempt to return to pre-Cartesian models of ontological thinking.

[183] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," (1964) 10.

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Merleau-Ponty applies this to art by connecting the Cartesian mind/body divide to the Renaissance *perspectiva artificialis*:[184]

> [Descartes] was right in taking his inspiration from the perspectival techniques of the Renaissance… The theoreticians tried to forget the spherical visual field of the ancients, their angular perspective which relates the apparent size not to distance but to the angle from which we see the object. they wanted to forget what they disdainfully called *perspectiva naturalis*, or *communis*, in favor of a *perspectiva artificialis* capable in principle of founding an exact construction.[185]

Merleau-Ponty goes on to deduce that the technology of single point perspective, devised in 1411 by Alberti to categorically organize the perceivable world,[186] is

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[184] Hildebrand asserts that "we must, then, look upon Nature as affording us all possible variations in the perception of a certain object, yet without ever giving us the thing itself. For the idea of form which we may obtain is but one facet of the whole; one which we have abstracted from comparison of our different visual perceptions; one which, we may say, has resulted from a separating of necessary from chance elements."[Adolf von Hildebrand, *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts* (New York: G.E. Stechert & Co, 1907) 18.]

[185] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," (1964) 10.

[186] Clark includes the fact that Descartes admits that depth is an illusion: "Admittedly, Descartes includes depth among the dimensions of extension. However, since extension itself is defined as being constituted by points, each of which 'is and is thought as being, right where it is—one here, another there" (EM, p. 143) extension is tantamount to height and breadth, which give themselves as a juxtaposition of simultaneous points. One might say that such a definition is, as Descartes no doubt knew, self-evident and indubitable, since both breadth and height belong to the object *itself*—its geometrical properties—whilst depth clearly does not belong to extended bodies themselves: it is the product of the observer's accidental solidarity with bodies by dint of his being embodied. Depth reveals itself only through the encroachment of things on one another. Yet if things do encroach on one another, for the Cartesian this is, on the one hand, only because 'thy are outside of one another', and on the other hand because, for the sensible observer, who is among them, the things in the foreground necessarily occlude those behind. IN this sense, depth is something of an illusion, a point that is corroborated by Descartes by the ability of artists to recreate the experience of depth in two dimensions with the technique of perspective drawing." [Clark, 11]

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categorically false:

> The [artist] sees the tree nearby, then he directs his gaze into the distance, to the road, before finally looking to the horizon; the apparent dimensions of the other objects change each time he sees a different point. On the canvas, he arranges things such that what he represents is no more than a compromise between these various visual impressions: he strives to find a common denominator to all these perceptions by rendering each object not with the size, colors, and aspect it presents when the painter fixes his gaze but rather with the conventional size and aspect that it would present in a gaze directed at a particular vanishing point in the horizon.[187]

Merleau-Ponty finds it to be a compromise of representation, in which no single object is treated with complete autonomy, but rather synthesized into an artificial whole. Ross Clark refers to this as *geometricized projection*, a "perspectiveless position that embraces them all."[188] Forcing all objects to conform to a single angle is to separate the form and content of the world, which is to say, its visual appearance and experience as perceived by the painter's eye. For Merleau-Ponty, this dissonance detaches cognition from bodily experience. This is reminiscent of Hildebrand's distinction between actual and perceptual form (as well as his conviction that spatiality in a picture plane should be stimulated, not reproduced).

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[187] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," (1964) 10.

[188] According to Clark, the space within the canvas thus becomes *partes extra partes*, absolutely homogenous and equal in every part of itself—at obvious contrast with the nature of reality and experienced spatiality. The pictorial implication is a state of total objectivity, both in terms of the objects within and the space around: "Having opened up this purely objective spatiality, then, the painter proceeds to arrange objects within it. But, crucially, the space is considered to be indifferent to the objects organized within it, and in turn the objects are regarded as indifferent to is; or, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, for classical painting "the form and content of the world do not mix."

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If the world seen through *perspectiva artificialis* reinforces a mind/body divide, then the drawn line is its primary agent. Merleau-Ponty writes that "for Descartes, the real power of painting lies in drawing, whose power in turn rests about the ordered relationship between it and objective space established by perspectival projection."[189] By the time Hofmann arrives in Provincetown in 1935, the line in his landscape drawings pursues the dissolution of these ordered relationships. *Untitled* (c. 1935) (Figure 43) suggests the semblance of a sand dune with a fence or railroad cutting across the foreground, but most objects have been dissolved into dots and marks. The undulating horizontal lines of *Untitled* (1935) (Figure 44) also suggest sand dunes, or perhaps a bay. Both map an improvisational, subjective image onto the landscape, whose unique shape is captured by a vast breadth of different ink marks and textures. A "spiritual" creation has been realized: Hofmann's emotional projection of the landscape has become thoroughly integrated with the fluidity of the ink and the flatness of white parchment sheet. So too, has his visual-kinesthetic experience become integrated into the picture plane. The privileging of the visual-kinesthetic over the strictly cognitive connects back to Merleau-Ponty's concept of embodied vision, which is itself an attempt to reverse the Cartesian mind/body divide. Read through Merleau-Ponty's postulation, we can now imagine how Hofmann's "spiritual" synthesis of logic and emotion might also suggest a collapse of the Cartesian mind/body divide. Art historically speaking, this is not such a radical notion; we can also think of

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[189] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," (1964) 9.

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Merleau-Ponty's embodied vision as equivalent to the modernist idea of plasticity, whereby experience is not represented, but expressed abstractly through line, color, and form, which is to say, embodied by the medium.

With great support from his U.C. Berkeley colleagues Worth Ryder, Vaclav Vytlacil and Glen Wessels, moved from California to New York in the Fall 1932.[190] According to Wessels, Hofmann felt that "at that time the cultural center of the world was moving to the East Coast of the United States...he wanted to be in the area where things happened."[191] With Miz's help, he formally closed the Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildende Kunst in Munich in 1933, and opened the Hans Hofmann School at 137 East 57th Street New York in 1934 .[192] After spending the summer sharing a studio in Gloucester with Mercedes Matter and her father Arthur B. Carles in, he moved into a small fifth floor walkup on east 8th street in New York. In 1935 he would return to nature, establishing a program in Provincetown, where students could enroll in extended summer sessions.[193] In addition to studio

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[190] Wessels recalls the great efforts they made in getting Hofmann to America and then helping him move to New York, essentially seeing Hofmann's establishment in the U.S. as way to spread the European Avant-Garde and radicalize the field of American art education. [Glen Wessels, *Education of an Artist*, 113]

[191] Ibid, 151.
[192] According to Jed Perl, "although in the early years, Hofmann's school was not especially well attended, with perhaps a dozen or so students at a time, his underground fame was spreading very fast." [Perl, *New Art City,* 7.]

[193] Mary Gabriel documents how he transformed in the countryside: "It was infinitely more relaxed there than his New York school. Provincetown was a business Hans operated to finance his Eight street atelier. It was popular among women from around the country, who were was interested in art as they were in escaping their tightly choreographed lives back home. It was thus, also, something of a private summer harem for Hofmann, who unleashed the force of his

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critiques and figuring drawing sessions, landscape and *plein-air* drawing figured significantly into the Provincetown curriculum. After returning to color and paint in 1934, Hofmann continued to produce increasingly abstract landscapes until the early 1940s. Around 1935, the increase in surviving figure drawings suggests that Hofmann returned to the nude with more frequency; perhaps the stability of his 8th Street atelier and the twice daily figuring drawing sessions he held for students there allowed him to return to the practice with which he first started. In *Reclining Nude* (1935) (Figure 46) the influence of his landscape practice is manifest. The body reclines horizontally, jutting across the page like a range of hills, each limb described with geological-like contours.

Philosopher Wayne Forman argues that the Abstract Expressionists took a Heideggerian position, expressing the "world-as-abstraction," marking a distinct break from the Cartesian logic of the Renaissance painter's "world-as-picture."[194] In his California landscape series, Hofmann appears to be on the precipice of no longer apprehending the "world-as-picture," but instead, "world-as-abstraction." Shortly after his return to paint in 1934, his landscapes became more and more abstract, sometimes entirely comprised of washes of color punctuated by minute,

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Dionysian character there. "He would praise the old ladies, and cut off the balls of the young men," Elaine de Kooning said, " He was really like a bull elephant." … Sculptor Louise Nevelson, who had studied with Hans in Germany, was disgusted by his antics in America, accusing him of "kissing the asses of the rich ones." Another friend put it more bluntly: "He fucked everything that moved." [Gabriel, *Ninth Street Women,* 48-49.]

[194] Wayne J. Froman, "Action Painting and the World-as-Picture," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* Vol. 46, No. 4 (Summer, 1988), pp. 469-475.

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loosely rendered houses or other man-made elements (Figures 47 & 48). *Red Landscape* (1936) (Figure 49) is a particularly early example of "world-as-abstraction": the represented world is entirely abstract, save for the lyrical bursts of green and blue that vaguely separate into earth and sky. Just as Descartes's concept of the thinking man is a perfect analogy for the Renaissance artist, Heidegger's being-in-the world surmises the simultaneous bodily subjectivity and interconnectivity with the world suggested by abstraction**.** (William Agee wrote that we do not look at a Hofmann, but enter into it and become enveloped in its world.[195]) Hofmann arrives at the precipice of finding the "world-as-abstraction" by allowing his accelerated sublime experience to radicalize his approach to pictorial space. In this light, the drawings of early 1930s are more than a link between Cubism and Abstraction but rather a bodily, nature-based exploration of perception, and in essence, of art.

American students and scholars of three succeeding generations have regarded Hofmann as the importer-synthesizer of the European Avant-Garde, but his American landscape drawings reveal a discernable influence of the open landscapes and vehicular travel on his approach to the pictorial space. As Hofmann said in 1944, "If I had not been rescued by America, I would have lost my chance as a painter."[196] Analyzing how Hofmann's experience in nature influenced his

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[195] William C. Agee, "Spirit, Spirituality, and the Cosmos." *Hans Hofmann: Magnum Opus*. Edited by Britta E. Buhlmann. (Kaiserslautern, Germany: MPK Museum Pfalzgalerie; Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2013.)

[196]Perl, *New Art City,* 6.

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pictorial creation allows us to consider how the landscape genre and his bodily movement in space were integral to the (de)construction of pictorial space.

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Conclusion

Following his move to New York in 1932, Hofmann would draw actively for another ten years before focusing solely on painting.[197] As Glen Wessels recounts, "the direct sketching thing became less important later in his life, although he still avowedly painted from memories of nature."[198] Memories are themselves a projection, or in-feeling; the intuitive acts that constituted "experience" for Hofmann. Experience was as fundamental to Hofmann's theory and practice as nature, and so with this research I have attempted to understand the effect of his subjective experiences in nature on his approach to the picture plane and pictorial space. I used the theories presented in his published and unpublished writings, which testify to a classically Romantic belief in nature as the stimulus for the creative process and interest in the plasticity of the medium. When examined against the drawings, archival writings, and photographs, Hofmann's notion that "nature is the stimulus" is literal, both in terms of his *plein-air* practice and his inheritance of Romantic ideals. However, as Jed Perl writes, "Romanticism…became with Hofmann a drama that shattered the natural

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[197] However, upon initially returning to paint in 1934, he began an extensive series of landscape paintings in casein on panel that evidences the importance of the genre at this time and the influence of the his *plein-air* drawing practice on his subsequent painting.

[198] Wessels, *Education of An Artist,* 147.

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order…each angle, each splatter, each color was a spark tossed off by life's wild unpredictability." Abhorring the copying of nature, Hofmann's search for the real in nature lead to the expression of his vision-as-experience through increasingly spontaneous and abstracted landscapes, as well as the deconstruction of traditional pictorial space. Read more theoretically, I found that the idea that "nature is the stimulus" also provoked phenomenological questions about his chosen medium of drawing, as he was using drawing not only to express his subjectivity, but also to experiment with the form and construction of this expression.

Hofmann's reading of Adolf von Hildebrand's mixed visual-kinesthetic theory of vision led me to conclude that the artist's vision-as-experience in nature could include the body's movement through space, and that this embodied perception could be used to disrupt traditional approaches the picture plane. Thus, my attempt is to write into the literature on Hofmann the notion of an embodied perception made visible through experimental approaches to the landscape genre and pictorial space. When expressed through line and ink, his vision-as-experience, affected at the particular moment of the early 1930s by the accelerated sublime experiences of vehicular travel in the American landscape, rattled the so-called "Italian" perspective he disdained. The figure, traditionally a subject within the landscape, becomes present throughout as a phenomenological conceit. The artist's Empathic "in-feeling" and embodied vision are depicted through absolute marks and multiple and conflicting first person, visual-kinesthetic viewpoints within a deconstructed picture plane, pointing to the very constructed-ness of vision, experience, and pictorial space. If, phenomenologically speaking, our perceptions

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of the world are constructs subjectively arrogated by the individual psyche, then the only "real" art must be a formally and plastically autonomous construction as well. By experimenting with the flatness of the picture plane and the legibility of line, the drawings are not only about the subjective experience of the artist, but also queries into the fictitious and constructed nature of ink on paper.

Wessels knew that Hofmann still painted from nature even after his plein-air practice moved indoors, and from the drawing pad to the canvas, because of his teacher's belief that "you must digest the appearance before it becomes reality for you." This goes back to Hofmann's idea that vision formed an experience unto itself, and this experience was more real than any outward appearance. Drawing was one way of "digesting" outside appearance, and once it became an internalized reality, the artist could ostensibly access the memory in perpetuity. This process of appearance becoming "real"—or, as Cézanne put it, when "nature is on the inside"—was also one of creating new plastic means to reflect one's perceptual subjectivity, and drawing *en plein-air* offered Hofmann a fruitful space to discover both.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

All works by Hans Hofmann unless otherwise noted.

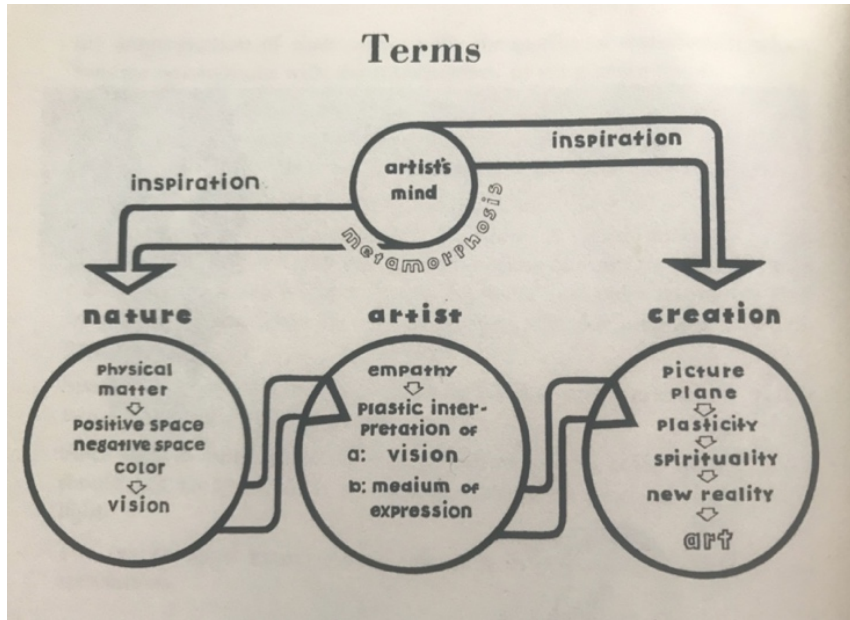

Figure 1. Flow chart with Nature, the Artist, and Creation. From *Search for the Real,* 1948.

Figure 2. Untitled Figure Study, c. 1890s, graphite on paper, 11 ½ x 8 inches.

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Figure 3. Photographer Unknown. Hans Hofmann with students at the Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildendes Kunst, Munich, after 1915.

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Die Kunst besteht nicht in der gegenständlich objektivierenden Nachbildung der Wirklichkeit. Die vollendetste gegenständliche Nachbildung der Wirklichkeit ist als Form tot, Fotografie oder Panoptikum, wenn ihr die Impulse der künstlerischen Gestaltung fehlen. Die Form im Sinne der Kunst erhält ihre Impulse zwar durch die Natur; sie ist jedoch nicht an die gegenständliche Wirklichkeit gebunden, sondern vielmehr an das *künstlerische Erlebnis* aus der gegenständlichen Wirklichkeit und mit diesem an die Beherrschung der geistigen Mittel der bildenden Kunst, durch die das künstlerische Erlebnis erst und mit ihm die Wirklichkeit im Bilde zum Ausdruck kommt. Ausdrucksvolle Gestaltung ist somit geistige Übersetzung des Seelischen in Form, durch Verschmelzung des Seelischen mit dem künstlerischen Ausdrucksmittel zu einer formalen und geistigen Einheit, in der sich der Gestaltungsdrang durch den gesamten Sinnes- und Gefühlskomplex und durch die lebendige Beherrschung der geistigen Mittel bis zur Steigerung in die Intuition auswirkt. Eine Nachbildung der gegenständlichen Wirklichkeit ist also keine Gestaltung, sondern Dilettantismus, oder als Produkt einer reinen Verstandesleistung, eine wissenschaftliche Fixierung. Das Kunstwerk ist ein in sich geschlossenes geistiges und formales Ganzes, in welchem es, trotz der Vielheit gezeigter Objekte, durch die geistigen Beziehungen seines Aufbaues keine Teile gibt. Jedes gegenständlich einzeln *Wirkende* fällt daher aus dem geistigen Zusammenhang und ist somit Flick-, nicht Stückwerk, und als solches und damit das Ganze, geistig minderwertig. – Der Künstler beherrsche deshalb die geistigen Mittel der bildenden Kunst, *diese* sind die Form und die Fundamente der bildenden Kunst und gestalte *sein* geistiges Bild von der Natur, d. i. sein Erlebnis, vor der Natur oder frei. Durch diese Erkenntnisse sind die Aufgaben der Lernjahre klar vorgezeichnet und damit auch die weitere Entwickelung des Künstlers, die sich dann unabhängig von Schulen und Richtungen, aus der Persönlichkeit heraus, vollziehen muß.

DAS LEHRPROGRAMM DER SCHULE FÜR DIE EINZELNEN FÄCHER IST UMSTEHEND ENTWICKELT.

UNTERRICHTS-STUNDEN			
	VORMITTAG	9 – 12	AKT- UND KOPFSTUDIEN
	NACHMITTAG	2 – 4	KOPF- UND KOSTÜMSTUDIEN
	ABEND-AKT	5 – 7	MIT EINZELMODELL U. GRUPPEN

LEHRFÄCHER:
ZEICHNEN VOR DER NATUR: Die 2 und 3 dimensionale Beherrschung der Form: Silhuette, Fläche und Volumen, Bewegung und Gegenbewegung, die 2 und 3 dimensionale Rythmik; Dynamik der Massen; formale Spannung und Funktion: das Raumproblem, Raumspannungen und Raumplastik, die Funktionen im Raum; die Gestaltung der lebendigen und vergeistigten Form in ihrer Beziehung zum formalen und geistigen Ganzen, d. i. zur Komposition.

MALEN V. DER NATUR U. FREI: Die 2 dimensionale Beherrschung der Fläche, Valeure und Kontraste; das Epuiliber: die 3 dimensionale Auswirkung, Qualität und Transparenz. Die reine Farbe, Abstraktion, Übersetzung; Intervalle und Klänge, Simultanität und Gesetzmäßigkeit, die entmaterialisierte, vergeistigte Farbe.

KOMPOSITION: in 2 u. 3 dimensional-konzentrischer Auswirkung. (frei u. v. d. Natur).

STATUTEN: Die Statuten der Schule werden in der Schule durch den Obmann bei der Anmeldung ausgehändigt.

HONORAR: Das Honorar wird monatlich berechnet und wird durch Anschlag in der Schule bekanntgegeben. Das Honorar ist im Voraus zu entrichten.

PRIVAT-KORREKTUR: Einzelkorrektur oder in monatl. Berechnung je nach Vereinbarung.

ANMELDUNG U. ABMELDUNG: Die Anmeldung verpflichtet zum Besuche der Schule von mindestens einen Monat. Der Eintritt in die Schule ist jederzeit möglich. Die Kündigungsfrist beträgt 4 Wochen. (Näheres durch die Statuten).

ZUR BESONDEREN BEACHTUNG FÜR AUSLÄNDISCHE STUDIERENDE:
Ausländische Studierende erhalten die Aufenthaltsbewilligung durch den Besuch der Schule. Die Aufenthaltsbewilligung erteilt das Fremdenamt der Polizeidirektion München, Ettstr. 4 Zimmer 141. Dieselbe ist dort persönlich mit einer Bescheinigung der Schule über die erfolgte Anmeldung u. von auswärts durch die Vermittelung der Schule nachzusuchen. Beim Übertritt eines ausländischen Schülers von einer Schule in die andere Schule müssen die beiden Schulen *rechtzeitig* benachrichtigt werden, damit die Schulen die vorschriftsmäßigen Ab- u. Neuanmeldungen beim Fremdenamte der Polizeidirektion *gleichzeitig* vornehmen können.

Figure 4A & 4B. Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildendes Kunst Prospectus, Spring 1915. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Series 2, Box 4. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C

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Figure 5. Hans Hofmann Schule für Bildendes Kunst Prospectus, Front Page. Winter 1933. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Series 2, Box 4. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

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Figure 6. Photograph by Christina Lillian taken during 1930-31 Classes in Berkeley California, Berkeley. Box 1, University of California, Berkeley, University Art Museum collection of Hans Hofmann papers, 1929-1976.

Figure 7. Photographer unknown. Modern Art Class at University of California, Berkeley with Professor Hofmann, c. 1930-31. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9, Folder 31. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

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Figure 8. Photographer unknown. Photograph of Hans Hofmann with students at the Hans Hofmann School in Provincetown, c 1941. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9, Folder 31. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

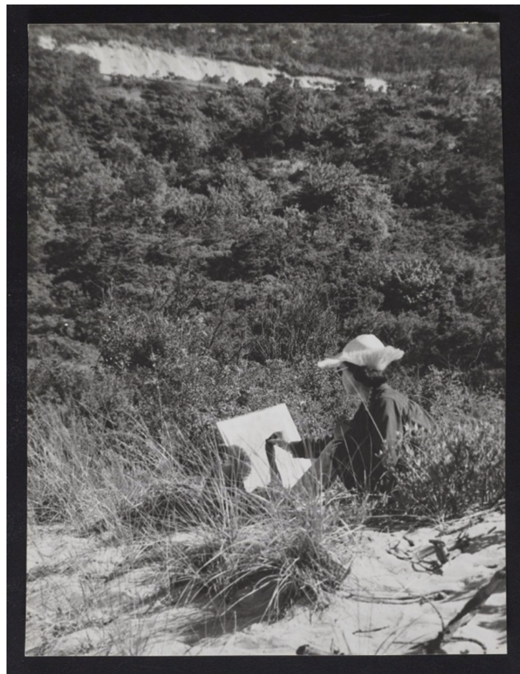

Figure 9. Photographer unknown. Photograph of Unidentified Student at the Hans Hofmann School in Provincetown, 1941. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9, Folder 31. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

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Figure 10. Photographer unknown. Photograph of Hans Hofmann in Provincetown, 1930s or 1940s. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9. Folder 18. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

Figure 11. Photographer unknown. Photograph of Hans Hofmann with unidentified students at the Hans Hofmann School in Provincetown, c. 1940s. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9, Folder 31. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C

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Figure 12. Photographer unknown. Photograph of Hans Hofmann with unidentified students working outdoors. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9, Folder 31. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

Figure 13. Paul Signac, *The Port of San Tropez,* 1901-1902, oil on canvas, 51 ½ x 63 ½ inches. The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, Japan.

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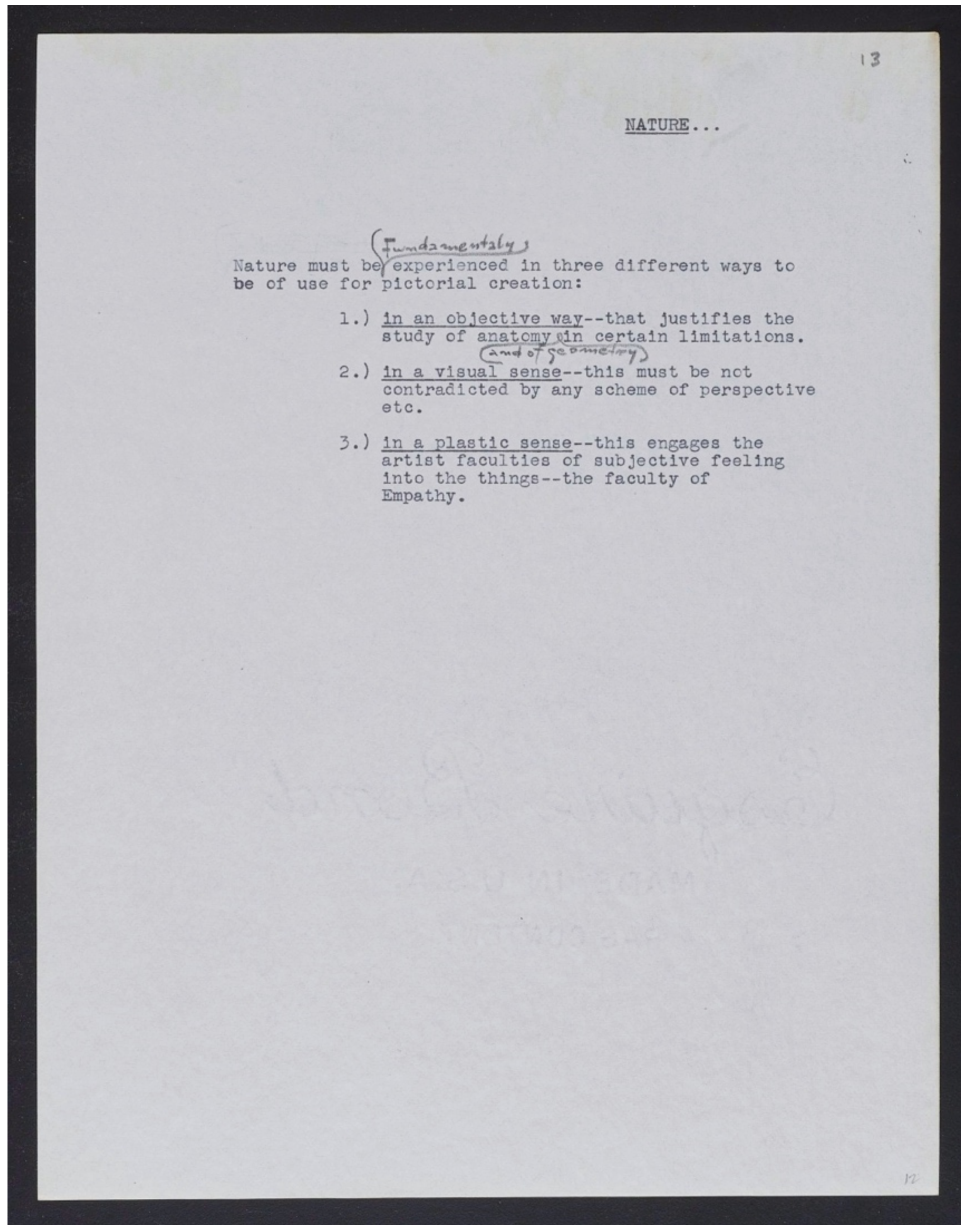

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NATURE...

Nature must be (Fundamentaly) experienced in three different ways to be of use for pictorial creation:

1.) in an objective way--that justifies the study of anatomy (and of geometry) in certain limitations.

2.) in a visual sense--this must be not contradicted by any scheme of perspective etc.

3.) in a plastic sense--this engages the artist faculties of subjective feeling into the things--the faculty of Empathy.

Figure 14. *Draft, Part II a) nature as objective experience*, circa 1952, possibly for Das Malerbuch. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Series 3, Box 8, Folder 18, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

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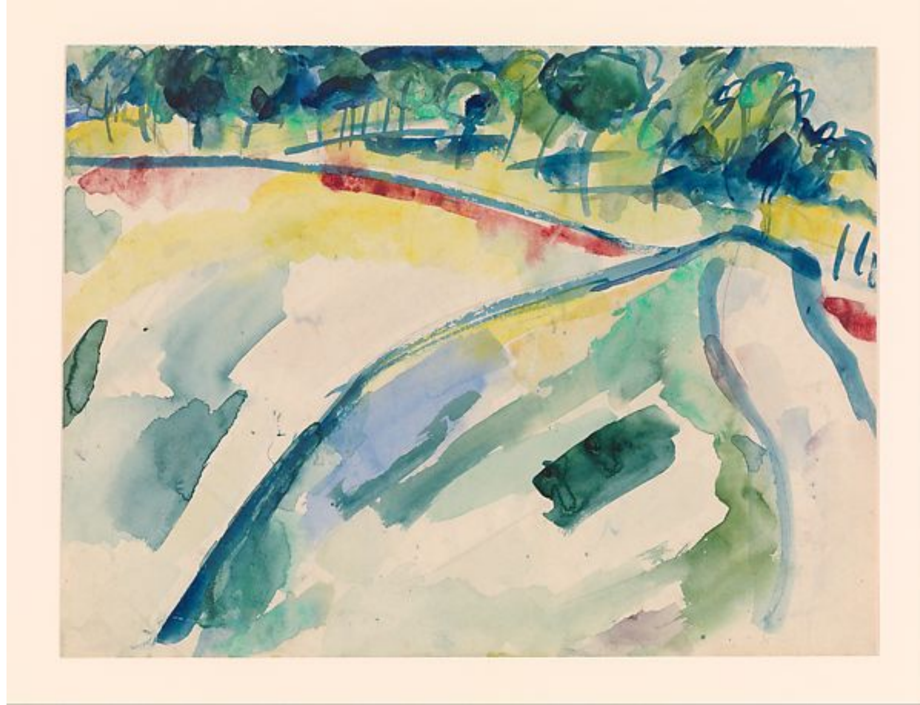

Figure 15. *Untitled (Landscape)*, c. 1914, watercolor and graphite on paper, 8 x 10 ½ inches. The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Gift of the Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

Figure 16. *Navires Aux Golfe de ST. Tropez [III/3],* 1929, Ink on paper, 11 x 13 ½ inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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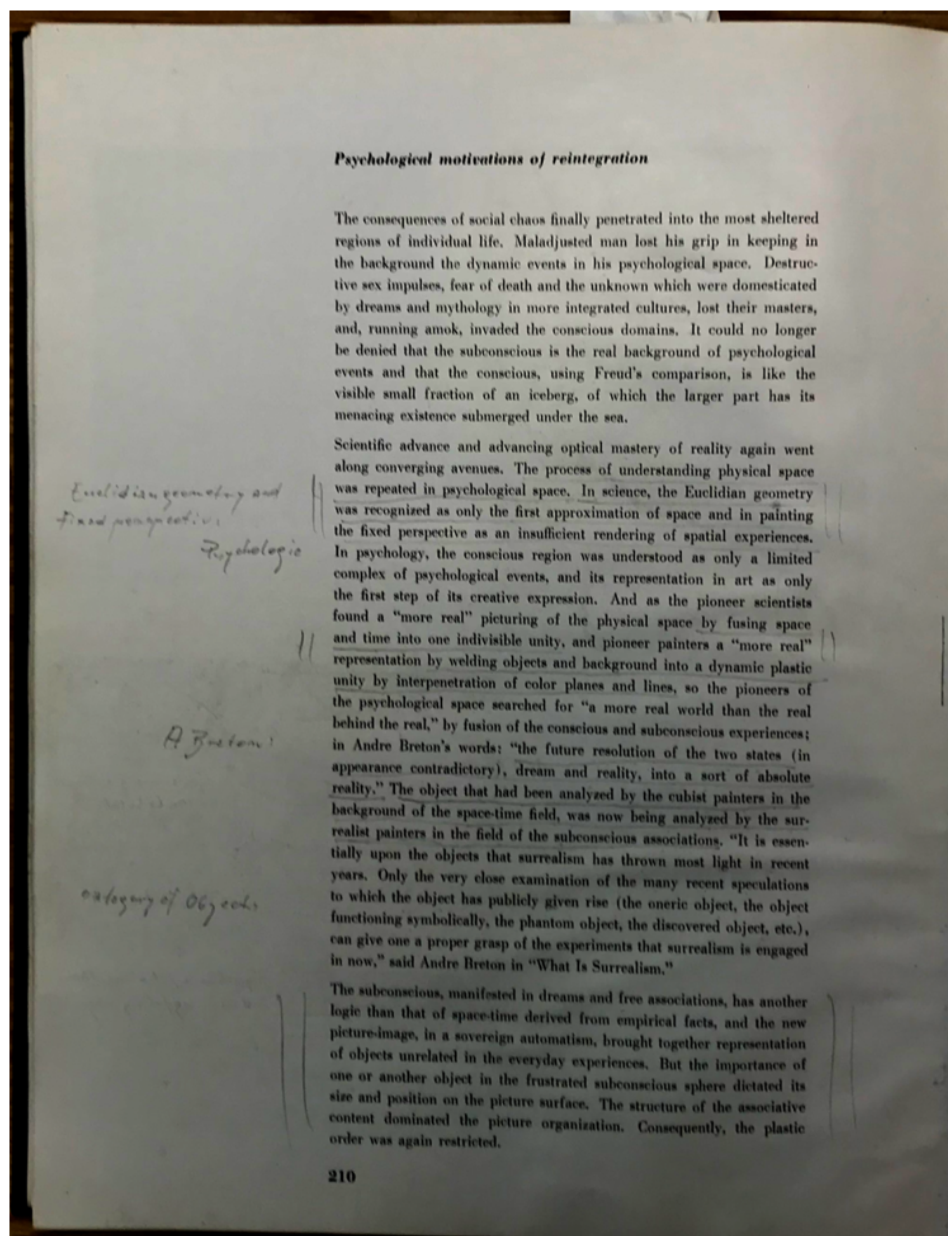

Psychological motivations of reintegration

The consequences of social chaos finally penetrated into the most sheltered regions of individual life. Maladjusted man lost his grip in keeping in the background the dynamic events in his psychological space. Destructive sex impulses, fear of death and the unknown which were domesticated by dreams and mythology in more integrated cultures, lost their masters, and, running amok, invaded the conscious domains. It could no longer be denied that the subconscious is the real background of psychological events and that the conscious, using Freud's comparison, is like the visible small fraction of an iceberg, of which the larger part has its menacing existence submerged under the sea.

Scientific advance and advancing optical mastery of reality again went along converging avenues. The process of understanding physical space was repeated in psychological space. In science, the Euclidian geometry was recognized as only the first approximation of space and in painting the fixed perspective as an insufficient rendering of spatial experiences. In psychology, the conscious region was understood as only a limited complex of psychological events, and its representation in art as only the first step of its creative expression. And as the pioneer scientists found a "more real" picturing of the physical space by fusing space and time into one indivisible unity, and pioneer painters a "more real" representation by welding objects and background into a dynamic plastic unity by interpenetration of color planes and lines, so the pioneers of the psychological space searched for "a more real world than the real behind the real," by fusion of the conscious and subconscious experiences; in Andre Breton's words: "the future resolution of the two states (in appearance contradictory), dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality." The object that had been analyzed by the cubist painters in the background of the space-time field, was now being analyzed by the surrealist painters in the field of the subconscious associations. "It is essentially upon the objects that surrealism has thrown most light in recent years. Only the very close examination of the many recent speculations to which the object has publicly given rise (the oneric object, the object functioning symbolically, the phantom object, the discovered object, etc.), can give one a proper grasp of the experiments that surrealism is engaged in now," said Andre Breton in "What Is Surrealism."

The subconscious, manifested in dreams and free associations, has another logic than that of space-time derived from empirical facts, and the new picture-image, in a sovereign automatism, brought together representation of objects unrelated in the everyday experiences. But the importance of one or another object in the frustrated subconscious sphere dictated its size and position on the picture surface. The structure of the associative content dominated the picture organization. Consequently, the plastic order was again restricted.

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Figure 17. Annotated pages from *Language of Vision* (1944) by György Kepes. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Series 8.1, Box 16. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C

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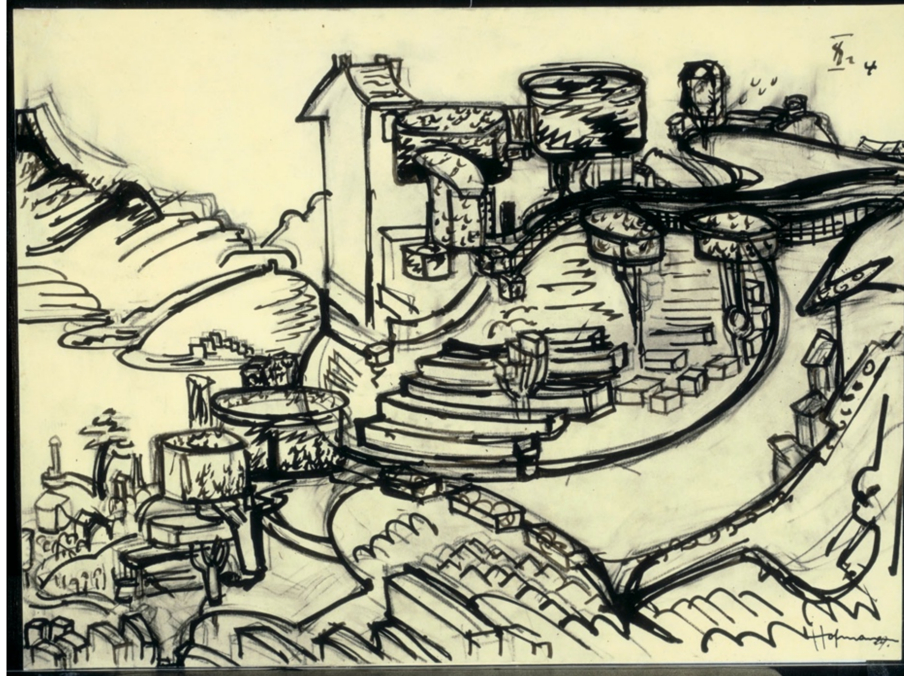

Figure 18. *St. Tropez, Vue Sur les Montagnes de St. Raphael [IX/4],* (1929), ink on parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

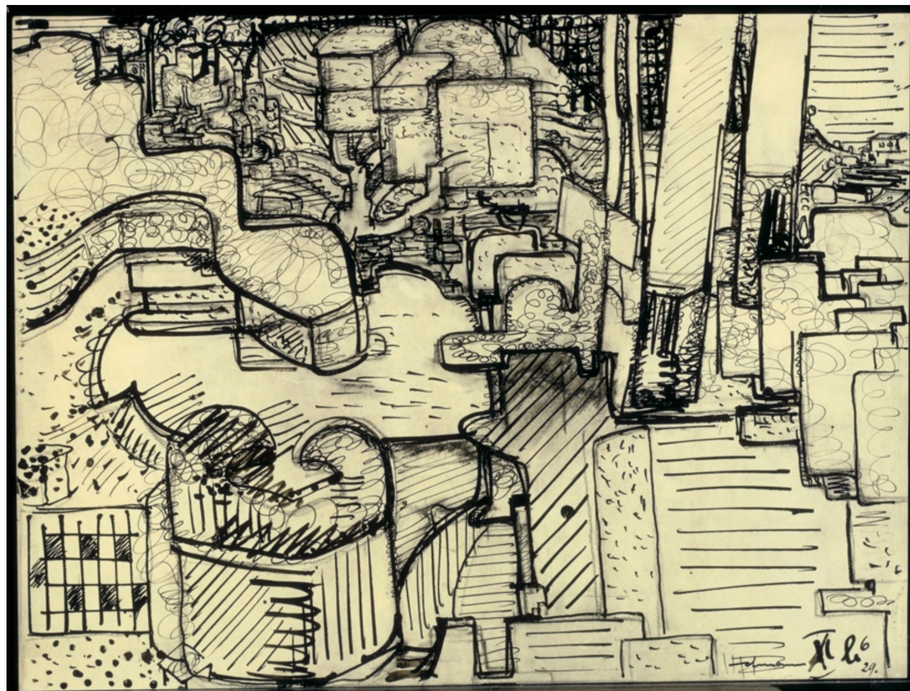

Figure 19. *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [XI/b6]*, 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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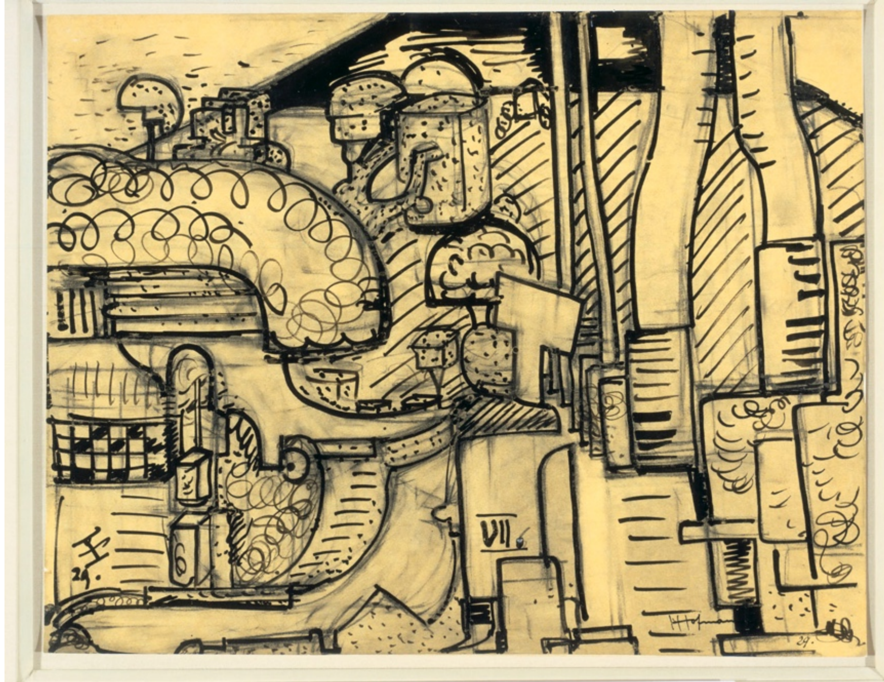

Figure 20. *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [VII/6],* 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

Figure 21. *Vue Sur les Vignes et Monte Bella Vista [I/6],* 1929, ink on mounted parchment 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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Figure 22. *Untitled [St. Tropez],* 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

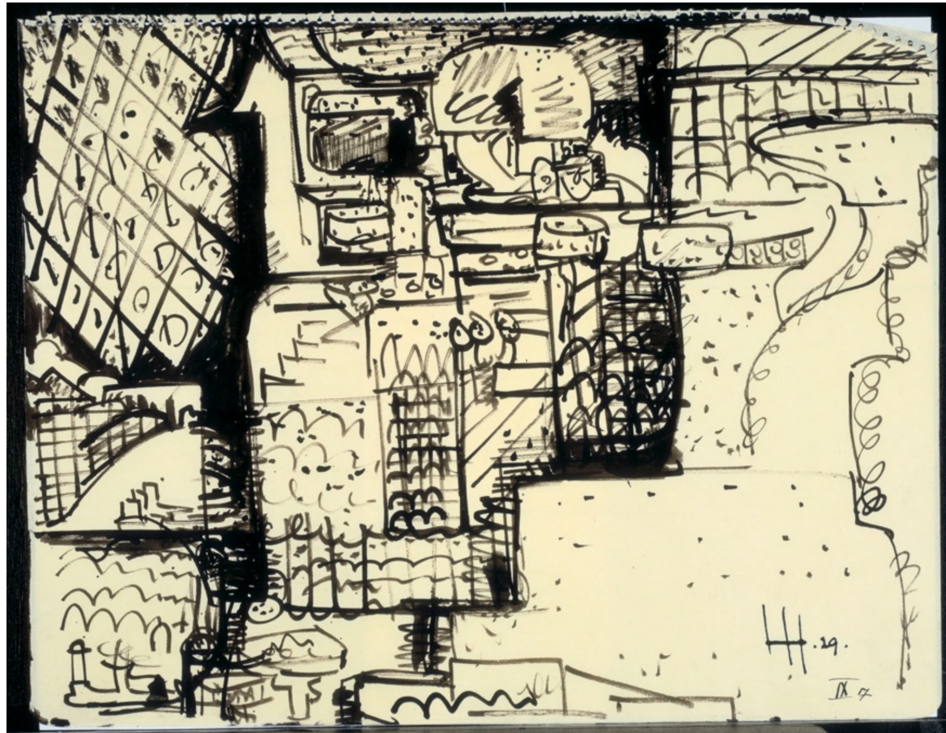

Figure 23. *Untitled [St. Tropez]*, 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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Figure 24. *Untitled [VII/4],* 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

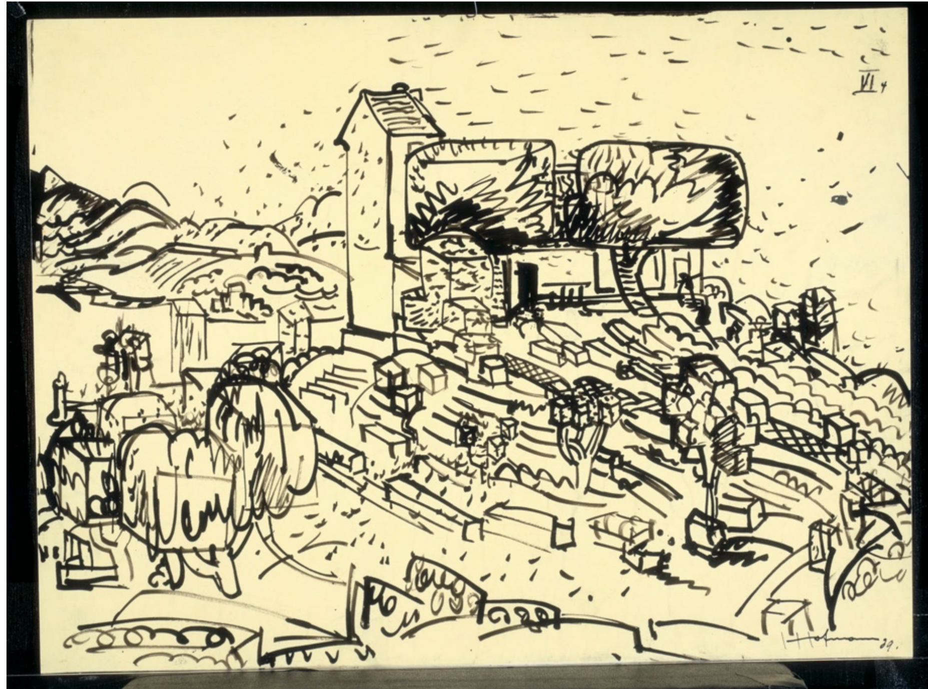
Figure 25. *Untitled [St. Tropez*], 1929, ink on mounted parchment. 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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Figure 26. *Untitled* [St. Tropez], 1929, ink on mounted parchment,
10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

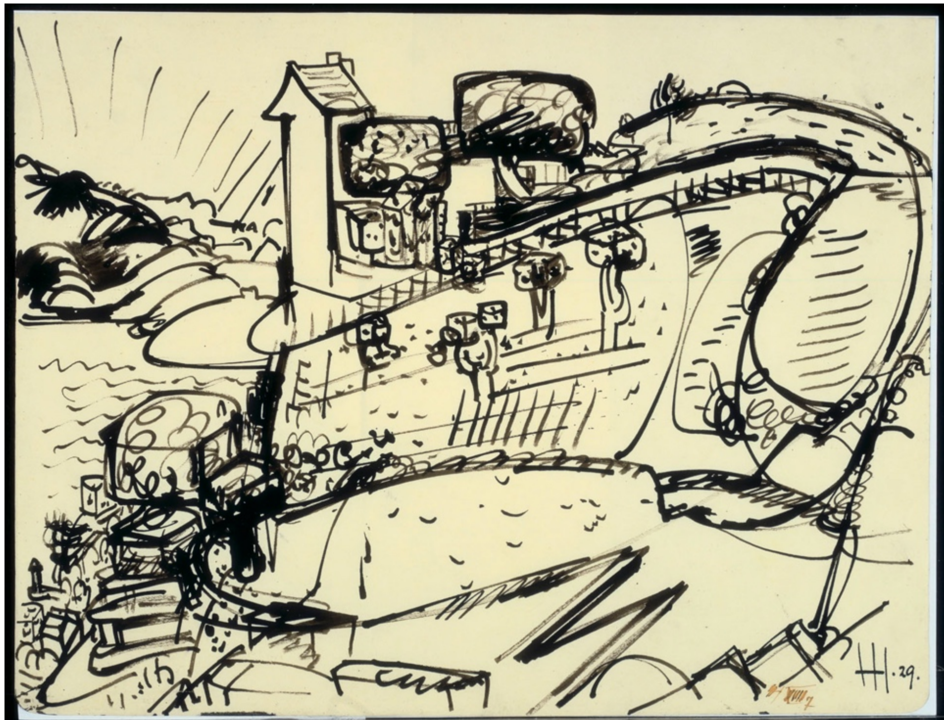

Figure 27. *Untitled* [St. Tropez], 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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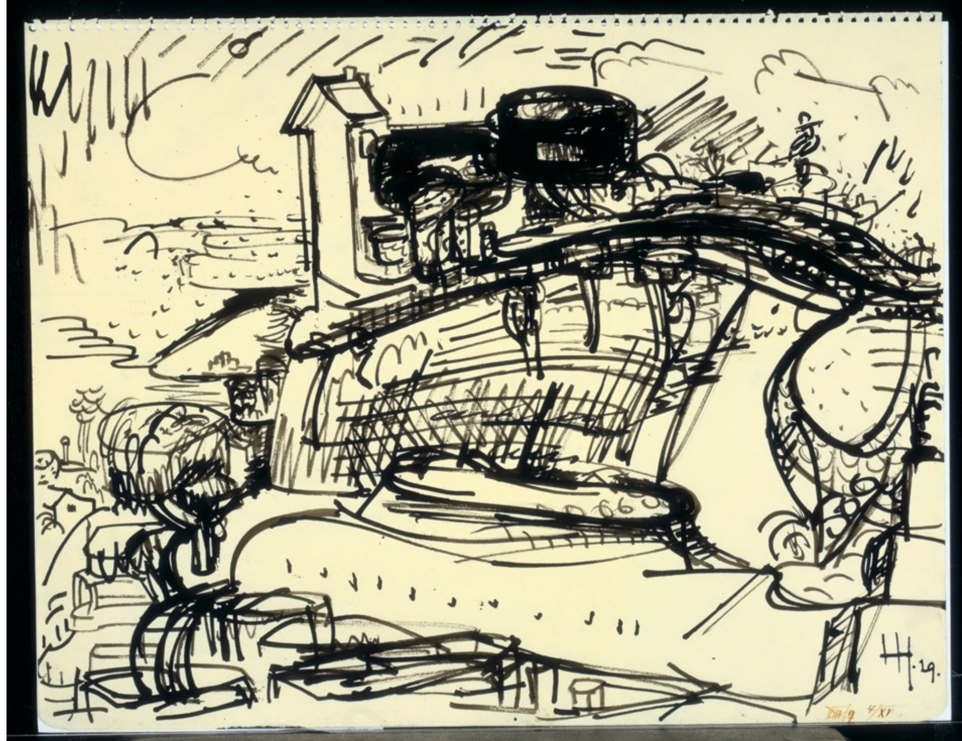

Figure 28. *Untitled* [St. Tropez], 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

Figure 29. *Untitled* [St. Tropez], 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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Figure 30. *Untitled* [St. Tropez], 1929, ink on mounted parchment, 10 ½ x 14 inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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Figure 31. Wassily Kandinsky, *On White II,* 1923, oil on canvas. 42 x 38 ½ inches x 38 ½ inches. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

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Figure 32. Photograph of Hans Hofmann with Fred Hack, Janet Chase, Warren Cheney, and Molly Bennett at Upper Angora Lake, California, August 1930. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9, Folder 31. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

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Figure 33. “ Hans Hofmann in Carmel, California (17 Mile Drive),” 1931. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9, Folder 28. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

Figure 34. Photograph of Hans Hofmann in California, c.1931. Hans Hofmann papers, [circa 1904]-2011, bulk 1945-2000, Box 9, Folder 28. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington. D.C.

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Table 5.1
Effect of Acceleration on the Body

No perceived Acceleration	No readily perceived Acceleration	Some gentle Acceleration	Acceleration, Deceleration, and strong cornering forces	A lot of Accelerations in all three dimensions
Looking at the view	Strolling	Sitting in a train	Car at speed on rough road	Extreme skiing
Floating	On a cruise liner	Flying in a plane	Downhill skiing	Downhill mountain biking
Free falling	Arial cablecar ride	Rafting	Jet boat in white water	Helicopter ride
Spacewalk	Canoeing	Sea kayaking		Aerobatics
				Offroad racing

Figure 35. Table of Effect of Acceleration on the Body. From Claudia Bell and John Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger) 2001.

Figure 36. *Landscape [III/3]*, 1928, ink on paper. 10 ½ x 13 ½ inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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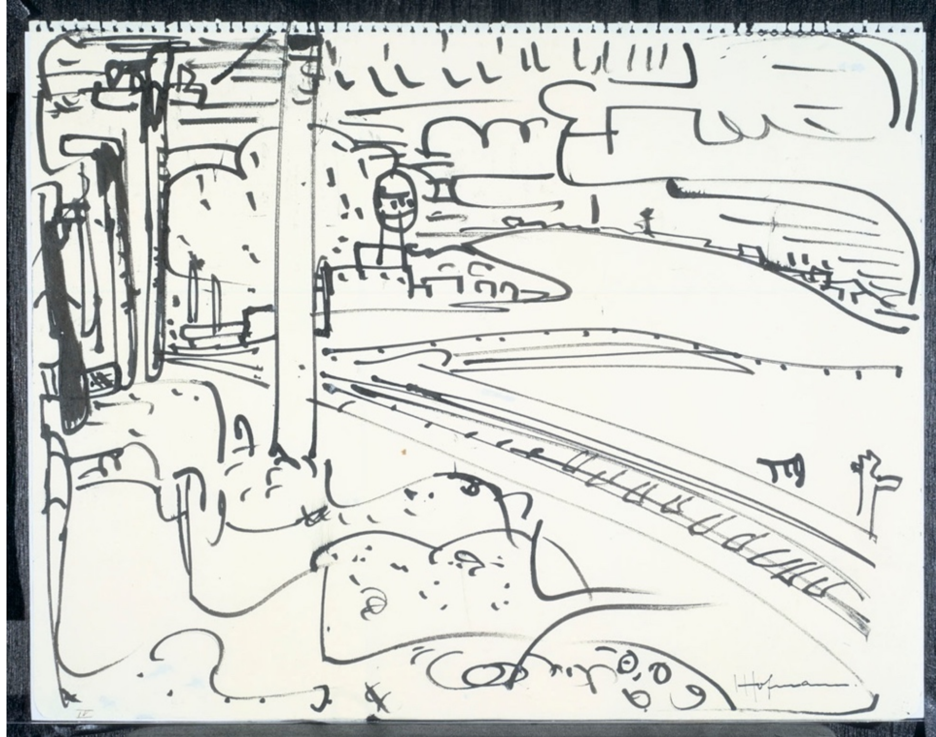

Figure 37. *San Francisco Bay [IV],* c. 1930-31, ink on paper. 10 ½ x 13 ½ inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

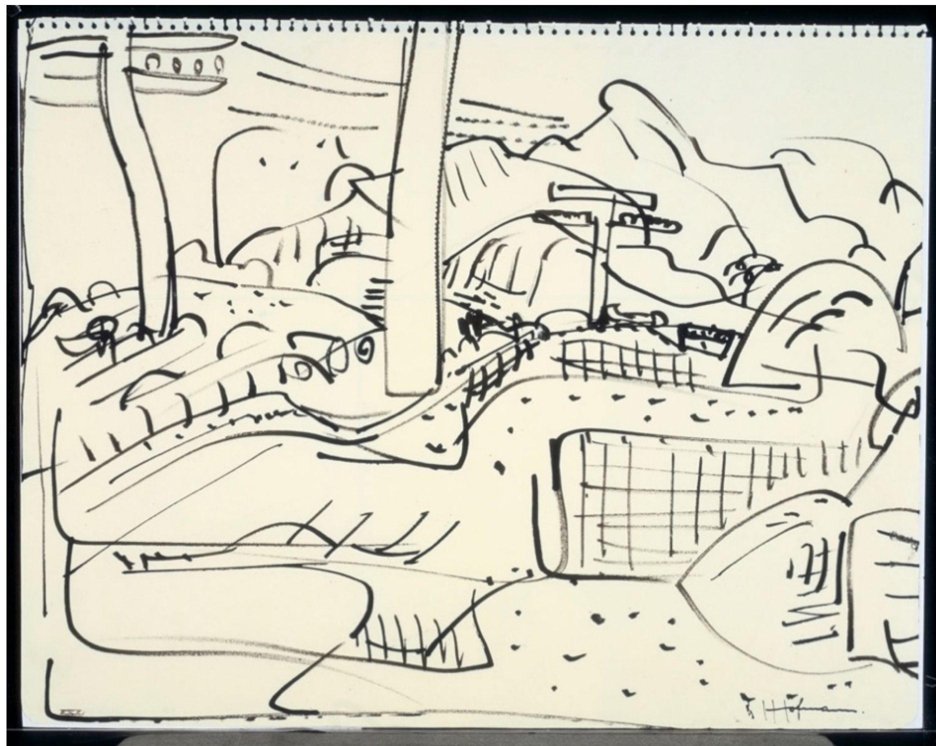

Figure 38. *Hills [XXXI]*, 1931, ink on paper, 10 ½ x 13 ½ inches. The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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Figure 39. *Untitled*, c. 1931, India ink on paper, 8.5 x 11 inches.
The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

Figure 40. *Untitled*, c. 1931, India ink on paper, 8.5 x 11 inches.
The Renate, Hans, and Maria Hofmann Trust.

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Figure 41. *Untitled* (Windshield), 1930-2, India ink on paper, 8.5 x 11 inches. Private Collection.

Figure 42. *Untitled*, c. 1935, India ink on paper, 8.5 x 11 inches. Private Collection.

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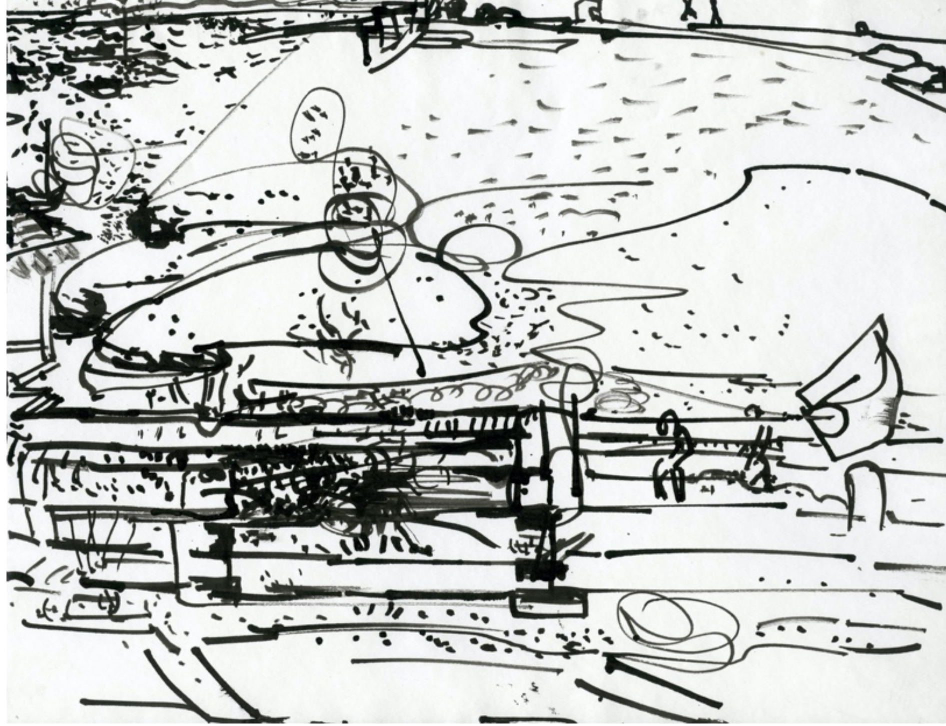

Figure 43. *Untitled*, c. 1935, India ink on paper. 8.5 x 11 inches.
Private Collection.

Figure 44. *Untitled* c. 1935, India ink on paper. 8.5 x 11 inches.
Private Collection.

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Figure 45. *Untitled* c. 1935, India ink on paper. 8.5 x 11 inches.
Private Collection.

Figure 46. *Reclining Nude,* 1935, ink on paper, 8 ½ x 11 inches.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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Figure 47. *Landscape No. 51,* oil on panel, 30 x 36 inches.
Collection Audrey and David Mirvish, Toronto, Canada.

Figure 48. *Landscape No. 14,* 1940, oil on panel. 30 x 36 inches.
Private Collection.

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Figure 49. *Red Landscape*, 1936, oil on panel, 20 x 28 inches.
Collection Elaine Sheft.

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