

a somewhat unsuccessful venture in the encoding process are compiled into the book of prints, *Common Marks* (discussed later). Moreover, an insight from the writer, Jeans (1998, p. 61), highlights this complexity of encoding energies: “. . . from the heart of the cosmos we receive strange, unreadable signals . . . still awaiting the creation of a cipher book that can decode them.”

## 4.5 PRACTICAL APPLICATION FOR COMBINING INTUITION WITH CALCULATION IN THE ENCODING PROCESS

### 4.5.1 INTRODUCTION

To add the dimension of analytical thinking to the intuitive responses captured in the prints, the paintings in this next stage are encoded using the traditional practice of Western Art: visual communication through the elements and principles of design. That such encoding could have universal application is revealed in Table 4.5.1.1 wherein a strong similarity between art theorists’ principles of design and, in part, Ramachandran’s (2003) universal laws of art (Section 2.5) is demonstrated.

**Table 4.5.1.1**

#### COMMONALITY WITHIN PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN AND UNIVERSAL LAWS OF ART

| <b>Principles of Design Hopwood (1967, p. 7)</b>  | <b>Principles of Design Ocvirk et al (1994, p.17)</b>  | <b>Universal Laws of Art Ramachandran (2003, p. 3)</b>  | <b>Common Denominators</b>  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ balance</li> <li>○ harmony</li> <li>○ contrast</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ emphasis</li> <li>○ rhythm</li> <li>○ unity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ balance</li> <li>○ harmony</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ dominance</li> <li>○ proportion [unity]</li> <li>○ economy [understatement]</li> <li>○ variety</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ balance</li> <li>○ symmetry</li> <li>○ contrast</li> <li>○ peak shift [emphasis]</li> <li>○ repetition, rhythm and orderliness</li> <li>○ grouping [unity]</li> <li>○ isolation (understatement)</li> <li>○ abhorrence of coincidence/generic viewpoint</li> <li>○ perception problem solving [elusion]</li> <li>○ metaphor</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ balance</li> <li>○ harmony /symmetry</li> <li>○ contrast</li> <li>○ emphasis</li> <li>○ rhythm</li> <li>○ unity</li> <li>○ understatement</li> </ul> |

Table 4.5.1.1 demonstrates that the use of traditional principles of design is appropriate. The character and arrangement of each element using such practice become the visual devices calculated to encode the artist's perception of natural energies into paintings.

As there is an overlapping by art theorists as to what constitutes a visual element and what constitutes a design element (Hogbin 2002, Ocivirk et al. 1994, Hopwood 1967), the focus in the following stage is on four key visual elements—line, shape, tone and texture—typifying the works of other artists who featured The Common as a subject: Olsen, Brown, Mangan and Cox (Section 2.4). Line as an element is selected on its effectiveness in creating the rhythm and tension that is critical to the expression of energy, as shown by Olsen who takes a line “for a walk around the canvas” (Hawley 1993, p.128). Shape addresses mass as well as how space is defined. Its latter use is evident in Mangan's work and is reflected in her belief in “starkness and structure and how nature interrupts” (pers. com. 2002). Tone helps express changing qualities of light, which Brown employs when showing his interest in “distinctive shadow patterns” (pers. com. 2002). Texture helps to characterise differences brought by change as seen in the different surface qualities rendered in Cox's detailed illustrations. By intention, the focus on four visual elements gives a frame of reference for comparison between the five energy cycles even though the way each element is employed varies considerably.

In the following discussion, analysis of the practical application for combining intuition with calculation in the encoding process focuses on three factors perceived by the artist as being appropriate for this stage of the encoding process:

- transposition of sections extracted from the intuitively drawn prints [Plates 4.4.2-4.4.6] into painting studies;

- use of either line, shape, tone, or texture in a single study to portray the feeling the artist experienced when executing each print;
- arrangement of these elements as a visual device designed to convey the notion of energy.

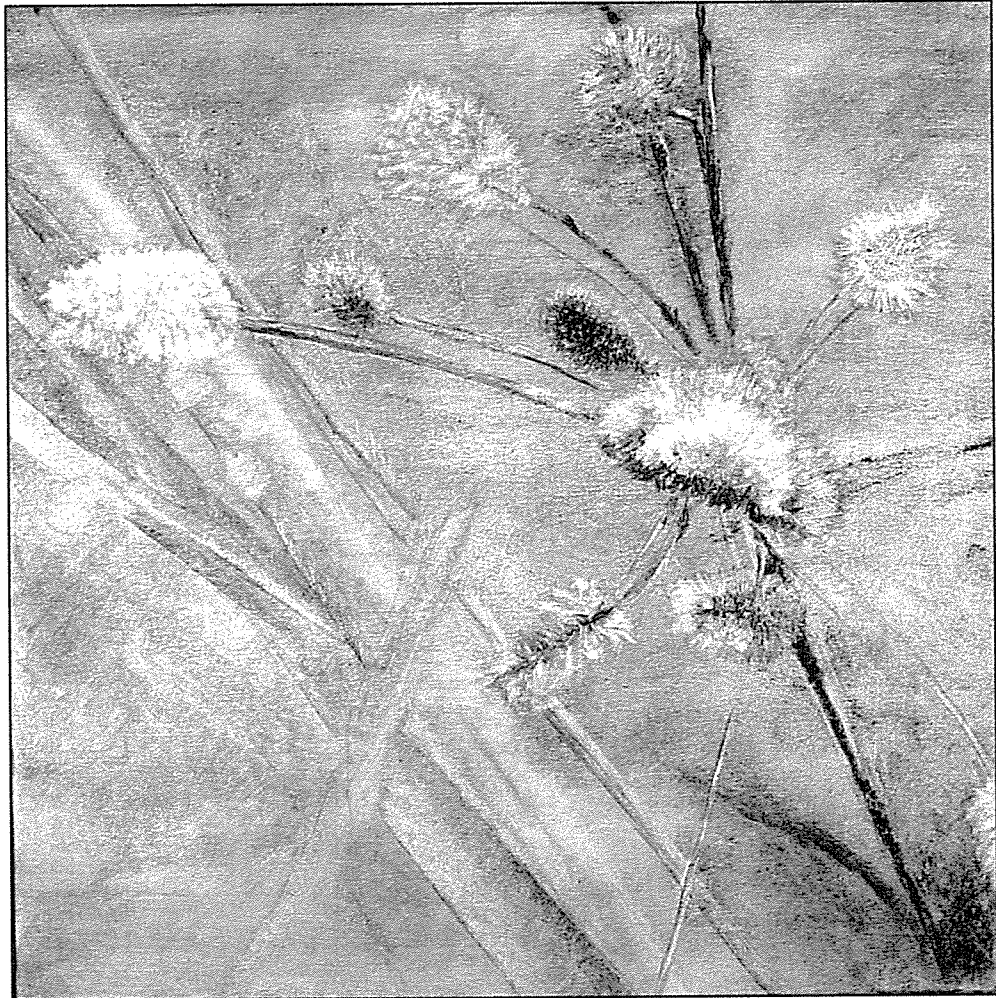
Rather than follow the traditional order that is, in which the elements are listed above, discussion within the studies follows the sequence in which the energies were experienced by the artist, as revealed in the examination of the prints.

#### **4.5.2 Growth Cycle Study Paintings**

The four paintings grouped under the title, *Growth Cycle Suite (Townsville Common Growth I, Townsville Common II, Townsville Common III and Townsville Common IV)*, are studies for the final stage of the process painting (i.e. one in which an idiosyncratic visual code portraying the energies of growth is applied). In visual terms, these studies explore and reveal the artist's interrogation of extracted sections from the prints of the *Growth Cycle Suite* (Section 4.3.2). By intention, this exploration will point the way to formulating a code of visual devices for conveying the notion of energy experienced in The Common.

In *Townsville Common Growth I* [Plate 4.5.2.1], the interrogated section of the print, *Townsville Common 5* [Plate 4.4.2], features a dancing grass-seed head. To the artist, this section epitomises exuberance by the sense of aerial explosion and lively movement shown in grass-seed heads as breezes buffet them: radiating energy dissipating from an unseen central point.

To portray this notion in the study, shape, as a design element, is used to allude to energy radiating from a central point. Instead of focussing on the grass-head itself,



*Townsville Common Growth I, 2003*  
charcoal and wax on canvas, 62 x 61 cm

## **GROWTH: EXUBERANCE**

### **Plate 4.5.2.1**

the study draws attention to negative shapes, portrayed as spaces, surrounding the form. This focus is brought about by the lack of detail within the negative areas. The pictorial simplicity of these voids lends the suggestion of airy openness; an openness further defined by the radiating arrangement of the grass-head as an explosive positive shape. Arrangement of positive shapes in the grass-head is pivotal to the expression of exuberance. Narrow shapes of stalks within the head articulate radiating movement.

Moreover, to express the notion of “energy dissipating from an unseen central point” (Section 4.3.2), large, soft shapes of the seed-flowers obliterate the source of the stalks’ radiating arrangement. Placement of these soft shapes at the ends of the stalks (where they occur naturally) gives the suggestion of awkwardly delicate balance that adds the dimension of spontaneity inherent in the feeling of exuberance.

By contrast, in *Townsville Common Growth IV* [Plate 4.5.2.2], the interrogated section of the print, *Townsville Common 34* [Plate 4.4.2], features the pictorially ill-defined plant material scattered on the ground. To the artist, this section epitomises gently unfolding by a mindset in which the indefiniteness of the forms slowly metamorphose into fungi.

To convey the idea of gently unfolding in the study, tone, as a design element, is used to render the gentle curves of a maturing fungus. In portraying these curves, subtleties of tonal gradation, from the centre outwards, give the suggestion of a slowly unfurling motion. Arrangement of strong tonal contrast between the leaf-litter shown in the background (rendered in dark tones) and the fungus shown in the foreground (rendered in light tones) draws attention to the fungus by highlighting it. The darkness surrounding its form lends the notion of depth from which emerges the unfolding spongy mantle of the fungus. To help project the idea of gentleness to the portrayal of unfolding, silhouette edges of the fungus are softly blended into the background.



*Townsville Common IV*, 2003  
charcoal and wax on canvas, 62 x 61 cm

**GROWTH: GENTLY UNFOLDING**

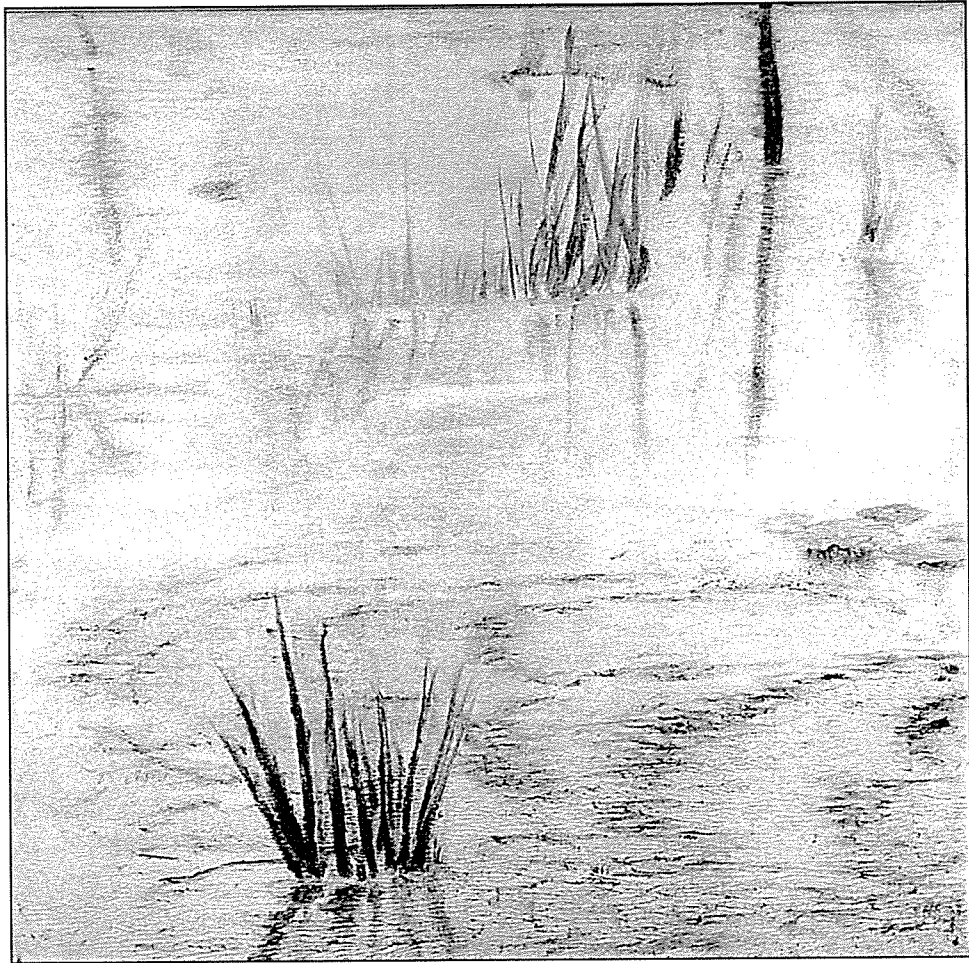
**Plate 4.5.2.2**

In *Townsville Common Growth II* [Plate 4.5.2.3], the interrogated section of the print, *Townsville Common 21* [Plate 4.4.2], features a clump of sedge protruding from glistening, rippling marsh water. To the artist, this section epitomises the energy of rejuvenation in the sense that the light and water driving the growth of plants fluctuates with the seasons. Moreover, also in the artist's mind, the featured vertical blades of the sedge seem to burst from the water suggesting the rejuvenation associated with new growth, while the ripples around them are like growth rings.

To portray this notion in the study, texture, as a design element, is used to emphasize water as a fluid nutrient. A mimetic rendering style, employing textural variations, lends the idea of inconstancies in the surface of the water from ripples to broad reflections. The textural variations also mark differences between the fluidity of water and the firmness of sedge.

Arrangement within the study of protruding sedge blades is pivotal to the expression of rejuvenation. To capture the spirit of rejuvenation (that is, strong upward movement) smooth vertical blades of sedge are juxtaposed against the horizontal textural complexity of light on spreading water ripples. Placement of a clump of sedge in the foreground also helps connote rejuvenation by a transition from one reality to another: the temporal reality of the sedge in rippled water expressed by strong textures and the spiritual realm of reflections in the distance expressed by faint textures.

In *Townsville Common Growth III* [Plate 4.5.2.4], the interrogated section of the print, *Townsville Common 6* [Plate 4.4.2] features a section of energetic screw-like lines within the context of pandanus foliage. To the artist, this formation epitomises the energy of fecundity: helical movement emanating, like the cornucopia, from a central core.

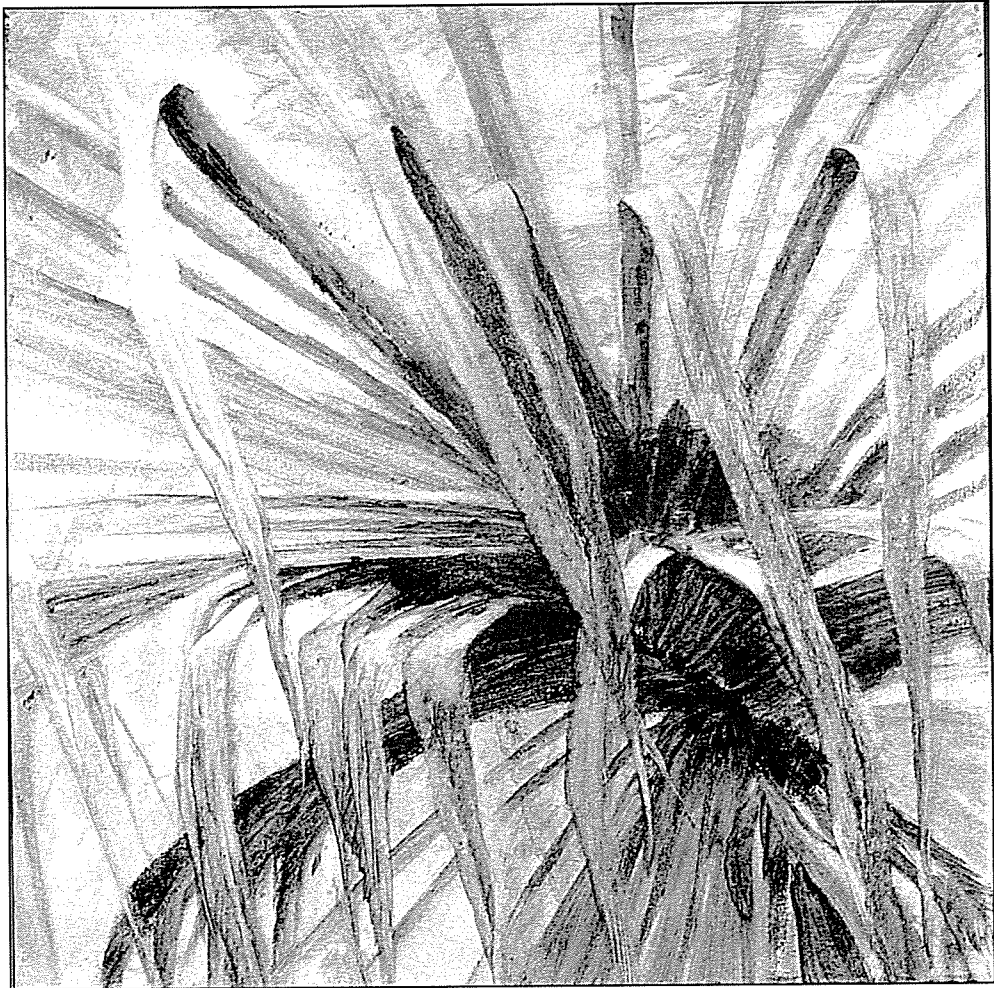


*Townsville Common Growth II*, 2003  
charcoal and wax on canvas, 62 x 61 cm

## **GROWTH: REJUVENATION**

### **Plate 4.5.2.3**





*Townsville Common Growth III, 2003*  
charcoal and wax on canvas, 62 x 61 cm

## **GROWTH: FECUNDITY**

**Plate 4.5.2.4**

To convey the idea of fecundity in the study, line is employed as a design element. It expresses the energy of fecundity by contrasts of rhythm and focal resolution. Here, upward spiralling marks connoting the fecundity of youthful energy contrast with cascading marks connoting the dissipation of this energy. In keeping with the state of fecundity, the upward rhythm is spelt out in three-dimensions: the foreground shows the rhythm in crisp emphatic lines designed to express dynamic thrust, while the farther region shows the rhythm in soft scumbled lines enhancing the dynamic power by complementary comparison.

The explication of fecundity depends on line arrangement. Disposed from the lower-right to the upper-left of the study, there is a transition from densely hatched small marks to lines loosely laid. This transition lays out in a graphic sense the notion of fecundity by the helical growth pattern that is inherent to the pandanus.<sup>11</sup> And, going further, the horn-like spiralling rhythm, moving from small to large, may be construed as a schematic representation of the cornucopia. In short, arrangement of line in the study, takes on a symbolic role in expressing fecundity.

By intention, each of the above studies integrates intuition and analysis by focusing on one of four elements (line, shape, tone and texture) in relation to pivotal sections extracted from prints of the *Growth Cycle Suite*. Use of complementary attributes of the chosen element and disposition of these attributes transpose the artist's experiences of growth—joyousness in continuity and life regenerating—from the prints to the studies.

The essence of using each element in the relevant study is shown in template form in Table 4.5.2.1.

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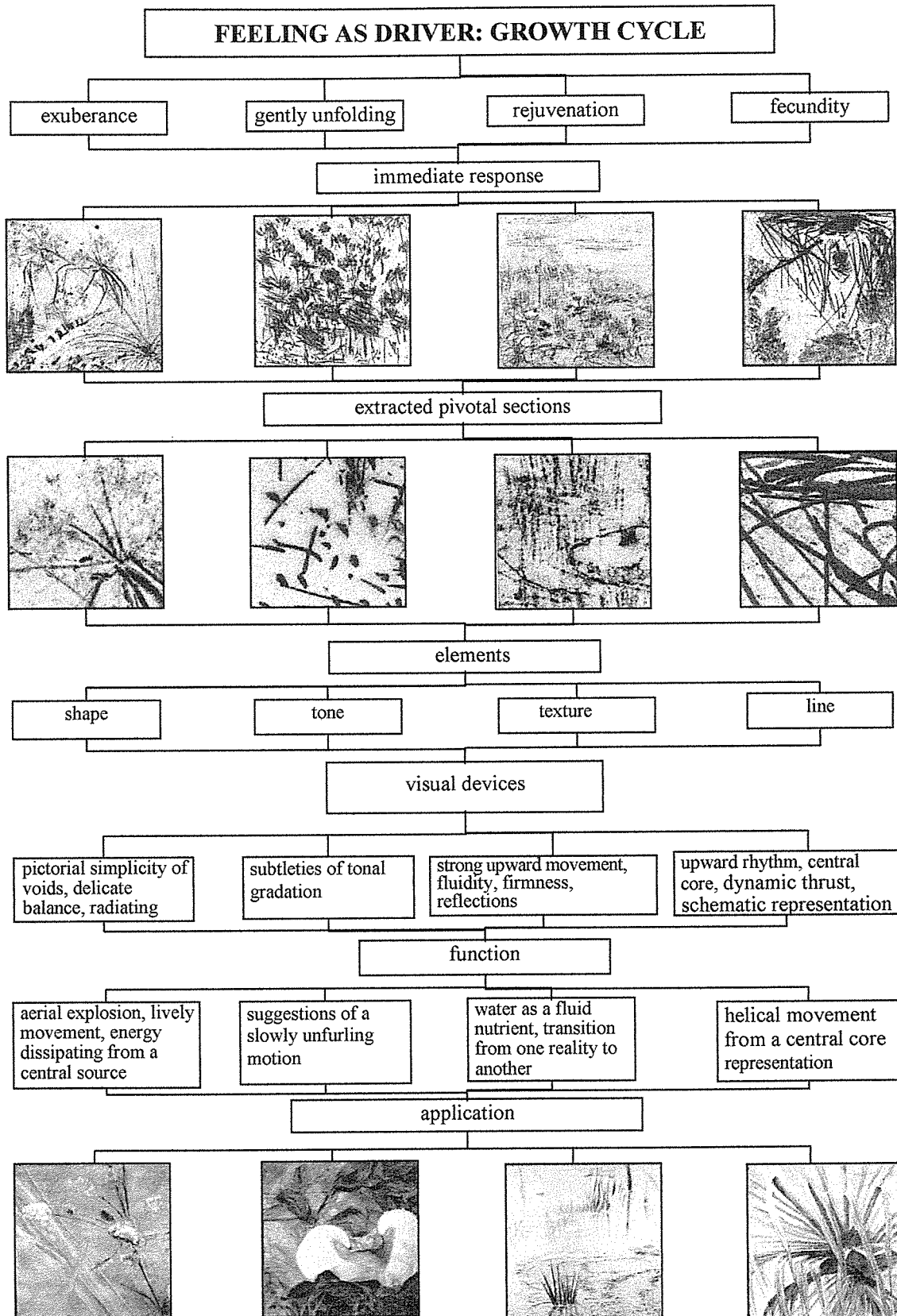
<sup>11</sup>

The common name for the genus pandanus is "Screw Pine" (Watson 2002).

**Table 4.5.2.1****TEMPLATE OF VISUAL DEVICES TO PORTRAY GROWTH**

| <b>Element</b> | <b>Visual Devices (attributes of elements)</b>  | <b>Function</b>  |
|----------------|---|--|
| Shape          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “pictorial simplicity” of voids (p. 94)</li> <li>○ “delicate balance” (p. 94)</li> <li>○ “radiating arrangement” (p. 94)</li> </ul>                        | “Exuberance” exemplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “aerial explosion” (p. 92)</li> <li>○ “lively movement” (p. 92)</li> <li>○ “energy dissipating from a central source” (p. 94)</li> </ul> |
| Tone           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “subtleties of tonal gradation” (p. 94)</li> </ul>   | “Gently unfolding” exemplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “suggestion of a slowly unfurling motion” (p. 94)</li> </ul>   |
| Texture        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “strong upward movement” (p. 96)</li> <li>○ “fluidity” (p. 96)</li> <li>○ “firmness” (p. 96)</li> <li>○ “reflections” (p. 96)</li> </ul>                   | “Rejuvenation” exemplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “water as a fluid nutrient” (p. 96)</li> <li>○ “transition from one reality to another” (p. 96)</li> </ul>                             |
| Line           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “central core” (p. 100)</li> <li>○ “upward rhythm” (p. 100)</li> <li>○ “dynamic thrust” (p. 100)</li> <li>○ “schematic representation” (p. 100)</li> </ul> | “Fecundity” exemplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “helical movement from a central core” (p. 100)</li> </ul>  |

Table 4.5.2.1 demonstrates the connection between the elements, their attributes as visual devices and their function applied in the study paintings to generate the notion of the energies experienced throughout the growth change cycle. Complementing Table 4.5.2.1 is Figure 4.5.2.1 which presents, as a flow chart, the progression from the feeling as driver for the study to pictorial representation.



**PROGRESSION FROM FEELING AS DRIVER TO REPRESENTATION**

**Figure 4.5.2.1**

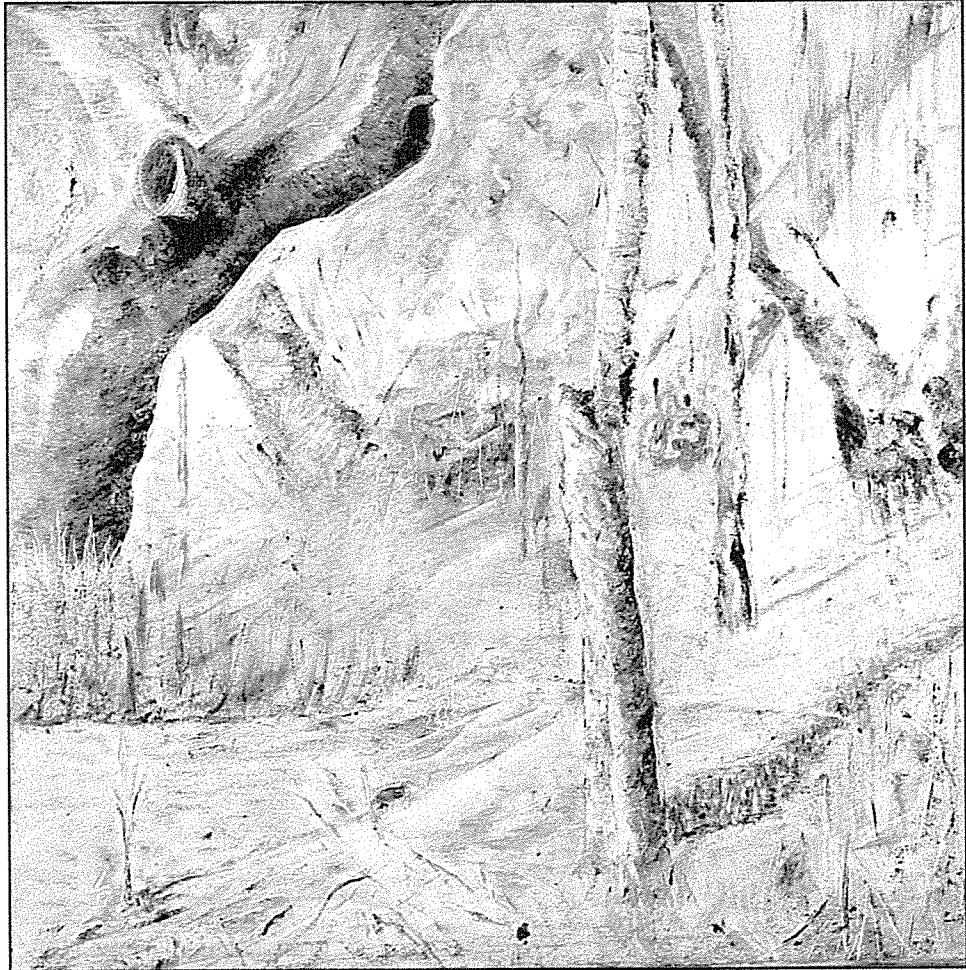
### 4.5.3 Diurnal Change Study Paintings

The four paintings grouped under the title, *Diurnal Change Suite* (*Townsville Common: Early Morning, Townsville Common: Late Morning, Townsville Common: Late Afternoon* and *Townsville Common: Evening*), are studies for the final stage of the process painting (i.e. one in which an idiosyncratic visual code portraying the energies of diurnal change is applied).

In visual terms, these studies explore and reveal the artist's interrogation of extracted sections from the prints of the *Diurnal Change Suite* (Section 4.3.3). Following the same intention as in the *Growth Cycle Suite* (a commonality throughout the studies), this exploration will point the way to formulating a code of visual devices for conveying the notion of energy regarding diurnal change experienced in The Common.

In *Townsville Common: Early Morning* [Plate 4.5.3.1], the interrogated section of the print, *Townsville Common 13* [Plate 4.4.3], features early morning light as it plays on the trunks of woody scrub. To the artist, this section epitomises anticipation through the sense of substantial forms emerging from tenuity: transience, personally viewed as being inherent to the feeling of anticipation.

To portray this sentiment, the design element of texture is used to accentuate the ethereality of the landscape and energy experienced during early morning. By employing textural variations, the solid earth appears insubstantial as if suffused in soft light, illusorily textured by the surface character of the ground. Further, rendering textural variations lends the idea of spatial conundrums, a cornerstone for portraying anticipation, fashioned by seemingly transient forms within this light. Arguably, use of this element also awakens the mind to expectancy, that is, the possibility of adding tactile sensory experience to an existing visual one.



*Townsville Common: Early Morning, 2003*  
charcoal and wax on canvas, 62 x 61 cm

## DIURNAL CHANGE: ANTICIPATION

### Plate 4.5.3.1

Arrangement within the study of textures is pivotal to pictorially materialising the invisible energy of anticipation. To capture the spirit of anticipation (that is, spatial conundrums) the predominant tree trunk in the upper-left of the study is fundamental. Here, the employment of a wide, silky band of noetic space (Section 4.1) abutting the form-following textures of the tree introduces the idea of positional uncertainty. In contrast to remainder of the study, this featured tree intentionally casts no shadow, thus adding to the puzzle of placement. The texture enhancing the rounded form of this tree is disparate to the vertical textures of the other trees in the study thus focussing visual attention.

In *Townsville Common: Late Morning* [Plate 4.5.3.2], the interrogated section of the print, *Townsville Common 18* [Plate 4.4.3], embraces a section of bush featuring shapes at awkward angles. To the artist, this section epitomises struggling to survive in the sense that the shapes and angles, appearing at every turn, are barriers to be overcome.

To convey the notion that survival is fraught with difficulties, shape, as a design element, is used to portray obstacles, such as the severe heat of late-morning. Contrasting shapes and tones of shapes draw attention to the effect of intense sunlight: a landscape bleached of visual features by concentration of heat and light.

The key to expressing the energy of struggling to survive is the arrangement of shapes. Juxtaposing two rectangular shapes (the under-canopy of a tree and the background void) of diametrically opposed tones in the upper area of the study, suggests both an impenetrable overhead barrier and a background barrier of searing heat. By transecting this structure with the dynamics of a third rectangle (a trunk placed on the oblique) attention is focussed on the glaring void of light. That survival nevertheless is possible is indicated by the contrast between rounded leaf shapes on an angular twig prominently placed in the foreground.



*Townsville Common: Late Morning, 2003*  
charcoal and wax on canvas, 62 x 61 cm

**DIURNAL CHANGE: STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE**

**Plate 4.5.3.2**



In *Townsville Common: Late Afternoon* [Plate 4.5.3.3], the interrogated section of the print, *Townsville Common 14* [Plate 4.4.3], features a shaded area of reeds in marshlands. To the artist, this section epitomised tranquillity by the sense of stillness and protection emanating from the dell-like formation of reeds: a resting place.

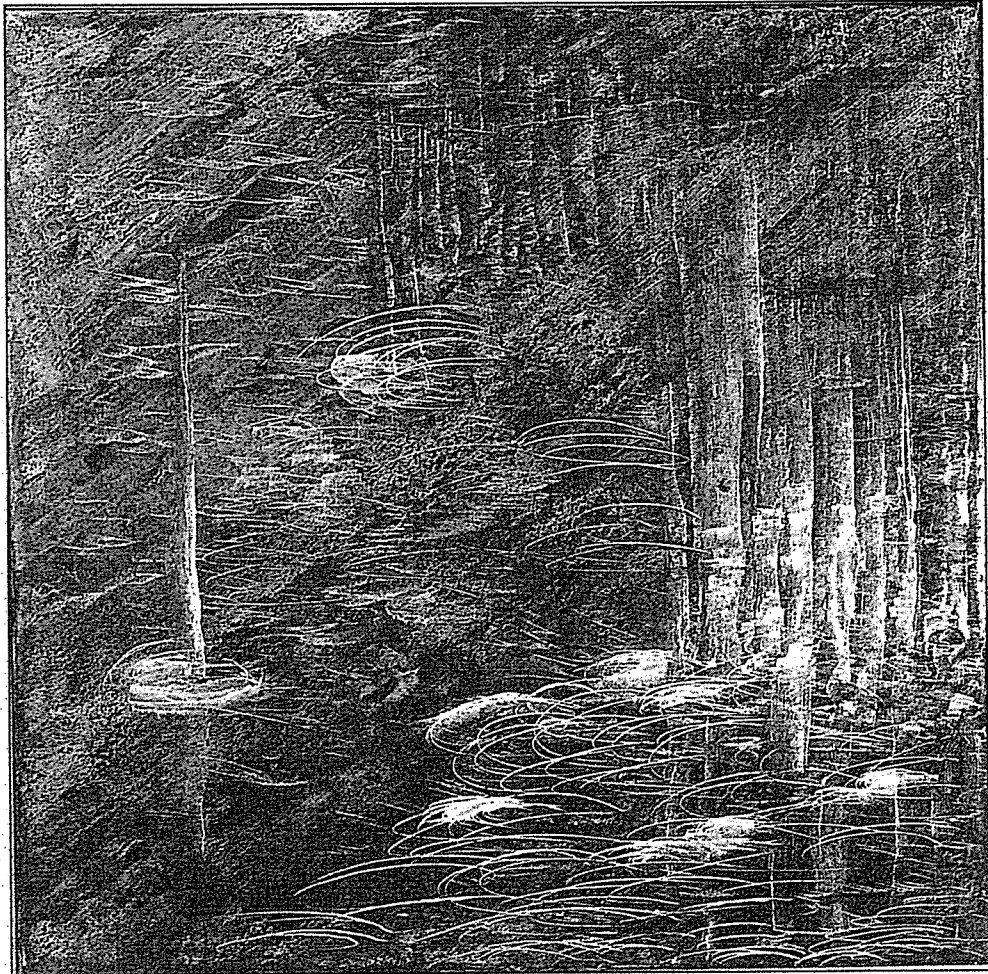
The design element of line is employed to convey the notion of tranquillity in the study by the character of the line used in rendering different rhythms. Here, the use of vigorous lines to portray the idea of lively energy determined by concentric ripples (results of the activities of water insects) suggests the existence of a concentrated core of calm energy awaiting conversion. In contrast is the languid circular rhythm defined in clumps of reeds within the marshlands drawing attention to the spaces: areas of stillness and protection. That the artist also perceives sound as being an element in the energy of tranquillity, is portrayed in rhythmic, jagged, horizontal ‘v’ shape, lines lightly laid, suggesting the mesmerising hum of insects inhabiting the marshlands.

The arrangement of lines as rhythms is central to portraying the energy of tranquillity. Lines, expressing rhythms of the mesmerising humming sound of insects, are portrayed in the upper-left corner, horizontally laid as entering the central dell-like configuration of three groups of reeds. Vertical reeds halt the progression of these sounds, signifying the humming is influential in tranquillity by being contained within the pivotal reed formation. Visual attention, in the bottom-right corner of the study, focuses on rhythms of water surface activity redirecting this attention, via a clump of reeds highlighted by horizontal bands of light, back to the dell. The use of vertical lines for reeds is more than mere representation—the connotation is that the energy of tranquillity is subject to influences from both below and above the earth.<sup>11</sup>

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11

Regarding the effect of orientation of lines, Frutiger (1998) is of the opinion that humans perceive the horizontal as being something that “*is*” and the vertical as something that “*happens* without human participation” (Frutiger 1998, p. 25).



*Townsville Common: Late Afternoon, 2003*  
charcoal and wax on canvas, 62 x 61 cm

## DIURNAL CHANGE: TRANQUILLITY

Plate 4.5.3.3

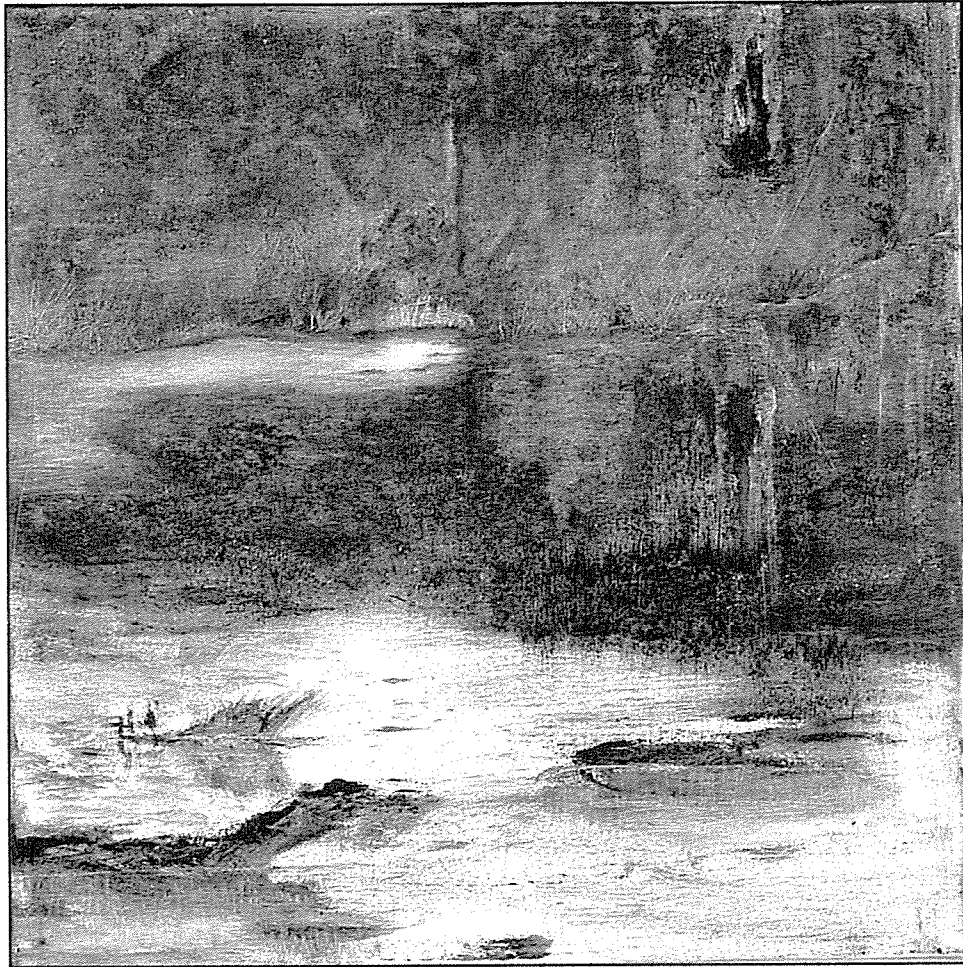
In the study, *Townsville Common: Evening* [Plate 4.5.3.4], the interrogated section of the print, *Townsville Common* 26 [Plate 4.4.3], features a section of scrub on a creek-bank in waning light. To the artist, this section epitomises mysteriousness by the sense of landscape forms abstracted by the crepuscular gloom.

Tone as a design element is used in the study to convey the idea of mysteriousness by rendering a creek-pocket full of somewhat disquietingly vague forms. In portraying this pocket of forms, tone similarity bleeds edges of definition suggesting the secretive aspect of mysteriousness.

Fundamental to the expression of mysteriousness in the study, is the placement of tones within the rendering. Expressing optical weirdness in the rapidly fading light is a broad expanse of tone, as shadows, ostensibly creeping across the water from the left-hand side of the study. This expanse of tone enhances the notion of mysteriousness in the sense of clouding definition of the borderline between creek and bank by the juxtaposition of similar tones. Adding to the notion is the tonal contrast between this shadow and lightly illuminated water, suggesting the light meanders through the darkness.

By intention, each of the above studies integrates intuition and analysis by focusing on one of four elements (line, shape, tone and texture) in relation to pivotal sections extracted from prints of the *Diurnal Change Suite*. Use of complementary attributes of the chosen element and disposition of these attributes transpose the artist's experiences of diurnal change from the print to the studies.

The essence of using each element in the relevant study is shown in template form in Table 4.5.3.1.



*Townsville Common: Evening, 2003*  
charcoal and wax on canvas, 62 x 61 cm

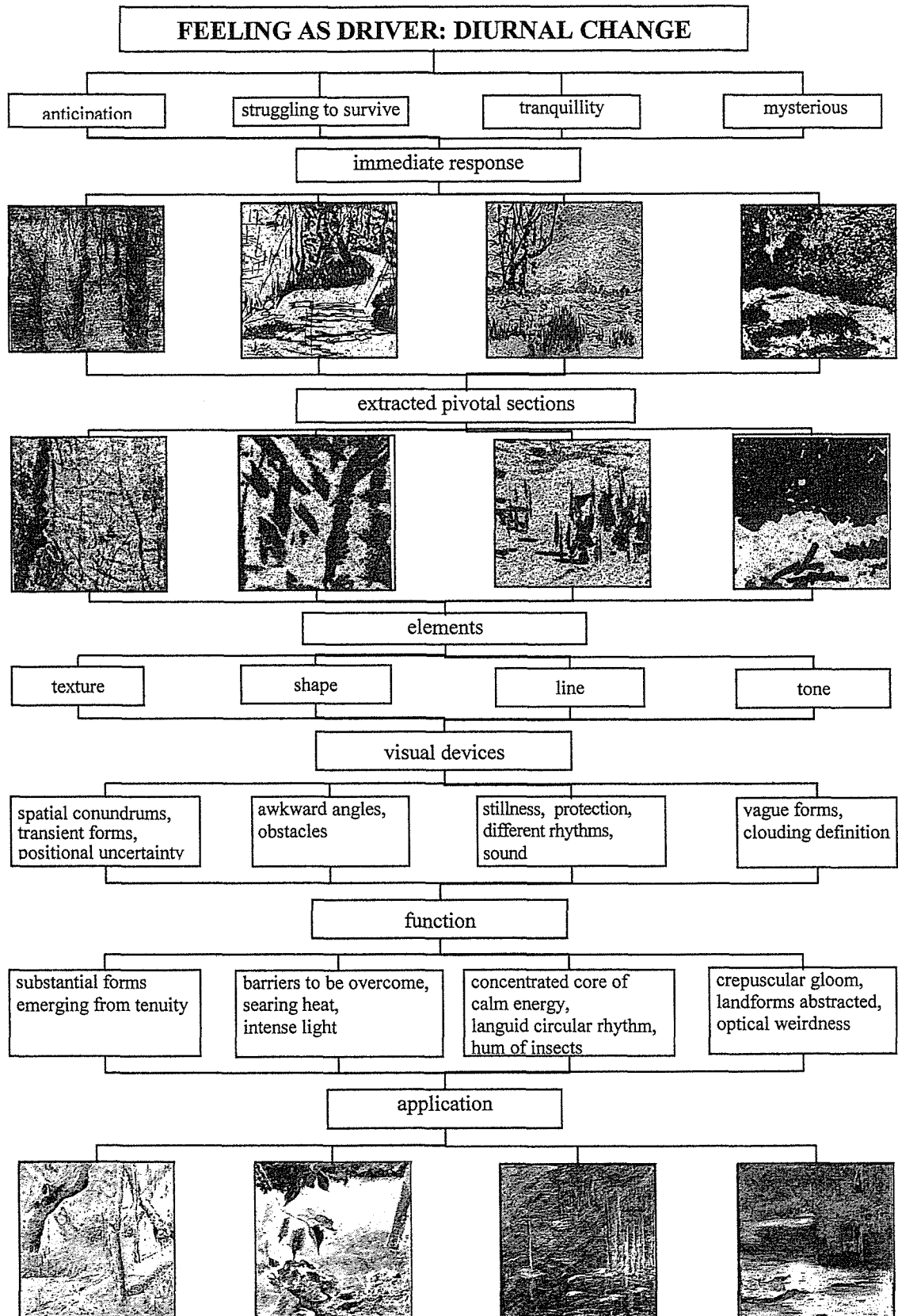
**DIURNAL CHANGE: MYSTERIOUSNESS**

**Plate 4.5.3.4**

**Table 4.5.3.1****TEMPLATE OF VISUAL DEVICES TO PORTRAY DIURNAL CHANGE**

| <b>Element</b> | <b>Visual Devices<br/>(attributes of elements)</b>  | <b>Function</b>  |
|----------------|---|--|
| Texture        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “spatial conundrums” (p. 102)</li> <li>○ “transient forms” (p. 102)</li> <li>○ “positional uncertainty” (p. 104)</li> </ul>          | “Anticipation” exemplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “substantial forms emerging from tenuity” (p. 102)</li> </ul>  |
| Shape          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “awkward angles” (p. 104)</li> <li>○ “obstacles” (p. 104)</li> </ul>   | “Struggling to survive” exemplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “barriers to be overcome” (p. 104)</li> <li>○ “searing heat” (p. 104)</li> <li>○ “intense light” (p. 104)</li> </ul>            |
| Line           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “stillness” (p. 106)</li> <li>○ “protection” (p. 106)</li> <li>○ “different rhythms” (p. 106)</li> <li>○ “sound” (p. 106)</li> </ul> | “Tranquillity” exemplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “concentrated core of calm energy”(p. 106)</li> <li>○ “languid circular rhythm” (p. 106)</li> <li>○ “hum of insects” (p. 106)</li> </ul> |
| Tone           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “vague forms”(p. 108)</li> <li>○ “clouding definition” (p. 108)</li> </ul>   | “Mysteriousness” exemplified by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “crepuscular gloom” (p. 108)</li> <li>○ “landforms abstracted” (p. 108)</li> <li>○ “optical weirdness” (p. 108)</li> </ul>             |

Table 4.5.3.1 demonstrates the connection between the elements, their attributes as visual devices and their function as applied in the study paintings to generate the notion of the energies experienced throughout the diurnal change cycle. Complementing Table 4.5.3.1 is Figure 4.5.3.1 which, as a flow chart, presents the progression from the feeling as driver for the study to pictorial representation.



**PROGRESSION FROM FEELING AS DRIVER TO REPRESENTATION**

**Figure 4.5.3.1**