

bushes themselves — is rather homogeneous in the large, and thus leaves the wholeness of the hill intact.

Later we get a glimpse of the whole as needing a focus ... so we look for the natural focus — in this case, it happens to be the “head” of the valley, forming a natural center — and

then intensify this center by first imagining (and ultimately building) a building there which forms a natural center to the canyon, in the right place, and which, with the canyon as a whole, forms a new more powerful center, consistent with the previous structure but enhancing it.



## 9 / MICROCOSM OF A PROCESS WHICH IS GUIDED BY THE WHOLE

To leave the reader with a clear, and intuitive small image of what it really means to make each step of a process enhance the whole, I shall close this chapter with an example of a painting. The example is intended to show, for painting, what a living process is like in its wholeness-enhancing nature.

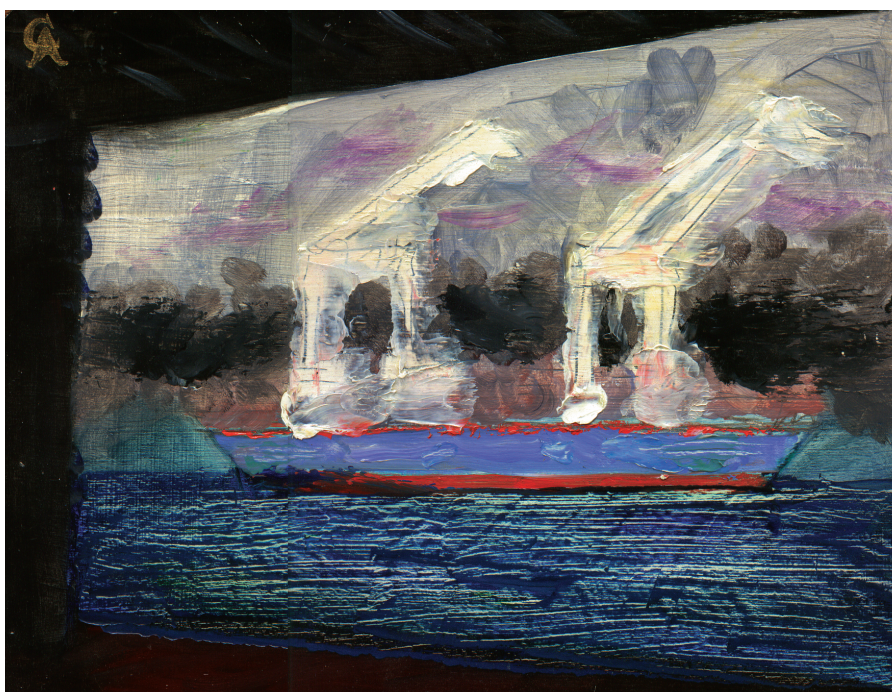
This process started with a ship in the Port of Oakland. I caught a glimpse of a cargo ship for a few seconds as I was driving home on the Bay Bridge one day. What stayed in my mind was the wholeness of the scene; by this I mean the wholeness of the ship, water, bridge, port. This wholeness is visible to some extent in the painting illustrated. It does consist, of course, of the turquoise hull, the red waterline; the two cranes against the sky. But there is a *large* aspect to the wholeness, not so easily described. This is the blackness of the bridge around me, and from which I saw the scene; the light around the white cranes; the distant darkness of the Port of Oakland, rhythmically visible through the cranes and the ship; the overall color sense, the black, the white, the turquoise and flashes of red; the shimmer on the water.

All this was the wholeness of that place, visible for an instant. Concretely, the wholeness was experienced, and remembered, as a kind of light. I remembered the quality of this wholeness, its structure, not by remembering a pattern of centers as described in Book 1, but by remembering the melody of this wholeness as a single struc-

ture. I experienced this melody as a feeling, or as a kind of light. Then, when I went back to my studio, and started the painting, I tried to create an object which re-established this wholeness, which shone with that light, that melody. So, I was trying to copy, not the details of the scene but the *wholeness*, the *life*. Then, in trying to capture this life as a whole, I constructed a variety of details, until these details made *that* feeling and *that* wholeness and *that* life shine out.

In general, the important thing is that the process was not based on details, but on the whole. At the moment I saw the ship, I concentrated on the particular feeling of light which existed at that moment. I tried to retain this structure in my mind. I made a quick mental note of the main colors: dark blue-green water; the ship pale turquoise, red stripe above, red below; cargo containers red and white; the two white cranes, silhouetted against the dark gray billowing fog. That was as much as I had time for. What I felt at that moment and remember even now, was the particular kind of light, the wholeness of the scene — *not its details, but a particular colored light, which occurred as a whole.*

Later, in my studio, I began trying to re-create this wholeness. In doing this, I was not trying to make the scene realistic in the ordinary sense. I was not trying to paint the ship in detail, or the water in detail, or the bridge in detail. If I had been doing this, I would have been trying to build the wholeness from the details. But that



*Cargo ship in the Port of Oakland, 9 x 12 inches, oil on wood panel*

would not have worked, and that is not what I did. I simply began placing colors on the paper, in the hope that the vivid life-filled light which I had seen would somehow begin to shine forth from the painting. That is what I cared about. So, I was not drawing *from* life, but trying to create a drawing which would *give off* life, making an autonomous construction (at first, in colored pencil on a piece of card, later in oils on a board).

When I began, the picture didn't have the real light of the actual scene at all, nor did it shine with the actual feeling I felt when I saw the scene. I tried a pinkish red, the stripes were too equal. I made the top one thinner. I made the red more red. I put deep ultramarine in the water. It became too sweet. I realized at a certain point that the blackness of the bridge members played a role, and I put them in — not because of realism, but because the black changed the light. I made layers of gray behind the ship — one of them almost black in order to make the others more brilliant. Much later, I decided to put violet streaks in the upper layers of fog. I have no idea if there was anything like that in the actual

situation. But when I put in those flashes of violet, the boat began to shine in the way it really was shining when I saw the scene the day before. I had already tried pink, violeted gray, more white . . . each time I noticed a change of some kind, but not the creation of the light.

It wasn't until I put the flashes of violet in the sky that the boat began to shine. The same with the small touches of light green near the cranes. Again, I don't know if there was anything like that in the actual situation. The green doesn't represent trees, or grass, or green containers, or anything that I actually saw. What I know is that when I put in these touches of green, the cranes began to have a life, the wholeness began to shine with light, in a fashion something like the actual scene.

In the same way I made the cranes more white, less white, I made the light turquoise more blue, more green, more gray, kept on changing it, until it began to give out light. In the case of the water I remember what it actually was like, a very dark green turquoise. But I didn't try to capture the color I remembered. What I

did was to work at the blue, the green, working over layers of green, layers of a grayish blue, touches of ultramarine — finally a coat of thin gray over the whole, until it made the boat shine and made the bridge shine. In the final version, I scratched the dark blue of the water to make whitish lines in it. Objectively, the actual water on that day was not like this. It was dark, and didn't have many highlights. But when I scratched the dark blue of the water, the overall light in the painting became more like the real light. The *whole* was more accurate. The detail was in some mechanical sense *less* accurate — but that had little practical meaning. It was the *wholeness* which mattered.

In this process, the wholeness generates the details. This is what I mean by a new kind of process. The living wholeness guides every step. The details are born, created, brought into existence, only to create that wholeness and its feeling as accurately as possible. It is the life of the whole which matters.

Oddly, though, as a result of this process, the painting seems very realistic. It creates the same feeling as the scene itself created in me at the moment when I saw it. But it became realistic because it was generated from the real life of the *wholeness*, not because of slavish mechanical copying of details.

And, as I did earlier, I will say a word or two about the way the fifteen transformations entered into the process by which the whole emerged. Once again, the focus on wholeness, and the attempt to enhance the whole (this time through color) brings with it, naturally, some of the fifteen properties in the geometric structure which creates the color. The Bay Bridge from which the scene is drawn, is a big BOUNDARY, solid black, intensifying the color of the ship. The scratches forming the sparkle of the waves provide ALTERNATING REPETITION and ROUGHNESS, and intensify the wholeness of the water. The stripe along the ship, is sized and placed to form a hull and a boundary and LEVELS OF SCALE. The cranes and white flecks of paint form ECHOES in the sky.

In each case the appearance of the property in question is present in the wholeness observed originally (the bridge itself) and plays a key role in forming the wholeness in the painting because that, too, is made of structures of centers which enliven one another through the fifteen properties. This structure of the picture may then be intensified and used, in the process of unfolding, to accentuate the wholeness, and to create a vivid version of that whole, *exactly by underlining and increasing the action of the emergent fifteen properties, one at a time.*



## 10 / IN SUMMARY

In a living process, what is always happening is that every step (large or small, whether it comes late or early) is done in such a way as to increase the beauty — the life — of *the whole*. The process starts with a vision of a possible whole that comes out of the circumstances, that is felt as

something which grows out of the form of the world. Every step is made with the idea that the feeling of this very large whole is being made deeper, more intense.

Even if it is only a tiny step, this is still the guiding rule.