

White, John, "Direct Experience into Art Experience," Number 8, L.A.I.C.A. Journal, (Nov-Dec, 1975), pp. 30-31, illus.

As I put my golf shirt over my head and shoulders and pulled it tightly down. I noticed several tiny holes were in it. Most likely they were made by moths, for I hadn't used the shirt for some time. At first I was inclined to remove it and put on my long sleeved white one, but it was a terribly hot day. This all took place in the parking lot on my way to the first tee. At the first tee I noticed that if I tucked in the shirt and raised my pants a bit most of the holes could be concealed, with only a few showing at belt level. Tucking it in provoked several mental images especially when the cold iron belt buckle touched my skin through the shirt holes. The shirt was white, with thin blue and red lines running across the front and back. Of the several images the most prominent was that of several eyes looking through a wire fence as if in a concentration camp or caged area. I stepped up to hit my shot and about halfway through my swing, I glanced at the protective wire openings, round in shape, that had been forced that way by errant tee shots. I continued through with my swing and hit a good shot. As I stepped aside for another player to hit my eyes fixed on his pants and on the detail of the complex pattern. It was checkered with some rips and loose threads, and had several tiny round paint splatters, hardly recognizable at first glance, near the cuffs. Then, by coincidence, after the game, I counted the number of pars on my scorecard and they matched the number of moth holes in my shirt. Later that day, I went to my studio and started some notations that incorporated the moth holes, wire fence, pant infirmities, belt buckle reactions and other mental images. Next I made several diagrams depicting the progression of thought from the golf course to my studio to be used for live performance situations and video.

Finally, I completed a series of large information drawings, showing golf shot trajectories and eye movement patterns. This studio activity brought me much closer to the initial impulses surrounding the entire event. The retracing of the steps also increased the number of new ideas to a point where I had to devise some method of sorting out data not usable at the time. The following day, I stopped by the same golf course for some early coffee and to read the morning paper. Stapled to the wall of the clubhouse was a tournament diagram that showed competition brackets between golfers. This diagram is used as a method to record eliminations. The two golfers who remain, then play for a championship. I then decided to make a bracket diagram with the same design, but using words in place of golfers names. In this way I was able to narrow down the multiple images to the two that I then used as a basis for a performance work. The following diagram illustrates the process.

Column 1 left and right side of diagram represent the initial word image clusters created by thinking about a direct experience on the golf course. Columns 2, 3, and 4, left and right are the results of playing words against each other to narrow down the image. For example, car and turn happened to bring to mind white (the color of golf balls and the color of my car). White and fast brought to mind the word short, which is what a golf ball (when hit properly) does to space, and so on ending up with back-up. Back-up is the word used for part of the final word play.

Note: Back-up control is a specialized golf shot that takes considerable skill to execute. It is used to control a golf ball on the green, guaranteeing the ball does not roll off into a hazard.