COPYRIGHT AND CITATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR THIS THESIS/ DISSERTATION

- Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

- NonCommercial — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

- ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

How to cite this thesis

LOGOS AS ARTEFACT
WORD BECOME FLESH
by
ELIZABETH VELS

PART I
LOGOS AS ARTEFACT
WORD BEccoliE FLESH
by
ELIZABETH VELS

DISsertATION / THESIS
Submitted in partial compliance with the requirements for the
MASTERS DIPLOMA IN TECHNOLOGY
in the Department of
FINE ART
at the
TECHNIKON WITWATERSRAND
SUPERVISOR: Dr G Kerr

November 1993
For Ernie
Acknowledgements

To The Name, The Word, The Breath for giving me utterance and reason to sing.

To Dr Gregory Kerr for the midwifery of this notation and for making learning lovely as flying the trapeze.

To Cathy, Kyle, Ella and Cheryl for rule and print.

To Linda Givon for support in better and in worse.

To my family, teachers and friends for their inestimable input into my life and work.
CONTENTS

Introduction

1 BOOKS

2 FATHER ABRAHAM

3 MOTHERS

4 DAUGHTERS AND SON

5 SISTERS
Introduction

"The Logos is more readily perceived by the eye than by the ear."  (Heraclitus.)
Mamre Cycle
The Mamre Cycle
110 x 117 cm
(Detail showing the medallion scroll)
Handmade paper, handspun inks, and paint.
This commentary aims to provide the receiver with some insight into the generation of image and symbol in a series of artefacts namely paintings, constructions and handmade books I produced between 1983 and 1993 with special emphasis on the 1992 Mamre Cycle exhibition. In order to do this, a wide range of concerns will be considered, including problems relating to Biblical text, the nature of symbology, autobiography, history and the technical manipulation of chosen media.

If one accepts that the ontology of the artefact is governed by the quality or effectiveness of the dialogue it generates, it is not unreasonable to assume that certain types of artefact, rich in symbol and allusive or referential iconography, would be ontologically enriched by the means which serve to clarify them. The contemplative receiver is invited to engage in dialogue with certain artefacts, be willing to identify textures and marks in a forensic manner and to read each single artefact within a particular sequential and Biblical context.
a. Jewish exhibition
  'Return'
  handmade paper
  tablet, etching,
  stitching and
  paint.

b. Passover project:
  'Letters to Timothy
  and Philemon',
  sand cast
  handmade paper
  thread, encaustic
  and grape leaf
  papers, for a
  scroll of Philemon
  (to indicate the
  Greek context).

c. Passover project:
  'By still waters'
  (23rd Psalm)
  sand cast paper,
  handmade paper,
  and gelatin.

d. He sprinkled
  my head with
  oil (media as in
  c. with oil stain).
Dialogue is fundamental to the Christo-Judaic experience, the nature of which is determined through the written and fleshed-out word of the Bible. This dialogue however, requires persistence, effort and commitment. To arbitrarily demystify the artefact and to demand no effort of the viewer would not reflect the I - Thou relationship that the arielact embodies nor the important reflexive element in interpretation. Therefore, the surviving vestiges of mark and symbol, like archaeological fragment or relic, offer a quest to the viewer interested in digging among the rubble of process and media.

Some buried or revealed content is autobiographical or personal metaphor. Only through access to diaries or notes can this information be partially revealed, although it appears that much of this material can be intuitively shared by certain viewers.
a. Passover Project,
"Looking back at Egypt through rose-coloured spectacles..."
Oil on stitched canvas with handmade paper, straw, palm,
and rag 'documents' and 'bricks',
creosote and burnt plastic.

b. Jeremiah Exhibition.
"Behold I will cause them..."
unspun wool, handmade paper,
carvers, paint, encaustic and
etching.
This was a transitional work,
utilising pieces of canvas 'carpet'
to illustrate the Passover Project.
The 'documents' also came from the
Passover Project. The script in a,
reminiscent of fly speck, sheep dung
and the 'blood' marks of the Passover
Project, become in b. 'at sheep or
flock' script.
I will cause them to walk by the rivers.

A heathen ground filled with memories of past redemption on which the repentant will tread on the way back - because it was a new generation founded.

mound assembly of heavy pieces:
1) book form + pages of writing i.e. the Word of God
2) rag paper heavily crumpled with frayed edges
3) undyed wool + paper. sized then later darkened with black enamel varnish
4) References to the Egyptian slavery (Moses) reads -[cut into paper] + shellacked binding
5) Pillars from Jebusite palaces for which he conscripted labour from his people - this was placed under the rack to punish it.
6) "sanitized" - the obliteration of graphic representations and sacrificial篮ete of 12-5-34

JEP 9.
"I will cause them to walk by the rivers".

Canvas 1.50 m x 2.50 m. (Jeremiah 31:8 Behold I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the furthest parts of the earth.)

Process:
1) Landscape pages, painted in the drakery.
2) Landscape pages, painted in the drakery.
3) Landscape pages, painted in the drakery.
4) Landscape pages, painted in the drakery.

And at times! City pond stuck over the entire surface! (Very little evidence left.)

I wanted to include some of my interest in land of voyaging: back and forth. Many of the sheets I worked while traveling in the ice.

2) The heavier pieces were worked and scattered.
Any apprehension of a visual artwork will reflect the preconceptions, understanding and tolerance of the receiver. These preconceptions are formed by the receiver's acquaintance with art in general, familiarity with the genre of the artefacts and finally by the content and imagery of the artefact itself. Uniting the artefacts selected is the co-ordinated vision of the eye of belief and the natural eye, the supernatural revealed within the natural, revelation in history, the eternal in the present, the ordinary and mundane elevated to sacrament.
CHAPTER ONE

BOOKS
Throughout the study reference is made to a wide range of Books and Notes collected by the writer over the years. To make this reference easier the books are coded.

**REFERENCE CODE FOR THE BOOKS**

The code is written on the left inside of the opening cover of each book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSEUM NOTES</td>
<td>MN I</td>
<td>(Originally the Book of Ruth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MN II</td>
<td>(British museum + Kiefer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MN III</td>
<td>(Papyrus paper dyed orange)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKBOOKS</td>
<td>WBI</td>
<td>(Passover project + travel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WBn</td>
<td>(The Flood + class projects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WB III</td>
<td>(Jeremiah exhibition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TD I</td>
<td>(Teaching Notes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLE STUDY</td>
<td>BS I</td>
<td>(Annunciation etching on the cover)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BS II</td>
<td>(Originally a Last Supper book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BS III</td>
<td>(Exposed cords)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAVEL JOURNALS</td>
<td>TJ I</td>
<td>(Stained pink canvas spine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS I</td>
<td>(Trip to Israel 1990 incomplete)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Travel notes also occur in books within other categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRAYER BOOKS</td>
<td>PB I</td>
<td>(Boxed book originally cryptic PassoverScript book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PB II</td>
<td>(Current .1993 journal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRYPTIC BOOKS</td>
<td>CI</td>
<td>(23rd Psalm wool covered)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ell</td>
<td>(Last Supper set of 13 books in collection of Jack Ginsberg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cm</td>
<td>(Durban Art Museum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CIV</td>
<td>(Vine Book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATALOGUES OF EXHIBITIONS</td>
<td>PAS III</td>
<td>(Passover project Joh. Art Museum 1985 incomplete)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JER</td>
<td>(Jeremiah exhibition 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POEM DRAFT</td>
<td>PD</td>
<td>(Store-bought note book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAPERS</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>(Unbound papers with Agapanthus theme)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1984 I attended Peter Carsten's beginners book binding course. This enabled me to bind my handmade papers and explore and adapt book binding and restoration processes in my work.

The first books I produced were cryptic and non-verbal, seeking to indicate content through sign, symbol and the paper itself. An example was a Book for Ruth (from the Ruth and Naomi narrative) made from straw-coloured papers embedding grain and other harvest-related material. The covers were constructed from heavy paper made of harvest gleanings used for feeding calves, and were reinforced with fiberglass resin. The book was bound using a crude adaptation of an early binding technique, 'stitching on cords', the cords in this case being manilla rope from the baling machine on the farm where we hired a weekend cottage.
A companion Book for Esther was constructed in the same way. The symbol and reference however was of an ornate, sensual Persian derivation using pinks, alizarin and gold befitting the subject. The Book of Esther was sold without its companion piece the Book of Ruth and the understatement of the latter lost much of its relevance. Subsequently the Book of Ruth was used as note hook or travel diary.

Of the more than twenty books of similar conception, a set of thirteen hooks on the Last Supper made for the Passover Project exhibition and currently in Jack Ginsberg’s collection, a small book in the Durban Art Museum the Book of the Twentieth Psalm. The Vine Book and the Book of Esther are the only books to remain as conceived and not be filled with notes of various kinds.
The books which offer an insight into the artefacts produced between 1983 and 1993 are of several types:

1. **Travel books**
   
a) **Diary style notes** and sketches produced during trips local and abroad containing descriptions of territory, quasi botanical information and meditative meanderings.
I picked this it was open

I picked it out at dusk to catch something

The fish eagle, Poine caught 3 minnows

3 knives sharpened a grass root and

fish and then it to feed material.
When we arrived I found on the wardrobe a necklace of Lotus Lily stalks split in half with the attached seed forming a pendant. The stalk had shrunk and stretched forming beads. I wore it to dinner but was conscious that perhaps it was not a custom that should be encouraged on a large scale.

*Lotus Lily bead*

sometimes opens mauve sometimes white-pink radiated with yellow from the centre

bud of the smaller Lily (p. 10 for flower)
b) Museum books.

For example, a book made of various papyrus papers to record ancient systems of writing in the British Museum was made. Observations and drawings were entered during visits to Art Galleries and places of historical interest. These notes served as visual memory aids or visual 'ingestion' of the art or artefact visited.
very vellum. the color of this paper
beautiful even brownish letters well
spaced on the page. about the age

tyca (Luke xxiii. 20 - xxiii, 14.)
the agony bracket + inexplicable.

It is a privilege to see the early pages to
friend of the lables and conviction that hear
relentless elevating and the writing and copying
of the word of god.

The scribe is perfect in getting the dignify
weight of content to the accented
syllable. large squareish sheets of
ornamented vellum, greyish white and the
parchment of the simple. fourfold division
of script, assume a monumental seriousness
and architecture for life.

MN2.p.17.
Roman Britain

Lullingstone wall plaets
one of the figures
from 4 to 10
Praying figures
Indicated by
Outstretched hands

Christianity in
Roman Britain
Van Gogh

Sunflowers

A strange painting remarkable in its simplicity. Its blooms are leary and dull on a sombre ochre.

But the background a basket around work of pale yellow (added white) and the table with a strong tone of warm toasted ochre yellow. Sings a light sunshine into the painting.

1890

Long grass with wild hyacinth.

Wonderful accuracy of the brush makes it look almost whitewashed, especially after the orange.

N.B. See cont. in the green.

Blue blocks for dark olive greens and red in the greens.
1854

Seurat

Bather

Florence

The greenish sheen of the brush, the white of the behind and the white of the painting give the painting a strong feeling of Piero della Francesca.

It is the stillness and the thickness of the flesh and the feeling of weight and solidity of the bather.

Strange stonewave drawing across the surface of the gods and into complete contrast to semblance of drapery.
Jews as builders, stone
wood

2) cornerstone.

store quarry
1) wheel with cutting
tool

b) wood
rock, expand
4) all

cant. get to the back
as, at b. wood

4) stone

wood
nether

mason

Came. stone mason
wet. stone mason

4) stone mason

Cornerstone: 2 1/2 to
2 1/4'

lower. Hike 9. 28

foundation. MK 6 1/2

P. 2 1/2.

stone

4) thought. rock

heavy groove cut

wood, wood

the stone. wood

water. water

was poured onto it.

breaking the stone

away from the brick

in the back would

crack away.
STORES
provisions.
In holes there are to cud up the cattle
offerings by pulling the plot with either
man yokes or oxen. A person is jointed.
He worked animals was allowed to eat grain
freely (Deut 25:4). After threshing a broad
width grain fork was used to separate the
chaff lightly from the grain kernels.

LEFT
These pages to be bound
into IS1 (i.e. first Israel
Journal).

In 1990 I visited the
Centre for Biblical
Resources outside
Jerusalem (Tantur).
The words of the
Bible took on new
meaning as the
processes and customs
of the New and Old
Testament world
were revealed through
the visual evidence
of operational actual
place sites and
reconstructions.

Piciin (Pequein) - village to watch the
making of the bible bread (Lebanese bread).

1. small ball of dough
2. patted larger on table
sprinkled with coarse yellow
heat (flour)
3. large shape wrapped in
rapid circular movements
from elbow to wrist
until it looks like a huge
pancake waving through
the air
4. draped over a cussion of questionable age
5. flipped from cussion over iron disc over
fire
and produce bread like a
dry pancake

IS 1 p 40
Note. I have a bijou watercolour box containing two short handled brushes. This small box and a medicine bottle of water reside in my handbag during trips to galleries and other places of interest. A more expanded selection of media is housed in a plastic ice cream box, and this together with a cardboard folder of papers and a journal constitute my travelling recording kit. A little can of water and the dashboard enables me to paint agent in a moving car. The results are usually disappointing but the act of recording sharpens my looking.
c) Sketches.

Loose pages of handmade or commercial papers constitute this subsection. Although unbound the sketches are a recording device. Many of the sketches were produced in moving vehicles whilst travelling to some holiday destination. Others done on the spot, were more complete and 'worked' but nevertheless were considered process rather than 'art works', though some might be framed for family consumption, chosen for their sense of place rather than artistic merit. Many are stored as souvenirs or included as surface enrichment in various artefacts.
Bible study and sermon notes.

Notes taken during the Sunday morning service and a weekly Jewish Bible class given by Dr Moshe Natas form the nucleus of the books within the category.

Two of the books originated as cryptic books made in 1984, one an 'Annunciation' book; the other a 'Last Supper' book.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danielle</th>
<th>Joshua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline</td>
<td>Kyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement</td>
<td>Lydia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Jeru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PBI β 21-22
3. **Prayer hook**

a) A small book and case made in 1985 on the Passover script theme was designed as a non-verbal book of meditation. In 1992, short erratic entries of a personal devotional nature were entered and continued in 1993.

b) A book with a green marbled cover made for me by my daughter Catherine.
Work books.

These books contain notes, sketches and diagrams recording ideas, problems and techniques encountered during the production of artefacts. There is a work book for each specific exhibition with the exception of the 1987 Ezekiel exhibition. The work book, thirty illuminated pages and loose notes for this exhibition were lost travelling to the National Gallery Cape Town, therefore this exhibition will not be included in the survey. A book of notes for lessons given at Wildrock Studio is included in this section.
5. Hand-made catalogues.

An attempt was made during the allotted time of the Passover Project and Jeremiah exhibitions to record the work in sequence before dispersal. Since there are constant interruptions during the allotted exhibition time, these catalogues were not completed.

Note 1.

These books are specifically a means to generate artefacts, or function themselves as artefact. Threads from each of these book types, excepting catalogues, are drawn together and interweave in the process of making each specific exhibition.

Note 2.

Since I am not of a systematic disposition, some of the journals contain several categories. For example, while on holiday, a work book or prayer idea may occur and be entered into the travel diary which happened to have accompanied me.
and reworked.

2. pages of papyrus papers stuck onto the canvas forming a border of wavy edge zone pre-wetted some blanks
2 = grass pulp and/or

2 = preworked panels and
3 = in paper sheets layered with glue to indicate the 3rd judgement, sword, lamell + breastplate.

3. the whole was reworked in paint to integrate the surface to establish the darkened and charred appearance of the three shield "blackened" and battered. The frontal view as well as illusionistic space were combined i.e., the step with the indication of a horizon line and linear landscape. In the frontality of the written fragments the paint is "jewelled" on in gold and ochres and reds, with heavy varnishes. A homage to Rembrandt's "Jewish Bride" also to indicate an area of "Holy Fire" that the fire is not solely destructive but purifying.
Anothoth No. 11

Process:

1) Lay blackened paper on top of clean paper.

2) Cut squares from thick layered paper.

3) Tone cut out of left side and paste pulp (spun gold).

4) Paper halved to make a block format.

5) Black paint scribbled across block.

6) Armour plates from the Babylonian.
CHAPTER TWO

FATHER ABRAHAM.
Manne Cycle
'Hamnail for Abraham'
31 x 92 cm. handmade paper, etching, paint, copper wire and black plastic bags 'sealed' and 'striped' to seal the 'document'.
Jeremiah's exhibition

The far city, handmade paper, conte, ink, and paint.
Now the Lord said to Abram,

Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families on the earth will bless themselves.

(Gen 12:1-3)
The artefacts forming the 'Mamre Cycle' exhibition embody aspects of spiritual inheritance and blessing; weaving threads of autobiographical, Biblical, contemporary, social and ecological elements into the warp provided by the Abrahamic saga found in chapters twelve to twenty five in the Book of Genesis. Abraham's journeyings physical and spiritual are characterised by vision, faith, covenant and obedience on one hand, and on the other by interfamiliar jealousy, labour disputes and land rights. There is little pastoral romanticism or utopian idyll to be found in the Genesis account, prosperous as Abraham undoubtedly was in nomadic terms.
He copes with Sarah and Hagar's animosity and the resultant loss of his eldest son's presence and later the fearful ordeal of the 'offering' of his younger son and heir. When the herdsmen of Abraham and those of his nephew Lot become belligerent over grazing and land, Abraham offers Lot the best grazing and separates the two groups. Neighbouring tribes waged frequent internecine war and Abraham was compelled to arbitrate, join confederations and alliances, and settle disputes over water rights. The Genesis account contains pathos, humour, tragedy and, in the poetry of the Old Testament, profound and timeless insight into the nature of the family. Abraham emerges in spite of errors and human failings as the man of Faith upheld in both the Old and New Testaments and also a man of integrity, dignity, honour and, above all, of great compassion.
So Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron: and there he built an altar to the Lord. 2

The oaks of Mamre were more accurately the sacred Terebinth trees on the land of an Amorite chieftan named Mamre. The Mamre camp provided an equivalent for 'home' in Abraham's unsettled life, and several important events occurred in or near this locality.

1) Abraham received the vision of his descendants or 'seed' becoming as numerous as the stars in the desert sky.

2) The enactment of the covenant ritual took place at Mamre.

3) Abraham pleaded for Sodom and later watched the smoke of its destruction.

4) Abraham entertained angels unawares by offering his hospitality to strangers and it seems as though the Almighty Himself was somehow present.

5) Sarah learnt through the strangers that she would give birth to a son before spring.

(I wrote this poem in the 1980's sometime, in contrition for judgemental attitudes.)

1 PO: 1

2 Gcn 13:18
Manse Cycle
Manse Script I
71 x 65 cm. handmade paper, gouache and ink.
6. Abraham legally purchased the field and cave of Machpelah as a family burial ground on Sarah's death.

7. Abram's name was changed to Abraham (meaning father of many nations).

Most of the artefacts of the Mamre Cycle relate directly or indirectly to the seven events listed above or to other elements in the specified Genesis chapters. However the Genesis content is often interpreted or layered within autobiographical and circumstantial symbology and metaphor that reflect a New Testament perspective.
Manne Cycle
To entertain, angels unasawed
93 x 100 cm.
Handmade paper, papyrus, paint
and varnish
Through documentation of the 'decisions and struggles encountered during the making of the three largest artefacts from the `Mamre Cycle', I endeavour to show that the creative process is a kind of metaphor for Abraham's journey towards the 'City of God'.

I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your descendants also can be counted. 
Arise walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I will give it to you.'

And he brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them. "Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.'

The carpet format was my initial response to 'offspring as sand'.

I Gen 13:16-17
2 Gen 15:5-6
In most of the above sketches it will be noted that large, round leaves and not oak leaves have been used. The large leaves came from two potted Ficus Lyrata trees which caught the winter frost and shed their leaves. Having experimentally cast several leaves and noted the emphatic results, I decided to use these theatrical leaves to express the supernatural aspect of the promise to Abraham.
In response to the second visualization, namely offspring as numerous as stars, a canopy or ceiling format presented in addition to the carpet formation and I digressed into adapting oak leaves to Ravenna Byzantine mosaics.

8th Feb 1992
Made some locking tabs and papier mâché the sheltering board for this in the third piece. I will need 4 to 5 for the canopy and as if looking up through the leaves, the heavy pikes will make an architecture or support for architecture as uncluttered ceiling painting modules etc.

The vault of the presbytery of
S. Vitale. Ravenna.

MJ p. 31
MJ p. 117
Canopy of bronze 30 14 paper must buckle concave

Look at Ravenna ceiling the one with the stars and adapt it to oak leaves + stars (maybe the one with the Lamb in the centre)

Stages make dark that stays in single sheet b 14 straight

Grande or twigs of oak leaves sienna + brown blue black sky behind with gold leaf flake forSolar
What did I make?
I stitched the leaves on the base, do I have a carpet or a canopy? or the backdrop for the nursery school concert?
I need to work the background.

The idea of Sarah and Abraham bearing a child in advanced old age supersedes all laws of nature and therefore I could accent the miraculous and use the huge Lyrata leaves in surreal metallic reds, purple, vendian and gold. The backing to the leaves was painted in blues with gold marks indicating the starry sky of promise at which Abraham gazes through his 'eye of faith'. This 'eye' transforms the natural oak leaves that he sits beneath, into giant technicolour inhabitants of another realm. It seemed that through the childlike placement of oversized and garish leaves several facets could be simultaneously revealed. The incredulity of Sarah and her derision, Abraham's faith and wonder, and the New Testament exhortation of Jesus.

Truly I say to you whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.2

The title 'Panoply' was chosen to imply a royal canopy as the leaf colours indicate. The scale of the artefact is similar to the intimacy of the Jewish wedding canopy or 'Chuppa'.

2 Luke 18:17

MJ:125
The artefact titled "The Mamre Cycle" summarises the overall context of the exhibition of the same title. At the start this work was a conglomerate of cast oak twigs and leaves surrounding a buckled paper painted tree trunk forming a roughly cross shape.
What is the problem with the two big ones?

(1) Lack passion - gouge into the picture part - leave the frame - gouge the oak stump, too refined - scribble more, scratch, - needs blood coursing through the leaves; at the moment they are polite Roccocco. Help me Father to have the courage to attack these that they might have the energy of life, Your gift not a static beauty. Ps 31. In thee 0 Lord do I seek refuge - rescue me speedily.

Tues. (1) rip out the frame of oak leaves.
(2) back onto writing with stitched on leaves.

At this stage a painted relief paper frame of cast oak leaves and twigs was salvaged and the centre removed. Three separate centre pieces were constructed to fit behind the frame from which the most meaningful would eventually be selected. One of these became a separate work titled, "Love letter to the seed of Abraham".
Mamre Cycle  'Love letter to the seed of Abraham'
85 x 130 cm. handmade paper, etching, ink and paint

a. complete work
b. detail
Another of the centre pieces covered in oak leaves, cast, painted and stitched onto a backing was compatible with the frame but backed the 'grit' of the Genesis account. The Faith of Abraham is praiseworthy precisely because it was tempered not in comfort and complacency, as the oak leaf centre might imply, but in the vicissitudes and rigour of nomadic existence. I needed the sparse desert of the real, framed within the promissory blue and gold oak leaves of Mamre.
For the third attempt at the central panel I returned to the letter concept. Passages from the relevant chapters of the Book of Genesis were handwritten on sheets of handmade paper glued and layered into a solid thick sheet. Significant words or phrases were repeated as if committing to memory in the oral tradition. Four 'desert scrolls' of distressed papers embedding handspun wool that I had made and a palm frond fragment set into paper pulp were stitched to the written sheet.
The four scrolls were initially chosen to refer to the gospels and the palm fragment to the nomadic origins of the Old Testament. In revision, three scrolls (the middle scroll white coloured) assumed the symbolic intent of the New Covenant or Testament with the background script as the bedrock of the Old Covenant or Testament.

**LEFT**

*The Mammal Cycle, The Mammal Cycle* 110 x 117 cm.

Handmade paper scrolls and leaves, ink, oil paint, wool and melted plastic packets.
The third artefact, similar in size and format to the two discussed, remains in spite of more time having been expended upon it than on copies of Rembrandt's etchings.

In spite of unresolved problems, this artefact initially incorporates a sacrifice of Isaac.
Two smaller artefacts relate directly to this work, namely From Mamre to Moriah and from Moriah to Golgotha. The Journey physical and spiritual from the relative comfort of Mamre, place of promise to Moriah and later Golgotha: ascents of suffering and deliverance: formed the undercurrent to all three of these pieces. The ram of the Genesis account becomes the slain sacrifice of Golgotha and the triumphant lamb of the Revelation to John.
Manusc Cycle

'From Monish to Golgotha' 78 x 68 cm.
handmade paper, etching, panel, broken sponds, oil paint and varnish.

right
detail of above
Formalise i.e.

The Abraham Rembrandt etching piece

Make a border, another chopping block to balance the existing one, or the victim i.e. the Ram as a balance on the other side. The rest of the story could be sunk into mist.

shellac, oil glaze, bitumen, enamel

What do I attempt in this picture?

Rembrandt's sacrifice of Isaac etching

Rembrandt is said, as in Van Riebeek, Van der Merwe, De Kleer (French probably). I love Rembrandt, he climbs into the skin of Abraham. The marks in blow up are harsh. The angel is fat and Momma. There is no animal that I can easily find - several marks begin to make a ram but nothing really definable. We are back to faith. The ram - the solution is invisible. Abraham has to take the promise hidden no visible means of escape - it is an awful awful story. did Abraham hear right? Is it metaphorical? Paul's "unless a seed falls to the ground." It is this nation's dilemma. There are so many crossings in this story. The Canaanites were the ones who practised child sacrifices. Abraham was supposed to be different and yet he believes God asks this horrendous deed. All he has is the sand and stars promise. As a young Sunday school teacher I would always skip the Abraham story or rush through the 'sacrifice' and get to the ram - but I was always uneasy. I am still uneasy.

Deliverance in the tonn of a ram - back o sheep the 'Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world' another sacrifice?

1 MJ 170

2 Ibid 177
In my picture the players change colour black, whitish brownish. Victim deliverer patriach change roles print to print. In the middle print the rams head appears and Abraham except for the knife bearing hand disappears and sinks into the page. Logically the aureole/arch of gold oak leaves rising from the left should continue onto the right. I erased the gold leaves completing the arch to create an escape route on the right to the jutting rock piece which became the place of sacrifice and the way out. The ladder is more a cliff faced climb perhaps the middle etching should be obliterated or become a waterfall. I have three different scales in the etchings small, medium and large blow ups.
These work in a hierarchical rather than rational way not very systematically though i.e. the smallest is at the top the logical place perspective wise. The largest etching is central (hierarchical logic) but is indistinct. All very ambiguous. I might have to obliterate them all. I don't want a neat ladder. The menorah - the promise of nationhood it is also the cliff and the flame is warped to the sacrificial altar block. The birth of a picture/painting/story/sermon/vision/nation takes a lot of burying, scrubbing shifting/redefining. The ram makes the difference. The ram caught in the thicket, the way out. Deliverance. The manuscript finger pointing up. In Grunewald's Crucifixion John the Baptist has this overstrained curved finger pointing up and his bent arm framing the Latin for "He must increase and I must decrease". The Van Eyck Lamb stands with Chalice and Cross.

This is the stance of Christian artists down the ages, not in uniformity but cloaked in history and coloured by personality. Back to Rembrandt - he can make me believe that man is made in the image of God.
CHAPTER THREE

MOTHERS
An underlying theme in the Mamre cycle is **covenant**. The covenant between man and God, the marriage covenant, the family as vehicle of blessing from generation to generation with specific reference to my family.
"With an everlasting love"
1989
Stitch, canvas, oil, handmade paper, enamel paint, wool and cow hair.
150 x 250 cms.
Memory is strange and I suspect many details are apocryphal, part real, partly imagined. I have not checked facts although that would be possible. What interests me is the sensation and experience that records in heart and mind and provides a reservoir from which can be extracted nuances, colours, metaphors and symbols to patch together intuitively and knowingly, so that each artefact contains a residue of memory.
I realise that although I saw my grandmother only a few months a year up until my mid-teens she was a major formative influence in my life.

Lydia my grandmother

My earliest memories are not of my grandmother Lydia but of my grandfather Nathanael sitting in a wicker chair on the verandah that wrapped around the house of the beach farm. He did not seem to move except for his soft, shining eyes that followed my tricycle as it careened down the streets of stoep, or a quickening and gentle laugh at the approach of my mother. Thereafter I remember only the empty chair.

On awakening at the inland farm I would run from the outside room to my grandmother's bedroom and sit among the white, woollen blankets on the high, wooden bed with the carved circle of fleur-de-lis at the head. She was tall and thickened. I watched as she encased her floured and pleated body in whale bone corset and beige elastic stockings, smelling of talc, soap and lavender. First she pulled over her head a silk petticoat followed by a soft pattern of dress from the high, narrow wardrobe beside the matching dressing table.
My favourite room on the farm was not the dark dining room with pictures of camels and sand dunes on the walls, but the breakfast room. A great dining table stood in the centre on the scrubbed wooden floor, surrounded by chairs with pressed patterned back rests. The walls were lined with shelves. Glass bottles blinked and shimmered a kaleidoscope of colour, beetroot, beans, carrots, yellow and white mealies, tomatoes, dilled cucumber, pickles, chutneys, jellies, quinces, pears, marmalades and jams with names like 'pompemous' and 'amatengula'. Smoked sausages in red, and blue-black looped beside hams, bacon and turkey legs.

Adjoining the breakfast room was the kitchen, dominated by a black Aga stove on which it seemed, containers stood or boiled continuously. The most beautiful were the deep trays of bright gold, crusty mealie bread taken from the oven and stood on the edge of the stove to be collected by the Xhosa women who moved in and out of the kitchen like the Magi in folded black headdresses, long, flared, earth-red skirts swirled in dark braid, arms and ankles orchestrated in bracelets swelling and diminishing to shape the limbs. White bread dough swathed in cloth lay beside the stove. On unveiling, the risen uncooked loaves were as lovely as my grandmother's flesh.
"A table before me."

It also comments on the importance of artist residency, as table and ongoing. It seems human beings and...
The Last Supper (detail)
300 x 15 cm
Canvas, stitched, woven, patched, and embroidered with the names of the disciples; oil paint and fibre glues seep
This work was designed as a stable with thirteen place settings.
I read the first chapter of John's gospel yet again the Word becoming flesh. That is easy for me to understand because in many ways my grandmother Lydia was the Bible I read. She was the embodiment of the Word how she lived, who she was, the servant heart; the deep richness of her voice, the gentleness and compassion; the abundance of things that she offered and made, far too much an outpouring of love and rejoicing... Goose down plucked and made into featherbeds and eiderdowns and cushions (which I recline on as I write). The whirring of the treadle sewing machine as she pleated and stitched endless dresses, skirts, even school blazers, in meticulous detail. Up in the dark to knead the bread, never too tired or busy to sing with us at the old pedal harmonium or piano. 'Jesus bids us shine', 'Jesus loves me', 'Rock of Ages cleft for me', the words became flesh in the rich timbre of her voice, sometimes silent that thin small voices could gain confidence.
Hats tied down with scarves she and I would roam the new green of burnt veld to find the mushrooms after the springs rains; which to discard, which to keep, where to find the safe ones, the ones never to touch. She knew how to fish for eels in the dam, save the ripening figs with tobacco bags, to mix pungent chest rub, to climb between the blankets and miss the sheets on extra cold nights; how to grow perfumed Stocks and brilliant hued stiff Gladioli in the dry Eastern Cape, and how to tell stories. She had an endless supply of bedtime stories not directly from "books although many were Bible stories, the others were the bitter sweet things our parents had done as children; the ducklings smothered to death because our aunt as a toddler had taken them to bed. The prize Muscovie drake shot dead with a 'catty' by an uncle as a small boy and how my mother and he buried it and finally confessed in fear and trepidation, and were forgiven.
Jilt are [beautiful] as yet there be light and round and slight and it was good.
(Percing pure they be.)

Mickey caught 2 another Fault the caper's gold especially around the gills - the often more pink and silver toned.

Sometimes they hover almost still near overhanging weeds or rock...
A watching languid...
In the blunter pools especially the smaller pools theij dart are cunning and vivid as they dart toward the hooked flies and slowly swim past.
My mother took us at times to visit my father's eldest sister at the family fishing shack. Cottages with water tanks stood in line above the wild bush at Kaiser's beach. Several of my grandmother's innumerable sisters had family cottages there also. I assumed everyone in the shacks belonged to me somehow. Tall young men in fishing tatters, bearing rods and gaffs, would stop and pat me on the head or tease me gently before they disappeared down the bush path to the sea. They were my armoured knights who would return bearing glittering booty for us to share, grunter, cob, brown spotted rock cod, and little silvies that could be fried whole, and eaten with fingers to remove the bones.
My grandmother had introduced me to the sea at the Gonubie shack. I watched as she scraped mussels from the far rocks left uncovered by the spring tide, and later I participated in the feast. A steaming enamel dish was placed on the table in a beam of the paraffin lamp. The mussels had opened, revealing orange tongues which we ate dipped in brown vinegar and pepper, depositing empty shells in another enamel dish. Prisms of coloured light bounced from the pearl of the inner shells. Beside mussels and oysters the rock pools yielded periwinkles and 'olicrocks'. The largest 'olicrocks' sucked hard to the rock and I was happy to point them out to stronger hands unafraid of lurking octopii. A favourite task was to sit on the kitchen table and hook the 'worm' from the boiled shells with a straight large hairpin, that my grandmother might grind the bits through the mincer to make patties for breakfast.
Perhaps the yellow red colours are baked in by the sun like a glaze and furnace. Black is the only sensible colour for inhaling posts. Floored and walled in black rock.

PBII p. 29
My grandmother's sisters would go swimming early in the morning at Kaiser's beach in a pack of three or four. If my grandmother happened to be with us I would be included. All in identical black woollen swim suits, we walked on the deserted beach to the gully between high rocks where the sea coursed in at high tide. The large women waded in chest high, while I stayed in the shallows or clung to my grandmother. My great aunt Helena who had by far the largest bosom and laugh slipped her shoulder straps and released her huge white mounds to float free, the other sisters followed, swimming and splashing in bouyant freedom and then decorously replaced their straps and walked back up the beach to disperse into their various shacks.

The sea, shells, sand, rock pools crawling and waving, ebbing, flowing, smelling, tasting of salt and air, fish dazzling and frying, dunes to slide, 'Chope' trees twisted and grasping to swing on the edge of the sand. It seemed God had improved on Eden.
When I was fifteen my grandmother died. She had been hospitalized for something the doctor had assured my mother was routine and minor. My distraught mother drove us from Natal to the farm. We went to the funeral in the village Baptist church crushed in aunts and uncles. The minister had come from East London to give a glowing eulogy -- as well he might. His large family had been entrusted into the loving and serving hands of my grandmother during his absence at various functions and seminars far and near, as there was no Mrs Minister. My grandmother Lydia entered their home and became their grandmother, mother and servant for times and seasons. My mother was not pleased by these appropriations.

I went to see my grandmother's body in the coffin with the insensitive curiosity of my age - I looked and looked but she had left and this brought me peace. My mother was silent, almost angry, she kissed the pale forehead and could not go to the grave.

A day later my mother and aunt went into my grandmother's room to sort out her personal possessions. Only on seeing the handkerchief case, with the lopsided mauve dove that I had made in school needlework years earlier, sitting on her dressing table filled with laundered handkerchiefs, did grief come to me for the first time.
As my grandmother was bread so was my mother flint. She attacked life. Retreat, collapse, tact and persuasion were not her modus operandi.

My father, a junior lecturer in agriculture, decided upon the death of his mother from tuberculosis, to study medicine. My mother followed and trained as a nursing sister and midwife. When she was twenty-seven they were married after a ten year engagement.

My father became the all-purpose country doctor in Howick, bringing into the world children who were later my classmates. Fluent in Xhosa and Zulu, equipped to deal with man and beast, by road or on horseback, he was singularly fitted to the farming and village community.
I remember him well because I worked at keeping him alive, surreptitiously collecting anecdotes to raise the dead. When last I saw him I was three years old. Two incidents on one day remain. Early Christmas morning my barechested father playfully wrestled me over the beds and wheeled me across the room on my new tricycle. Later there were men in rows of high beds, and my father in gold-buttoned uniform and shining leather band, travelled down the lines lifting me from bed to bed as he spoke to the men.

Then there were only letters and a silver wire butterfly brooch from Egypt.

When the time for her confinement drew closer my mother and I moved to a flat in East London so that we would be nearer her family. My mother learnt that my father had been killed at Tobruk in my brother's fifth month.
Resisting her family’s pleas, my mother returned to the big empty house in Howick to enlist in her own battle. The surgery and waiting room became an apartment for the new grade’s teacher, who ate with us. Wigwams of runner beans, beds of strawberries and gooseberries, pumpkins, mealies and vegetables stretched behind the dispensary. A hissing Muscovie drake and his harem took up residence. Two and a half acres seemed almost a farm. Even the Toe H eventually began to refuse the sacks of green beans donated by my mother. Half the village came to pick strawberries in season and we had shelves of jam ourselves. Everyday, accompanied by my small brother on his tricycle, I was despatched to deliver a hot dinner to the tin house on the edge of the veld, where a bed-ridden old lady and her slightly simple son were the grateful recipients of my mother's feeding scheme.

The Mame cycle
‘No weapon formed against you shall prosper’

100 x 63cm
Our mother was not as other mothers. She did not belong to the Women's Institute. A 'belly button' was an 'umbilicus' in our house. She could shoot tins off the septic tank on the lawn from the upstairs window. Instead of a gravestone in North Africa my mother bought a piano and ferried her two children to music lessons in the city. Apparently my mother had learned to drive after my father had enlisted. A succession of 'locums' moved through our lives. One, a psychotic foreigner afraid of cars and dark skinned men, obliged my 'unlicensed' mother to single-handedly cope with hogged roads and dark patients. Official recognition crowned five attempts at a driver's licence. Subsequently my mother's driving skills were honed weaving through military convoys on the winding curves to Pietermaritzburg and on trips to the Eastern Cape through the Kei cuttings, over dirt roads between swollen rivers and horned cattle. My brother and I sang to keep her awake.
permanent exhibition
(though a walk through the valley of the shadows)
handmade paper, etching and paint.
Promus of Mamre
Mamre Cycle
143 x 170
Nine fragments on tablets of handmade paper,
paint and pastel.
My grandmother's visits to Howick were times of joy. She had stitched me a tartan pleated skirt that buttoned onto a 'vyella' bodice, a red woollen blazer with my father's brass military buttons, and a cornet hat with ribbons at the back. The Sunday evening service in winter began at four o'clock in the afternoon. My grandmother and I walked to church down the hill past the school, around the corner of the house where my mother's best friend had died, and on through the manse gate. An ancient oak covered the wooden gate leading to the churchyard, marking the transition from this world to the next. In the deep shadow of the hallowed side, last season's acorns hung from the leafy canopy to my height, becoming fruitful fidget for lengthy sermons. The squeaking of bats encouraged by the wheezing organ was another welcome distraction.
In the front garden my mother grew swathes of flowers above a lawn banked in Azalea gran vista that I loved but the dawn banked in Azalea surgery. Strange secret moss bed of ferns a iridescent greens ste d bamp patch behind the anenomes. Plucked pieces of moss could make miniature peppercorn between fern and Japanese irises interspersed with twigs and poute moss in their mouths from th plant and water concoctions that I pestled, mortared and forcefed.

Running water is a wonder of orchestrated sounds and rhythm - Bach by God himself separate cadrans strung and interspersed in endless circle to which the listener may grow at any point and depart at anytime without breaking the sequence.

It seems we can return to Eden if we choose. Always it is choice - my will therefore we choose life - life and death are in the power of the tongue of Eden restricted as a place of the heart and spirit. Eden redefined as a place of the heart and spirit.

I have chosen to visit or partake of Eden this afternoon Saturday 10th Feb 1990. It is snowing it would be less that would be to see only seeing is part and an inventiv delight - fun walks onto old rotted pine logs covered in snow and young pine saplings of varying sizes g>Your name here. Trim the disorder down - worth the health, health and rebirth. Eden inverted.
a. b. The Creation panels from the Deluge cycle. Bamboo supports treated and wrapped in rags and layered in handmade paper and pulp.

c. The Creation panels (detail from the creation of the fourth and fifth days)

d. The Flood (detail from the Deluge cycle)
The first four years of school were punctuated by episodes of acute beauty. The grades teacher brought her gramophone to school and transported us through beams of sunrise down fearful dark caves echoing in deep-throated song and swelling dance. Day by day she verbally sketched the narrative and played a section of the Peer Gynt Suite.
In the third year of school, girls did 'cookery'. The day began in the great brick kitchen building, where each of us collected a tin pail, blue soap, and bristle brush, to fight our allotted area of wooden floor. We baked portions for a family, not the pitiful samples of the two schools I later attended. Proudly we presented our masterpieces to our astonished families... a tin of rock buns, a plate of scones, an English breakfast, a full dinner of shelled peas, mash, pumpkin, and fried chops, a box of coconut ice and toffee, and finally, in standard three, an iced Christmas fruit cake. In hindsight I realise that some classmates would have to survive on these skills when schooling ended in standard six. Signs at home and at school signalled that not all homes were as bountiful as mine.
My mother took pressed and laundered packages of our outgrown clothes to specific houses in the village. School children who had no shoes were permitted to come barefoot. I was disappointed that did not apply to me. Every morning before school all the children filed into the kitchen to collect mugs of hot cocoa and slices of bread. In addition some children were selected to visit the kitchen when school closed.
Hockey was a harum-scarum delight of sticks, whistles, dust, bare feet, skinned knees and blue shins.

A handsome new master with a moustache was my last teacher. 'Nature study' sometimes walked past our gate where my brother would be waiting to be hoisted onto the master's shoulders to become king of the pack jabbering down to the Umgeni river. We caught tadpoles, fell in 'accidentally', while criss-crossing on stepping stones clutching precious bottles of wrigglers, and wearily we trudged over the veld back to the houses, entranced with learning.

In the pursuit of higher education my mother sold the Howick house and we moved to a small new suburban home lent us by the War Memorial foundation. My mother attacked the city and the resident nest of puff adders, decapitating them deftly with the garden spade, while the Zulu gardener observed from the high garden wall in mortal fear of things reptilian. The back garden greened into beds of beans, lettuce, carrots and spring onions. In the front, walls of sweetpeas and banks of poppies and stocks bloomed.

Integrity and cleanliness seen and unseen were absolutes for my mother. When it was discovered at supper that the wood for my eight year old brother's tree house had been acquired from a building site down the road, he was compelled to dismantle it by moonlight. Each plank was returned to the astonishment of the nightwatchman witnessing the small boy's numerous trips.
No one of whatever race or creed who fell remotely within my mother's sphere of influence was likely to be undernourished. Our school lunches were meals in disguise. Layers of mince meat, mashed potatoes and beetroot between bread was one option. A beloved elderly Scots couple in Howick received a year's supply of rusks in twelve tins on birthdays.

My grandmother's Christmas cake recipe is not for the faint-hearted. Nuts to crack and shell, raisins to de-pip, quantities of butter and eggs, mounds of brandied fruit, and baking tins dressed in layers of brown paper. My own Christmas cake arrived in Cape Town where I was a student nurse... I shared not a morsel. On coming off duty I would sink wearily to my bed clutching a piece of the ambrosia of home. Two years ago my eighty-plus mother winged her way to her granddaughter's wedding clutching three tiers of her baked fruit cake, 'hand luggaged' between her feet. This Christmas our eldest daughter baked her great grandmother's cake.

On reaching back to Israel pass were the most unexpected sight, rose gardens even in the sea-sand and Shiblu, Rachel's (offspring dear) at its giant menorah outside the temple, in force extradosing at Hurvat Rishon. Below the Hermon in snow. The Ruth and Hahot of this land had to be struggled on plain bellow for the sake... Edan on red of faith and sweat. So that what occurred in Goca, sweat and flight and that Israeli content and single-minded vision. Inhabit the premises of God when all you and given is a desert and a swamp?

The legacy of sowing and reaping, leading and nurturing, my mother has bequeathed to her granddaughters. Advancing years have increased in her the 'zeal of the Lord'. This year she will visit Israel and it has taken powerful persuasion to deter her from climbing Mount Sinal. All her days she has been striding Sinai.