Collecting raindrops: investigating multiplicity in the work of Paul Arthur Dufour

Kristin M. Krolak
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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COLLECTING RAINDROPS:
INVESTIGATING MULTIPLICITY IN THE WORK OF PAUL ARTHUR DUFOUR

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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in
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by
Kristin M. Krolak
B.A. Louisiana State University 1990
B.F.A. Louisiana State University 1999
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an investigation into the artwork of Paul Arthur Dufour. He has continuously redefined his identity through the form of his art, and his life. The work is passionate, powerful, complex and always of the moment. It is helpful to capture specific moments as opposed to developing a theory about brushstrokes or color or thematic focus because Dufour has worked in just about every imaginable media, color and genre. The possibilities for interpretation of his life’s work are thus limitless. After interviewing Paul Dufour and poring over countless drawings, paintings and other works, I have determined that to discuss the work of this artist effectively, a flexible approach is required. The paper is broken up into four main sections, each devoted to a specific facet of his fifty-year career as an artist and educator. Part One explains the philosophical foundations of his conceptual approach to creativity. Part Two illustrates his education and its impact on his artwork. Part Three features a description of three research trips he took and their influence on the continuing development of his expression. And finally, Part IV illustrates the earlier chapters in concrete fashion through a discussion of a particular piece that ideally represents Dufour's multidimensional approach. To experience the ‘reality’ of Paul Dufour’s work, one must bathe in the color that shines through his windows or sense the electric air in his storm paintings. The conceptual discussion of cognition and reality help prepare the way to understanding the fragmented nature of Dufour’s art because this is what he thinks about. In Paul Dufour’s art, the more you look, the more you see. Multiplicity is the key for understanding the career of Paul Dufour because it illuminates perhaps one of the only conceptual links that is present in all of his pieces.
INTRODUCTION

I am complete space. In order to identify myself I have to find my limit through form. The mark I make only serves to outline and never outlive a time void. A sense of needing a focus of form allows me to be – this being you now understand – but never the space.

This artist statement written by Paul Arthur Dufour nearly fifty years ago holds a key to understanding and appreciating the fruits of a long and prolific career. He has continuously redefined his identity through the form of his art, his life, and his teaching. The work is passionate, powerful, complex and always of the moment. Rather than establishing a style or a specific language for his expression, Dufour has developed a visual vocabulary that he employs with dexterity and confidence in whatever capacity the present moment requires. In other words, he is exquisitely prepared to participate in this moment, fully devote his sincerest efforts to the experience and then move on to partake in what happens next. Dufour's work does not lend itself to identification based on the way he renders figures or his singular focus on a subject. It is better to consider specific cases as opposed to developing a theory about brushstrokes or color or thematic focus because Dufour has worked in just about every imaginable media, color and genre. He is an oil painter, watercolorist, printmaker, sculptor,
tapestry maker, metal smith, mosaicist, photographer and master glass artist (Fig. 1-9). Figures one through nine are examples of the varied techniques and subjects Dufour’s body of work encompasses.

Figure 3. LIGURIAN CREST 1984 Lithograph 17"x23"

Figure 4. SHREVEPORT DOORS 1980 Bronze

Figure 5. LABYRINTH 1990 Tapestry 48"x36"
The utilization of a particular medium in Dufour’s work cannot usefully be narrowed down to specific time periods. His work in mixed media spans a career of over fifty years. Choose any year at random, for example 1969. In 1969 Dufour executed over 45 works in sumi ink, glass, watercolor, oil pastel, graphite, collage, pencil and mixed media. (Fig. 10-14) Analysis of a particular style is inadequate to describe the scope of his focus. The pieces range in subject from abstraction, to narrative, figurative, landscape and calligraphic. His production evades conventional compartmentalization. A measurable constant in Paul Dufour’s work is the constant work. Other sure things are his impeccable craftsmanship and composition. Within such a vast output organization and analysis in terms of a single style will leave great chunks of information out of the picture. One cannot break the work into a central thread or series. You will not find a climactic peak to measure everything else against. There is no single epiphany of ecstatic triumph. Instead key moments happen repeatedly because of the way Dufour translates his ideas into art.
Additionally, because Dufour still creates, artistic occurrences continue to transpire. A thesis on Renoir or DaVinci will fall into a sort of order because the ending is known even if the approach can take many directions (for example, feminist theory or cross-cultural comparison). That is, one knows when the artist’s career began and ended and what happened in the middle. Investigations must fall into this established history. Chronology serves as bookends for the grand nebulous mass of life experience in the middle. Since Dufour still works in his studio, his story is open-ended.
Its form is fluid. As he alluded to in his artist statement, Dufour creates meaning by giving his experience form. His identity lies in his elucidation and is framed by the marks he makes on a page. The possibilities for interpretation of his life’s work are thus limitless. After interviewing Paul Dufour and poring over countless drawings, paintings and other works, I have determined that to discuss the work of this artist effectively, a flexible approach is required. The solution to this unique challenge, short of writing a complete encyclopedia, is to provide a catalog of key interests and influences to understand where he has come from and why his work is inseparable from his worldview(s). Simply put, I will describe, to my best understanding, the filter that ties the elements of his life’s work together and explore the multiplicity that characterizes Dufour’s work. The discussion includes three areas in which this tendency towards variety is manifested: the philosophy, education, and travels that have informed his art. In each case, literal and/or conceptual fragmentation plays a large part in the ultimate form of his expression. The first place to start is with my understanding of his philosophical perspective. Part Two introduces the measurable facts of his extensive education and Part Three describes his travels and their effects on his professional developments. Finally, I will discuss a particular piece that ideally represents Dufour’s multidimensional approach, Seventy Perfect Little Pictures. These investigations will provide a platform for further contemplation and enjoyment of his extensive body of work. He is a fascinating person with a unique and rich viewpoint. His wife, Rita once told him, “You live a life of metaphor.” This observation provides a perfect starting point for discussion. Symbols have meaning via their connection to a deeper idea. These ideas must be grasped to give context to the symbolic language. To really enjoy the conversation, one might consider the conceptual foundation that follows.
PART I

*If a Man were to inquire of Nature the reason of her creative activity, and if she were willing to give ear and answer, she would say –ask me not, but understand in silence, even as I am silent and am not wont to speak..*¹

In a lifetime, countless instances collide and are imbued with meaning via the filter of a single consciousness. These moments often evade systematic organization within constructed parameters of linear order or videotaped exactitude. For example, a song you experience in the present may instantly evoke the remembrance of a warm summer night years ago. There is no way to tell if the moon actually rose as high or shone as luminously as you re-experience it in this moment of reverie. One can string memories together to create an explanation of what has happened but the memories and the explanation are not static. Tomorrow a different, equally reasonable chain will be created. Thoughts meld into each other in an unorchestrated jumble and they are often unrealized until we re-experience them. To paraphrase an idea that Dufour attributed to one of his favorite writers, Henri Bergson, thoughts are as pieces of furniture in an attic lying under dust clothes until a need arises and we come into the room to rearrange and use them. Reality is a distillation of experience. Understanding and perception of experience takes a dynamic form. Thus, the décor in our minds changes constantly. Immanuel Kant described the subjective nature of interpretation with his assertion that the mind brings something to the objects it

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experiences and "imposes its way of knowing upon its objects."² This concept surfaces in a multitude of epistemologies. Consider Richard Tarnas' statement: "The mind is not the passive reflector of an external world and intrinsic order, but is active and creative in the process of perception and cognition. Reality is in some sense constructed by the mind, not simply perceived by it, and many such constructions are possible."³

The purely subjective character of perception takes on another dimension when applied to the specific. The physicality of a symphony or poem stands as a marker in the sea of possible experiences. This is especially noticeable when others share in the act of perceiving. Several people may live the same moment. Although it is true that my review of a concert cannot be measured and calibrated to exactly match another attendee's impression of it, we both agree that the concert was. The fact of the event remains the same even as our unique filter alters the retelling. Describing the immeasurability of perception, Martin Heidegger wrote, "there is no way to formulate an adequate language to transcend human subjectivity. All that is left is silence, for no two people can be sure that they have the same thing in mind."⁴ Yet, we must somehow manage and communicate the information that pours into our awareness. Language is the mapping device that enables individuals to locate what they have perceived. Digital recordings, sheet music and crumpled recital programs bear witness to the encounter at a recital hall. Using language in all of its forms, written, spoken, and visual, we can navigate the countless events that comprise the world of experience with some semblance of direction.


Methodology, a framework for communication, endures because it helps us, if only momentarily, to roll the vast chaotic formless randomness of experience into bite size pieces that we can taste and enjoy. Henri Bergson understood that "reality is not to be reached by any elaborate construction of thought: it is given in immediate experience as a flux, a continuous process of becoming, to be grasped by intuition, by sympathetic insight. Concepts break up the continuous flow of reality into parts external to one another; they further the interests of language and social life and are useful primarily for practical purposes." To experience the reality of Paul Dufour's work, one must bathe in the color that shines through his windows or sense the electric air in his storm paintings. Written language serves the practical purpose of building conceptual scaffolding. It is as valid and as limited as trying to describe dance in terms of plié or arabesque and music in terms of measures or chords.

All of this philosophy is certainly interesting and sometimes liberating but I am including it because it is intrinsic to the worldview that informs Dufour's work. The conceptual discussion of cognition and reality helps to prepare the way to understanding the fragmented nature of Dufour's art because this is what he thinks about. He reads theology and philosophy with great deliberation and intensity. The earlier discussion of the dissolution of a larger idea such as the experience of reality into specific and unique moments is applicable to the contemplation of an artwork and is of vital importance to thinking about and appreciating the remarkable career of Paul Dufour.

In conversations, he often discussed writers such as Henri Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead or Arturo Fallico. The tenets of existentialism form an underlying support for his creative expression. He explained it in the following way:

For artists it's (existential thought) a very valid kind of thought process because every moment is an important moment in the making process. And if you think about the past in terms of how it nourishes the now that becomes a

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5 Pogson, ix-xii.
little bit egocentric because you are focusing on too wide a perspective. And then... you get involved in 'what did I do in the past that brought me to this point' rather than thinking about the [moment]...no one cares about your nowness and you don't do it for the by product except for the understanding of what happens at that moment. You are just making a line. If it doesn't work, no one has lost anything. It's like saying you can't grieve over the children you didn't have...because that becomes a foolish activity, so that the thing that I haven't done you can't grieve about it. You can only be able to anticipate and know the thing that you are witnessing at the moment now.

I think Fallico helps us to understand this existential moment. It's very Zen like because it becomes the externalization of that moment of internalization. That's the total focus. You bring your whole lifetime to that moment. So I don't need to focus on that apriori or that apostori fact. Art is really a lie. It's not real. It's not reality. If we come to it and say it has to become experiential, knowable [you are artificially altering] the way you are standing vis a vis that work because you are trying to make it respond to you rather than the conversation you might have with it. By going to that piece and confronting it, you are opening a conversation.

Thinking in terms of the present moment creates a challenge to traditional historical research. We are used to organizing events linearly. In Dufour's paradigm, the existential method of perceiving reality arranges history in an entirely different hierarchy. One speaks to a moment in terms of its singularity. Furnishings from past experience may add depth but in order to maintain the integrity of the present must not corrupt the current reality. With the following words, Paul Dufour described this fine line between an open-minded conversation with art and approaching it with the dialogue already written.

We get very much involved in thinking about ‘well how did this come about in historical terms’, so that you think of Giotto and that influence. When you are thinking about Giotto you are missing something because Giotto steals from your understanding. It's kind of a backwards way from the way that historians think...I was trained the same way but I have to forget about the continuum in order to make that mark...if I think that the mark that I make is going to be part of an historical continuum it's scary. You don't make it. It could be wrong.

A fresh outlook does not on the other hand, exclude acknowledgement of the past. Familiarity with what has been nourishes our comprehension of what is now. A scenario that runs through many aspects of Dufour’s thought and creative energies is the careful dedication of a student to mastering basic foundations and the subsequent freedom of the master to break all of

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6 Arturo B. Fallico, PhD was an editor and philosopher who wrote extensively about existentialism. He died in 1949.
the rules. Paul Dufour discussed this process using the career of Abstract Expressionist painter, Jackson Pollock as his example.

Background helped...Jackson Pollock was trained by Thomas Hart Benton. Now who could be more of a traditionalist than Benton? Benton had a background, he was trained at a very rigorous classical [program], the human figure in every pose, glazes over scumbles, ...very traditional. When Pollock went to New York and witnessed what was going on, he went crazy. In a wonderful way. He realized that instead of documenting in the old style, he was going to document his passion, his fire, his energy, his understanding of structure and rhythm and things like that. He was very much a humanist. His background contributed to his disobeying all the orders. I think that breaking rules becomes a very rational act. It's an intentional thing rather than undisciplined.

Looking over Dufour's vast catalogue of work, instances of his deliberate rule breaking are not hard to find. His masterful use of all media and genres challenges the common maxim that an artist must pursue a single focus in order to achieve excellence. (Fig. 15) *Louisiana Sugar Mill*, executed in mixed media, defies traditional divisions of interior space. Usually, remote areas are lighter than those in the *front* of the picture plane. In this piece, designations of near and far prove elusive as Dufour creates a dynamic feeling of visual distance. Dufour's approach, his execution and his creation are multiplicitous but never, never haphazard or disorderly. He practices a methodical innovation.
A work of art is the unique result of a unique temperament. Its beauty comes from the fact that the author is what he is... \(^7\)

Paul Dufour, born in the New England summer of 1922 (Manchester, New Hampshire 8/31/22), grew up in an environment rich with art and music. As a child his parents regularly took him to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Hours spent in the company of fine works of art fed his ravenous imagination. The Museum holdings included works by Velasquez, Degas, Monet, Bouguereau, and a large collection of Millet. One can easily imagine how thrilling mythological scenes such as *Automedon with the Horses of Achilles* by Regnault must have seemed to a young boy. Of these visits, Dufour said, "I saw something that I am quite sure [my parents] didn't know about. The things that I saw, the Sargents... the Renoirs, were saying something to me that [my parents] didn't seem to talk about as adults... they [the art works] spoke to me." In addition to providing visual excitement, these intimate childhood conversations with master artists sharpened Dufour’s composition, color, and design sense as surely as any formal art education. In these precious hours, he practiced the art of seeing. Dufour said, "It was very culturally enriching."

During our interview discussions, these afternoons spent in dialogue with Corot or Rembrandt resonated in Dufour’s views about the relationship of artists and viewers. He believes that the person experiencing a work of art has a responsibility to expend as much effort seeing the piece as the artist does in making it. Active viewing creates a more rewarding and fuller result for all the participants. People in museums and galleries often race through the exhibition, viewing all

\(^7\)Oscar Wilde. *The Soul of Man under Socialism*. 1891.
but actually seeing very little. They come to the space because they feel they ought to, or because someone told them not to miss it. Dufour points out that if a person actually spends time with a piece and opens herself to the dialogue the artist has initiated, a much richer experience takes place. Sometimes, the conversation will be of more or less interest. If a piece holds nothing for the spectator, so be it. The important thing is to listen to a work of art completely before making that decision. This concept of active dialogue with art was nourished in the dark halls of the Boston Museum and blossomed into a fully developed rubric for aesthetic measurement of artistic effort in Dufour’s adult life.

Paul Dufour's formal art education began in earnest after an early decision to study painting: "My parents when I was 10 asked me to make a choice between studying piano and pursuing art. I chose painting... Years later on, when I had fallow periods, I said, I should have chosen piano." He was tutored in art foundations by a nun of the Presentation of Mary order at a Catholic school in Manchester, New Hampshire. Sister Mary of the Annunciation was a French Canadian trained in music, painting, piano and voice who not only taught him art techniques but also French language and literature. The school itself held bilingual courses in French and English. Dufour's father was a linguist and the transition to a polylingual curriculum must have been relatively smooth because multiple languages were spoken in the Dufour home. Dufour received a traditional, classical education and was also very interested in Oriental art. Describing his early education, Dufour said, "I learned about color, discipline, I learned about glazing and scumbling. When I went to the art institute ...I worked very hard. I was a loner."

Literature, poetry, mythology and music run through many of Dufour's works. His experiences at an early age in the museum and at school created a strong foundation out of which his later developments flourished. A childhood entrenched in solitary intellectual pursuits also fostered a strong sense of self-awareness. Dufour spent a lot of time with only Claude Monet or
Apollo as companions. Later, during his term in the United States Navy, he often attended the symphony or theater alone because his companions did not share his passion for the arts. These experiences added to his growing sense of discipline and self-sufficiency. Dufour possesses a single mindedness towards the practice of his art that is unhampered by outside opinions or distractions.

This pleasant image of student life was disrupted by the crushing reality of World War II. After high school, Dufour joined the United States Navy and served for four years. The war filtered into Dufour’s life via routes besides his own military service. The larger context of the world during the time of his tour of duty and post-military experience is important because it provides insight into possible motivations for his unique perspectives. T.S. Eliot wrote that the ordered, stable and inherently meaningful worldview of the nineteenth century could not "…accord with the immense panorama of futility and anarchy, which is contemporary history." 8 The World Wars ushered in a revolt against the Enlightenment belief in a perfect age of reason and science. Ideals of happy peasants working in bucolic, utopia-like landscapes of peace and leisure, classical perfection, and technological advancements of the earlier age, far from resulting in utter triumph had instead been twisted and torn into the rubble of a war swept society. Genocide, poverty, inflation, economic disaster and mass destruction of unprecedented scale rocked the whole world, including the world of art. Cultured and refined works from art academies must have seemed superfluous and disconnected from the realities of hunger, violence and despair. Many movements grew out of this environment. George Grosz and Kathe Kollwitz created compelling works that described the

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destruction in Europe and specifically Germany. Writers, poets and artists explored the world of symbolism, dreams, Surrealism and nonsense or Dada.

Two other branches of artistic exploration rose from the ashes of the wars: Spiritual and Eastern art. Interest in religious themes and art from China, Japan, India and other parts of Asia was not a new phenomenon but the manifestation of interest in these themes had specific significance due to the times. Henk van Os referred to post World War II art in his essay on The Black Death and Sienese Painting:

Everything will be different after the disaster, say the survivors. And that includes art. Mankind has gazed on the very frontiers of existence, and that is why art must change. This brings me to one of the basic themes, which one finds in art produced immediately after the Second World War, and one can only wonder in amazement that it has still not been investigated. I am referring to the re-emergence of the religious dimension in art...It was the rediscovery of ‘the supernatural’, ‘transcendental experience’; it was the evocation of the numinous in a new kind of cultural mysticism...

In American abstract expressionism, the religious dimension was experienced even more fundamentally. I am thinking here not only of the remarks made by Barnett Newman, but particularly of the art of Ad Reinhardt and Mark Rothko. The road to abstraction in their art is prompted above all by the need for ‘transcendental images.’

...There is the credo of those who are enabled by art to participate in ‘the supernatural’, either above or behind...nature. That credo was expressed with fresh intensity by the post-war artists in New York, and it found magnificent expression in their work...Mark Rothko...wrote to a friend: I’m not interested in the relationship of form or color or anything else...the people who weep before my pictures are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them. And if you, as you say, are moved only by their color relationship then you miss the point. 9

Interaction between nations during wartime creates an environment for cultural exchange. European painting had an enormous impact on the art in Asia, and conversely, Japanese and

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Chinese arts continued to take Europe and the United State by storm.\textsuperscript{10} Color palettes, design, composition, perspective and subject matter were widely exchanged against a backdrop of global unrest. Asian influences stand out in the work of modern artists such as Klein or Gottlieb and their Impressionist and Expressionist predecessors. Japanese ideals surfaced in the work of Arts and Crafts artists. The popularity of Existentialism fit neatly with elements of Buddhism\textsuperscript{11}. The growth of craft as a valid art form reflected Japanese influences.\textsuperscript{12} Cross cultural exchange between Asia and the West during the early twentieth century deserves more attention that can be afforded for this paper. The point of this investigation in terms of Paul Dufour is that he absorbed this flurry of activity and applied it to his art. His early education in the classics of western art was enhanced by this exposure to modern and international influences. Innovations in art that grew from the devastation of war seeped into the experience of Dufour and, through his unique filter, into his work. With that said, it is important to point out that this osmosis did not occur as a neat little package. Dufour did not suddenly wake up one morning full of new influences and ready to devote himself to their full exploration. Reference has a more subtle nature. Perhaps a landscape or a stunning shade of blue reminded him of a drawing he had seen somewhere. The global upheaval of the war years must have added 'furniture' to his mental attic room, but the significance of the

\textsuperscript{10} The World's Fair in London in 1851 and the opening of Japanese ports to European trade in the late nineteenth century fueled a keen interest in Asia among modern painters such as Van Gogh, Monet, etc. Events in the early twentieth century compounded this cross-cultural fascination. Japanese and Chinese art students flocked to Paris at the turn of the century, soldiers in wars brought home foreign art, and German woodcuts and socialist ideals proved extraordinarily meaningful to Chinese printmaking.

\textsuperscript{11} Buddhism and Existentialism have many ideas in common. For example, Buddhist theory suggests that suffering in life is a result of desire and attachment to notions of what should be rather than what is. Some existentialists believe that adherence to a divine plan or preconceived idea of reality is illusory and that one should consider the present moment as the only knowable reality. These concepts are very closely related.

\textsuperscript{12} Bernard Leach studied in Japan with master potter Shoji Hamada and brought aesthetic principles of imperfection and simplicity to European and American awareness. The growth of the private studio artist versus the factory or group is also related to the Leach – Hamada relationship.
additions may not have been readily apparent or even noticeable until they were needed for a specific instance sometimes, many experiences later.

In the years following Dufour’s honorable discharge from the Navy he redirected his life towards family and his career as an artist. He said, "...it was that post-war period – philosophically we had to invent a new life or new world…There was a high degree of individualism because when you think of all these people that left the service who were regimented and anonymous [they] now wanted to become individual, spectacular but unregimented." By 1949, Dufour was married and, thanks to the G.I. Bill, attending the University of New Hampshire in Durham. When at last he was able to attend college, his experiences had made Dufour a mature and serious adult. As an undergraduate, he began teaching classes as an assistant instructor while studying with Alan Clark, Cornelia Schoolcraft and John Hatch. (Fig. 16) Hatch was a Yale graduate schooled in an academic style of painting. His classes reinforced Dufour's strong classical background. Dufour stated that at the University of New Hampshire students studied traditional subjects and techniques, such as under-painting, egg tempera, and artists like Masaccio.

During the year 1950, many important changes occurred in Dufour's life: he graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a B.A. in Fine Arts, his oldest son Jay was born in November, and Dufour was awarded a scholarship to attend Yale. The years at Yale bear closer examination because Paul had a unique opportunity to study with innovative and groundbreaking artists, including Josef Albers, Stuart Davis, Abraham Rattner, Alvin Lustig and Willem DeKooning.

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13 The G.I. Bill had a significant impact on the success of post war America. Students, who might otherwise have been unable to attend college, pursued their education with successful results. Paul Dufour calls it the most successful government program in history.
When Albers was appointed head of design at Yale, he completely changed the curriculum by replacing the traditionalist faculty (John Hatch's teachers) with his friends and colleagues, many of who were modern painters from Europe, New York and Black Mountain College in North Carolina. The World Wars of the early twentieth century contributed to the explosion of the art scene in the United States. Refugee intellectuals fled to America and immeasurably enriched the culture. Dufour explained their impact as follows:

"When you think of the explosion of freedom that happened and all of these ex-patriots who had been imprisoned in their own land, I mean intellectually, creatively, that came and they were part of this new individuality. It was really a very exciting time. Every one of them was well educated. They had really gone through the discipline of training. Paul Dufour was a beneficiary of this vibrant climate directly through his amazing educational opportunities and indirectly through the fruits of artistic innovation that flowered in reaction to the devastation and destruction of battle. One hesitates to draw pat, direct comparisons between Dufour's work and that of his teachers. It would be foolish, however, to overlook the impact they had on his artistic development. For example, when one considers the importance of color, line, or spiritual themes in much of Dufour's work, his mentors inevitably surface. No matter the direction one takes after school, the route must bear some imprint of those who have taught us. Paul Dufour’s Yale education provides fuel for an appreciation of where he came from and where he has gone. His experiences there inform his art by the same processes as his afternoons in the Museum of Fine Arts or his nights in Navy camp. Brief summaries of his teachers' contributions to art will prepare us to recognize their lingering presence in later works by Paul Dufour.

Josef Albers, most famous for his text *The Interaction of Color* and his series "Homage to the Square", believed that color was the most relative medium in art and described this principle as the phenomenology of color:

Each color has different properties, both as color and as buttery paste. Each has a different density; in spite of this… I want them to behave; to do what I
want and not what they want…. One must taste and taste in order to cook just right….Until one has the experience of being fooled by color, one cannot be expected to be very careful to look at things inquiringly…I want to imbue others with my delight in the endless possibilities for new color experiences.14

Albers trained as a teacher and taught at all levels from grammar school to college including a stint teaching Preliminary Design and Color classes at the Bauhaus.

In a marvelous case of synchronicity, Josef Albers spent only three years at Yale University including the exact years during which Paul Dufour received his B.F.A.: 1950-1952. When Dufour arrived at Yale, he and his fellow students were warned that their professor, Albers, would grind them into nothing in order to make something of them. At the time, Dufour admits, he was perhaps a little full of himself as an artist and may have needed the humility. He had enjoyed freedom at New Hampshire because of his advanced ability and responsibility.

Standing Nude (Fig. 17) executed in 1951 is an example of the technical ability he had attained as an undergraduate. It is beautifully drawn. Alber’s aim was to grind away the preconceptions and habits the young artists had acquired. He encouraged them to try many different media and discouraged them from falling into any one idiom or style. He wrote that there is never only one solution in art. Life is change. "When you really understand that each color is changed by a changed environment, you eventually find that you have learned about life as well as about color." 15

Albers practiced what he preached. The fact that Albers came to art when he was in his forties serves as evidence of his capacity to adapt to new influences and insights. This open approach reinforced Dufour’s assertion: "I am a restless person and find no virtue by being singular


15 Nordland, 3.
in a medium.” Unselfconscious application of multiple, appropriate materials to specific conceptual and artistic challenges hallmarks Dufour’s body of work and is related to this educational experience. Additional closely held tenets echo the ideals of his teacher and friend. For example, Albers believed that one’s individuality comes to speak in its own accent only after the fundamental disciplines have been mastered and the artist has come to terms with himself and what he has to say.16 This idea relates closely to Dufour’s belief in the necessity of strong foundations and considered innovation. Albers has been called the first painter to favor series of works on the same subject. Dufour utilizes this practice repeatedly. Because Albers and many of the students in his classes shared the common experience of World War II, it was a powerful and unique time for teacher and students. Albers created a lasting impression on Dufour as an artist and a teacher and remained a dear friend for many years. One of the most popular classes Dufour taught at LSU years later was color theory.

In contrast to Alber’s precisely considered squares, Willem DeKooning’s work exploded with apparently unbridled energy, although both painters believed deeply in pursuing a dynamic relationship with the work rather than adhering to a single visual truth. DeKooning’s background as a serious student at arts academies in Holland and experiences as a commercial designer and sign painter may have contributed to the tension present in his paintings. Strongly defined forms appear out of a seemingly chaotic maelstrom of brush and color. His most famous series of variations on "Woman" were contemporary with his tenure at Yale. Sam Hunter described "Woman" as an experiment in which DeKooning “…asked himself if it might be possible to evoke a human image whose essential features were determined not by nostalgic memory, association, or simple representational intent but by the dynamic events of the creative act itself.”17

16 Nordland, 2.
brushstrokes revealed the process by which his paintings were created. In 1950, at an artist’s symposium DeKooning stated that no art of the past or present could be considered as an abstract category apart from the struggles and intentions of the creator. Furthermore, an enlightened uncertainty and a sharp awareness of the limits of rational knowledge were essential for the making of modern art. "I consider all painting free. As far as I am concerned, geometric shapes are not necessarily clear. When things are circumspect or physically clear, it is purely an optical phenomenon. It is a form of uncertainty."  

Through DeKooning, Dufour had a direct line to the intensity and freedom that characterized the Abstract Expressionist movement. Like Albers, DeKooning supported experimentation and exploration as vital facets of artistic pursuits. These were ideals that Dufour clearly embraced and utilized in his subsequent work although by his own admission he started school with some misgivings about his professor.

My first teacher at Yale was DeKooning and that was overwhelming because I was trained to hate that stuff. It was difficult because I was married and having a child so that was a big adjustment....[It was a] very volatile experience. When I got to Yale [it] was a highly individual discipline, we designed our own curriculum, they would look it over...as ex GIs we kind of understood what we had to do. I took 22 hours every semester my third semester I took 25 hours...We had a real balance, history and studio.

Immersion in an environment rich with expert colorists such as Josef Albers, Abraham Rattner and Stuart Davis provided a granite foundation for Dufour's development as a master of the color palette. "Curiously enough," he explained, "Albers experimented in stained glass but he never told me because he was so involved in the homage to a square series. It was very exciting to work with him."

One of the best-known branches of Dufour's work is his stained glass. He says that technically, anyone can cut the glass and build a window or panel once it has been designed. Therefore the touch of the artist lies elsewhere. A Dufour glass piece will incorporate an

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18 Hunter, 289.
astonishing variety of hues. Where traditional work features six or eight colors he will incorporate many times that amount. Dufour's confidence with color must have roots in his classroom experiences at Yale.\(^{19}\)

Professor Stuart Davis certainly strengthened Dufour's ability to manipulate hue and shade but Dufour also described Davis in terms of his dynamic energy. Dufour said, "Stuart Davis, who always came with a cigar in his hip pocket and smoked cigarettes incessantly, gave this sense of wonderful excitement of his days in Paris and you understood his evolution and it was important to see this man who was always doing this [Dufour clapped his hands] to music and [to study] his work with a sharp edge."

Davis found that different hues transmitted a spatial message. Some move away from the viewer while others approach. He said, "It is impossible to put two colors together, even at random, without setting up a number of other events."\(^{20}\) Using color, he could paint a deep landscape without the traditional tools of shading or modeling. His forms, seemingly flat shapes, created depth by virtue of their color relationships. The rhythmic power and strong sense of edge, present in many of Dufour's fragmented glass panels or collages, call to mind the vigor of a Davis cityscape.

Undoubtedly, his teachers had an enormous impact on the continuously developing sensibilities of Dufour. This period in his life is of crucial importance to the understanding of his later work not only because of what he absorbed but also because of what he wanted to escape.

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\(^{19}\) Paul Dufour's heightened awareness of color was recently demonstrated during an afternoon interview at Christ the King Church on Louisiana State University campus. As we walked into the church, a flowerbed caught his eye and he stopped abruptly. He asked me if I saw the glow of color surrounding the bed, a bluish tinted luminescence. I peered with all of my might but could only distinguish what my mind told me was visible: purple flowers and green leaves. His senses, honed to startling precision by years of seeing were privy to a reality I was unable to share. I imagine that at some point Albers or Davis might have shared such a moment with him. It was a lesson in seeing beyond the limits of expectation or habit.

In 1951 he won the Yale Achievement Award that included a cash prize and by 1952 he had earned his B.F.A. When Dufour graduated he says he experienced some artistic confusion because of the stature of his teachers. He needed to break free and discover his own voice:

After I got out of there I had been with such strong people, I didn't know who I was. You spend every semester with this giant and so you really humbled yourself and listened. I went through my color period. I went through my texture period. So having gone through all those I went through my Albers period, Abraham Rattner period, and then I [began to focus on brushwork]…because the brush became important …my abstract cityscapes and landscapes were really freedom of the brush…and they become reductive, I started limiting more and more of the palette.

Dufour's transition from student to teacher surfaces in the work he completed in the mid to late fifties. Career and family changes as well as philosophical issues of identity contributed to the varied nature of his art. An oil painting, Birth of A Red Form (Fig. 18) created at about the time of his daughter Stephanie's birth in 1954, illustrates the mixture of technical and emotional explorations that mark this stage of his career. A rich and vibrant form comes out of an inky darkness. It is a spark, an explosion of vibrancy. It serves as a metaphor for Paul Dufour too as he stepped out on his own into the wide-open.

Figure 18. BIRTH OF A RED FORM 1954 Oil 34"x40"
PART III

A fractured rainbow

Is staining under thunder clouds

With Cathedral quiet.  

The fact that Paul Dufour graduated from Yale in 1952 did not mean his education ended. He never stopped investigating. His post-collegiate learning grew from experiences rather than formal classroom instruction. The demands of a growing family necessitated steady work, so Paul took the position of director of the Currier Center for the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire. After three years in Manchester, Dufour relocated his growing family to St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota, where he taught for a brief period before finally moving to Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1959 to begin teaching at Louisiana State University. Relatively little work remains from these years, for much was lost in a gallery fire. The next twenty-five years saw his steady rise as an educator and artist. He pioneered the study of stained glass as college curriculum, bringing LSU to the forefront of glass schools in the United States. An active community member, he juried exhibitions, lectured, and helped found the Baton Rouge Gallery. His contributions as administrator, critic, and scholar are widely acknowledged. He says that he paid the bills as a professor and the sale of his art sent him on travels around the world. The traveling provided balance to the active and stressful world of administrative responsibilities.


22 Dufour said that creating or living is like drawing breath. The lungs expand and grow out but then the body must relax and the chest falls back. When one creates he explores and makes marks intensely but then he has to reflect, relax and replenish himself before the next cycle begins. Fallow periods are a natural element of the creative process.
Although Dufour's color theory courses are legendary and he is widely praised as a demanding and outstanding educator, it is the travel that is the focus of the next part of this paper. Three sabbatical destinations had tremendous impact on the continuing development of Paul Dufour's work. Research in Japan, Europe and an artist's retreat in Georgia fed his creative appetites just as his devotion to teaching and his excellence as an administrator provided support for his family responsibilities. A common thread in these journeys is their necessity in terms of Paul's artistic growth. In each case, he found exactly what he needed. Though upon setting out, he may not have known what it would be. His work evolved and grew richer conceptually and technically as he added new experiences to his mental storage room.

Earlier, Paul described his growing interest in brushwork motivated partially by his desire to escape the shadow of giants. Having been immersed in color, he longed for the simplicity of a monochromatic palette. Within the parameters of fewer colors, he was free to explore the subtleties of line quality and brushwork. He experimented in monochromatic studies using charcoal, graphite, printmaking techniques and sumi ink. (Fig. 19) It is important to point out that these trials were not his only focus. He continued to create work in color during this period. There is never a time in Dufour's career when one can say he followed only one path. His multiplicity is the single thread that runs through all of his work. It is true however, that he devoted much of his energies to the pursuit of monochrome. The late fifties and early sixties mark a dominance of these studies in his body of work.
Dufour's interest in black and white led him back to Asian art and eventually a sabbatical in Japan studying with Ikuo Hirayama at the University of Tokyo and Takahiko Fujita, an independent artist based in Kyoto. His affinity with eastern aesthetics was nurtured during his childhood exposure to the collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and attendance of scholarly lectures by experts such as Anada Coomaraswamy. The wartime influx of Japanese and Chinese arts only added to this interest. His devotion to existential philosophy prepared him conceptually for the inherent similarities of Zen Buddhist thought. Further, his studies in line and brush led him to deeper studies of a Japanese approach to painting. He said,

...[I was] thinking introspectively about a brush...the difference between a sable and a bristle...we [Americans] don't think about them in the same way [as the Japanese do]...so that there is a whole dynamic that happens when they [Japanese artists] paint and I think I really wanted to learn about that when I got that grant to go to Japan. [Before my trip] I'd been trying to make my tools...accommodate the paper that I had [and they] had never been put together that way.

Many elements came together seamlessly and made his visit to Japan in 1964 a natural extension of his artistic growth. Several pieces executed prior to his travels illustrate the strong pull towards Asian art that he felt although the stamp of his expressionistic, modern education strongly
dominated the work. (Fig. 20-21) Sail, executed 1958, and The Owl, from 1963, exemplify his attempts to copy the expressive brushwork of Chinese and Japanese masters. The work created in Japan and immediately after shows the tremendous leap Dufour made in understanding the material and conceptual basis for ink wash painting in Asia.

The post-Sabbatical work seems more confident. His brushwork is freer and lighter in many instances (Fig. 22). Comparison of Sail and Seed Oysters clearly defines the expansion of his understanding of the nature of ink, brush, and compositional space. The earlier drawings are immediate and urgently painted while his later work is more elegant. If you divide Dufour’s work by his pre- and post-Japanese experiences the influences of each time are unmistakable. Aesthetic devices common to sumi ink wash painting include "flying whites" in which the brush passes quickly over the paper in a single movement leaving behind broad, white spaces within the wash of black. The absence of ink is as important as any brush stroke. Expressionist and Zen painting share the concept of immediacy and focus on the moment. The former is bold and frenetic while the latter tends to be more deliberate, graceful and controlled. Another change marks this important period. Dufour appears to have made a conceptual leap in his understanding of monochromatic color. Initially, he turned to black and white as a respite from the forces of color theory he absorbed at Yale. His interaction with Japanese masters in Kyoto and Tokyo illuminated his understanding that in Japanese and Chinese painting, the palette of ink wash is as varied and complex as any polychromatic rainbow. Beauty lies in the subtle colors between black and white and the interplay of brush stroke, line and space.
Paul Dufour's Japanese teachers, Ikuo Hirayama and Takahiko Fujita were impressed by his innovative application of sumi. In a culture where tradition and reverence for the past is bound up tightly in artistic endeavors, Dufour's innovative freshness and daring caused quite an appreciative stir. It was a valuable exchange for everyone involved. Besides a contrast in devotion to tradition and commitment to invention, other differences in creative approach impressed Paul during his stay in Japan:

It is an intellectual process to put this (ink) down and yet to allow it to have its own life. The Japanese I worked with in Kyoto said western artists...think they are being creative but in eastern art we destroy the whiteness, we destroy the infinity. By putting a mark on a piece paper you are destroying, you are creating a finite mark. It's like looking up at the sky and then that total infinity and making a mark that exists someplace in that firmament. And so you are destroying the quietude of the paper. So every mark was trying to make its own identity. So philosophically it is a totally different approach to putting marks on material, making the marks. But all of your training, the thousands of times you do make one little mark and then when you do want to get bent on destruction on something happens to that transition that’s ignored and yet it still calls itself. It's kind of a difficult thing to talk about.

Immersion in a completely different mindset is a liberating experience. One realizes that there are many ways to consider the same challenge and so the world of possible solutions is opened up to him. Dufour's already wide life experience was nourished by his sabbatical in Japan and the effect of this journey on his work is continuously manifested in his subsequent projects. Contemporary paintings bear witness to the impact of the journey via his use of calligraphic lines, ink washes and deceptively simple composition. In Japan, Dufour was called Paru Assa Dufuru–keep the rain jewel and bring forth the morning. The influence of Japanese aesthetics and techniques on the vocabulary of Dufour's expression cannot be overstated. He was renamed and he found his voice. Sometimes we have to go somewhere completely foreign to rediscover ourselves. When nothing is familiar, we can live in authenticity because we are not reflected in others and so we have the opportunity to find freedom from illusion. Pieces created at some
distance from this intense experience, for example *Twins #3* (Fig. 23), contain these forces in a single work. Color, line, ink wash, calligraphy, thought, form and balance unite. Previous moments, artistic and conceptual, become activated in the immediacy of this complex mixed media statement. It is as if, having had some time to incorporate his newly accumulated knowledge with prior experiences, a new consciousness evolved. Although it was completely in the present, continuity was maintained by virtue of Dufour being the creator. This phenomenon of redefinition happens repeatedly over the long span of Dufour’s productive career. Perhaps his restlessness contributes to his prolific output. He moves on and on, always creating something, never lingering too long in the past.

Following the 1964 sabbatical in Japan, Dufour created some of his most moving and powerful work. His ‘Storm’ and ‘Wave’ series combine his exacting compositional sense and the looser techniques of ink wash, resulting in a mixture of tension and abandon. As is usual in his work, there are numerous variations on the storm and wave themes. Some include collage or drawn elements while others are purely ink and water. Dufour uses wide bamboo brushes and thin pieces of string dipped in hand ground ink to create the various lines and textures that add amazing complexity and depth to the pieces. *Jupiter's Voice* (Fig. 24), completed in 1971, immediately evokes an anticipatory mood. The painting is an intriguing mixture of deep washes of

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23 Dufour said that his sumi work firmly established his career as an artist. It was an aesthetic and commercial success.
ink and bright expanses of white light. Brushstrokes engage in a sublimely choreographed dance of delicate and confident contrast. Dark, rolling clouds add to a sense of impending power as one waits for the skies to break apart in and the full power of the storm to thunder down upon the waiting water below. The colors are deep. A beam of rain forms a strong vertical line connecting the water and sky. Even the title suggests thunder and might as if at any moment, the god's booming voice will echo across the turbulent seas.

The concept of raw force unleashed is replayed in many of Dufour's landscapes. Volcanoes erupt, spewing fiery, molten rock. Storms boil across watery horizons. Waves crest high above the waterline, just on the brink of crashing down in a violent spray. The concepts are introduced repeatedly though always from a different perspective or later, via a new medium such
as stained glass, woodcut or paint. Relevant too is the idea of multiples. This fact is amply illustrated by the sheer number of these works, each one unique, that Dufour has executed over the years. His studio walls are hung with his latest stormy moments. They are smaller than many of the earlier paintings and brightly hued. The waters roll more gently. Bright, watercolor waves reflect the light of a calmer sky. The tone of the conversation has mellowed, though the images suggest a lingering power.

While Dufour unleashed the angry voices of Jupiter and Medusa through sumi ink, he was also initiating a conversation with God via stained glass. Dufour is perhaps most celebrated for his numerous stained glass commissions and free hanging panels. Spirituality has long been a component of his work and the movement towards liturgical art flowed naturally from his philosophical and artistic interests. The work enhances the sacred feeling of the space in several ways. It is an expression of devotion for both the members of the commissioning church and the artist. The brilliance of the colors and beauty of the designs pay tribute to the majesty of God. Immersion in a bath of light physically and emotionally allows the celebrant to participate in the presence of spirit. Symbolically, the prismatic hues create a complete experience of the multiplicity of God. Everyone approaches spirituality in his unique way. Each part of the window represents a metaphysical way of seeing. The validity of a particular fragment of glass rests on its perfection as an individual and its contribution to the integrity of the whole. So, the medium of glass ideally suits the communicative impulse Dufour experiences in terms of epistemology. His work filters sunlight in churches across the country.

The success of the glasswork lies mostly on Dufour’s shoulders because he is self-taught. The story of his education in glass, including a seven-month sabbatical in Europe, highlights his continuing commitment to growth and experimentation. He attained a mastery of aesthetic foundations and superb flexibility in applying an extensive conceptual and visual language to any
medium according to what the moment requires. At the time of his first commission in 1961, the art of stained glass had faded into obscurity. Very few art schools taught glass as part of their studio curriculum. Dufour was asked to create a façade for the Capitol Bank and Trust Building in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and he accepted the challenge although he did not know how to do it. No working glass studio that he contacted was willing to tell him their methods or provide any guidance at all. He literally started from nothing. That is, nothing except his excellent education and natural talents. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of composition, color and line, Dufour approached the project from a design perspective. He considered the space as an extended canvas. Glass was his color and lead was his line. Up to this point, much of his work featured obsessive compartmentalization of space. The surface was dissected into smaller fragmented areas of varied texture or color or both. This tendency naturally applied itself to the medium of stained glass. Panels are comprised of many smaller forms united by lead channels. Lead comes in several sizes and widths and Dufour uses these functional tools as a compositional device. Line quality resurfaces in the undulating metalwork. In a glass panel or window, Dufour's lead transcends its function as joinery to become a delicate tracery of silvery line. At night, when the colored glass does not shine, the combination of thick and thin leading takes precedence.
creating a new and unique way of considering the piece. In daylight, Dufour’s expanded palette dominates the eye. Every imaginable color is combined with deft confidence. Suggestion of a sumi wash appears in a wavy mottled piece of glass. Different thicknesses, textures, clarities and finishes are employed in the same way he would use watercolor or the opacity of gouache in a painting. He could handle the commission visually and aesthetically. The technical execution proved a greater obstacle. Dufour researched the history of stained glass in collaboration with an art historian friend. Then he taught himself how to do it by simply doing it. With the confidence of a beginner who does not know what is impossible, he created 720 feet of window and he did it very well.

Other commissions soon came flooding in and Dufour’s reputation and ability as a glass artist grew rapidly (Fig. 25-26). Dufour designed and built large stained glass elements and mixed media, liturgical pieces including candelabras, furniture, and mosaic stations of the cross. Architectural glass pieces sprung up amidst the paintings, drawings and other creative endeavors that filled Dufour’s hours. By the late sixties, Dufour taught as a full professor in the glass curriculum he founded. In 1971, an MFA program was approved and Dufour earned a Graduate Council on Research Award to go to Europe and study Gothic art, glass, and architecture. He took a second sabbatical to Europe seven years later. These expeditions provided fresh insight into the technology and principles of stained glass. For example, Dufour broadened his use of glass as a purely flat color element to include an expanded utilization of the dimensional effects of light shining through color. This was a complete breakthrough. The medium served as both object and activated movement. In much the same way that the white space on a blank sheet of rice paper became a catalyst for Dufour’s mastery of brush and ink, the relationship of light and color in a space lit by stained glass windows catapulted the artist to a deeper level of understanding of the nature of the medium. Inspired harmony with a medium is the place where art is made.
Intimacy with principles of line, space, color and respect for the inherent properties of materials blossomed with Dufour's engagement in the spirit of the countries he visited. A third journey in 1988, this one to the Hambidge Foundation in Rabun Gap, Georgia, strengthened his theories of composition. Mary Crovatt Hambidge founded this artist's retreat in 1934 in honor of her late husband Jay. It is nestled on 600 acres in northeastern Georgia. Mr. Hambidge was an artist, scholar and author who explored design principles and wrote *The Elements of Dynamic Symmetry* as a result of his findings. Using ancient Greek art and architecture as his model, Hambidge believed that the key to classical design was a deliberate employment of natural laws of balance and proportion found in plants, animals, and humans. He broke these laws down into mathematical models that he applied to his own work and to the analysis of famous Greek and Egyptian monuments such as the Parthenon. He wrote, "These plan schemes, which we find so abundantly in Art, are nothing more than symmetry, using the word in the Greek sense of analogy; literally it signifies the relationship which the composing elements of form in design, or in an organism in nature, bear to the whole. In design it is the thing which governs the just balance of variety in unity." 24 The design model referred to by Hambidge is also widely known as the *Golden Mean*. A geometric visualization will show that each smaller piece of the design is to the larger as

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the larger is to the sum of both (Fig. 27). Composition classes tell a student to position elements off center rather than in the middle of a page. This is a principle of dynamic symmetry.

Examination of Dufour’s work accomplished during this time show his adherence to the theory. All of his work, in fact, is based in these design principles. A series of ten sumi paintings and two images in pencil were executed during his two-month residency, during which Paul Dufour painted in sublime solitude and peace.

Figure 28a. HAMBIDGE SUITE: #2: DUSK 1988 Sumi 27”x39.75”

Hambidge Suite #2: Dusk (Fig. 28a), is a prime example of Hambidge principles. A vertical rectangular area on the right side stands out from the rest of the composition. It is lighter in color for emphasis. The area acts as an open curtain letting in a greater intensity of light and action. It also creates depth and anchors the rest of the stormy seascape. Within this framework, smaller sections are also visually divided through the use of light, color intensity and shape. Compositionally, it springs from the pages of Hambidge’s mathematical studies (Fig. 28b, 29-30).

Analysis of other Dufour works reveals the consistent use of this system.

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In summary, every travel opportunity contributed to the growing technical and conceptual catalog in Paul Dufour’s mind. He practiced line quality and brushwork in Japan, researched the creation of sacred space and the interplay of light and color in the great cathedrals of Europe, and explored natural symmetry and the human understanding of composition and design in the Walden-like solitude of the Hambidge retreat. Each creative enterprise, although experienced fully in the present, drew on Dufour’s extensive repertoire to formulate an appropriate and finely wrought artwork.
**Picasso**

**you give us things**

**which**

**bulge:grunting lungs pumped full of sharp thick mind**

**you make us shrill**

**presents always**

**shut in the sumptuous screech of**

**simplicity**

**(out of the**

**black unbunged**

**Something gushes vaguely a squeak of planes**

**or**

**between squeals of**

**Nothing grabbed with circular shrieking tightness**

**solid screams whispers,**

**Lumberman of the Distinct**

**your brain’s**

**axe only chops hugest inherent**

**Trees of Ego,from**

**whose living and biggest**

**bodies lopped**

**of every**

**prettiness**

**you hew form truly**

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**Seventy Perfect Little Pictures**, created in 1975, is an important piece to consider because it contains a sample of many of the conceptual and visual moments that together describe the prolific output of Paul Dufour. Just as a patchwork quilt is a visual record of the clothing that a family has owned and recycled into a final work of art that is separate yet intrinsically connected to

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the history of the household, *Seventy Perfect Little Pictures* collects the visual vocabulary of Dufour into a single canon. It illustrates where he has been and has some foretelling of his future directions as well. It was created in the middle of his career and thus serves as a useful dividing line. The mixed media image also connects many of the principles of Dufour’s artistic focus by virtue of their presence in the piece.

The collage on paper consists of seventy square areas connected visually to the whole yet fully unique in their appearance or material. They are all part of a single work. Many of the separate elements are drawn from specific past pieces. Others suggest future directions for his expression. Through hindsight, early manifestations of later stylistic approaches are clearly illustrated. The overall composition is also important because it ties the apparently discordant parts into a unified work. A parallel between the creation and contemplation of this piece and the attempt to reach an overall view of Dufour’s career via the minutiae of his individual works cannot be denied. When circumstance fits together into such a happy rhythm it seems natural to follow the beat. (Fig. 30a)
One is immediately struck by the vibrant colors that form a unifying system in the collage. Deep pinks, blues and reds frame a smaller rectangular area situated slightly left of center. Its position is in harmony with the symmetrical principles organized by Hambidge and embraced by Dufour. The presence of bright white space and lighter shades of lavender, yellow and green reinforce this visual balance (Fig. 32). Fragmented forms are embedded in a fairly geometric grid covering the image surface. The lines draw seventy small tableaus together into a unit. They also suggest lead channels connecting parts of a stained glass window. At the top right corner, sumi wash reminds us of inky storms on wind swept oceans, images that surface repeatedly during the years that Dufour has been making art (Fig. 33-corresponds to red square on Fig. 31b.). Recognizable parts of former works are scattered among the perfect little pictures (Fig. 34 – corresponds to orange circle on Fig. 31b.). For example, bright red and pink flowers on the right center edge of the main picture resemble boldly drawn blooms in an oil pastel from 1970 (Fig. 35).

Figure 31b. SEVENTY PERFECT LITTLE PICTURES image details in red and orange
Figure 32. SEVENTY PERFECT LITTLE PICTURES composition detail in blue
Figure 33. SEVENTY PERFECT LITTLE PICTURES Sumi detail
Figure 34. SEVENTY PERFECT LITTLE PICTURES Flower detail
Figure 35. WINDOW BOX II 1970 Oil Pastel 30”x40”
Amidst the various squares, examples of the prolific range of media and subject matter visibly connected this sampler to other Dufour pieces. Washes, collages and stamped papers are arranged next to figurative fragments of a chin or a classically posed body. Some areas are obsessively filled with line and pattern- a form of horror vacui. Others peacefully reflect a clear uncluttered surface of saturated color. In this piece, several contrasts stand out: detail and simplicity, poly and monochromatic palettes, watery soft lines and razor sharp precision. Realistically rendered narrative images lie adjacent to abstract and non-representational forms. In Dufour’s art, the more you look, the more you see. So it is in this microcosmic echo of his extensive body of work. Sustained investigation of the seventy pictures prepares the viewer to make order out of the prodigious amount of work that Dufour has made in the last fifty years. For these reasons, the piece is perfect.

If Seventy Perfect Little Pictures could be considered a visual sampler, then the front window at Christ the King Catholic Church on the Louisiana State University Campus is a fully realized masterpiece. This work combines impeccable design, practical application of composition principles, fluid line, vibrant color and intelligent consideration of architectural space. It was executed in October 2000 in collaboration with Dufour's long time friend, business partner and former student, Samuel J. Corso. It is Dufour’s self-proclaimed swan song (Fig. 36-37).

Figure 36. Christ the King Church interior – before P.A.D. glass installation
Figure 37. Christ the King Church interior – after P.A.D. glass installation
The central window design embodies many ideas and experiences that have accumulated in Dufour’s memory. The narrative behind the abstraction is appropriate to a discussion of the church, the congregation that worships in the space and the artist himself. A majority of attendees at Christ the King are university students. With this fact in mind, Dufour designed a flowing wave of deepest blue as the central element of the main window. He says it symbolizes the transition of a student from freshman to graduate. It speaks of the movement of entire student bodies through the college community. The progression of lives is cyclic like the ebb and flow of an ocean tide.

The bold, undulating band of cobalt surges through an ordered, almost medieval pattern of supplementary window space. Multicolored rectangles form tidy, formal rows. Etched lines reinforce the schematic regularity of the panels. They are in strong contrast with the single, wide wave that bisects them horizontally. Tall pillars and a strong pediment form a massive temple-like entrance into the space. A balcony and clerestory call to mind European cathedrals. The open floor plan and broad expanses of glass doors add an aspect of modernity to the architecture. It is the perfect foil for Dufour’s art. Another way to consider it is that Dufour created a masterful, beautiful and intensely appropriate glass window that meets the specific demands of the space and its congregation seamlessly. It is indeed a pièce de résistance and as such, speaks to us about the brilliant path Dufour has painted, formed and cut throughout his career.

Like the flowing water he designed, the artist is continuously moving and changing. His countless works collectively form a vast stream like thousands of raindrops filling a riverbed. He is a force of nature tempered by the wisdom and sensitivity of a lifetime spent paying attention to an essential conversation between a man and the world.
REFERENCES


Kristin Marya ‘Malia’ Krolak earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy from Louisiana State University in 1990. After a disappointing brush with the corporate world, and various jobs as a reference librarian, Montessori school teacher and book seller, she decided to go back to school to pursue her passion for art. A second undergraduate degree in ceramics, awarded in 1999, brought her closer to her ultimate goal of happiness. She decided to utilize her philosophical background and combine love of art with an affinity for conceptual and historical investigation and earned a master's degree in art history. Her M.A degree specialty lies in the realm of Asian art, specifically the arts of China. Several trips to Europe and Asia fed her interest in cross cultural exchanges and world history. This area is a path she might take for further studies. The decision to write about Paul A. Dufour was made after a summer working for him in his glass studio in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Here was an artist of highest caliber living and creating fine work outside of the usual New York, big city venue. It was an opportunity to learn about a great artist first hand. His unfettered use of multiple materials, experience with master painters and extensive travels to Asia and Europe followed the interdisciplinary, international, approach that was of keen interest to Ms. Krolak. The subsequent experience fulfilled her hopes completely.

Ms. Krolak currently works as the Coordinator and Curator for the Louisiana State University School of Art Gallery. Since, her ultimate aim of happiness includes constant exposure to art and creativity, the fit between woman and work is seamless.