tary decision is to defeat the enemy not at his weakest but at his strongest point." (Peter Green, *Alexander the Great,* New York: Praeger, 1970.) Just so have I found that a direct confrontation of difficulties at their worst is the best starting point for action.

17 JANUARY

The *Arundel* paintings are installed in the Baltimore Museum of Art. An easy installation. We reduced their number to eight and they seemed to place themselves, even to stretch themselves luxuriously once they were hung. I wish I could be as serene as they looked yesterday after we had finished. I can, and I think I do, use my head on the business of exhibiting, but there is an irreducible strain. It is easier than last winter but—I guess because I am trying to do it all more plainly, without excitement—my spirit rises only sluggishly to the challenge.

19 JANUARY

But there are pleasures too in exhibiting. Flowers abound all over the house; friends encircle me. This is the period I always think of as comparable to the protection given an elephant in labor. When, after almost two years of gestation, she is ready to deliver her child, the herd forms a circle around her. A particular friend helps her in her labor and coaxes the baby into vitality. The circle remains intact until the mother and child are ready to travel. Then the herd moves on, larger by one member.

Anne Truitt, Daybook, 1984

20 JANUARY

The Baltimore exhibit is now open. The reaction was exactly what it always is. Some, most, simply cannot "see" the work at all. One of my children overheard the scornful remark, "Well, I never did think Anne Truitt was much of an artist."

This failure to see is not only psychological but also can apparently be physical. A physicist explained to me during dinner at the museum last night about the macula lutea, a yellow retinal filter that circumscribes the fovea. Foveal vision, which determines our apprehension of line, is limited by its cellular nature to the perception of red and green only. This perceptive acuity apparently varies little from person to person. The saturation of yellow in the macula lutea, however, varies considerably. It is the nature of this filter that determines our perception of blues. Thus, some people, those with concentrated yellow in the macula lutea, are literally unable to see close changes of hue on the blue end of the spectrum.

I always take off my glasses to mix color. This must be an instinctive shift in attention away from foveal vision, specific and limited to red-green sensitivity, toward a concentration on the entire possible range of subtle hue and value discrimination. In addition, since all glass absorbs blue light, removing my glasses increases the amount of blue light reaching my eyes.

These facts seem to me relevant to the apprehension of the *Arundel* paintings, which depend for their perception on both foveal and nonfoveal vision. The lines in them are sometimes so widely spaced that they cannot be seen simultaneously, and the fields of white in which these lines act

depend for their understanding on peripheral vision; that is, on the entire range of sight from all the way left to all the way right.

Earlier this morning I was swept by waves of sorrow as imperative as the blizzard now blowing outside my window. A memento mori. The *Arundel* paintings—which came in, so to speak, from nowhere—will remain here "in the where" while I will ultimately go out into nowhere. I rejoice in their existence. But each objectification is a subjective diminishment.

23 JANUARY

Are there wounds that never heal? Yes. When accurately pricked, they bleed as freshly, but not as long, as when first pierced.

I like sometimes to think of my past as laid out like the relief maps of my childhood: Particolored, motley-textured, lush here, arid there, pocked with craters events have blown or scraped out. Certain areas are bogged with pain, but there are tufts of tough grass that I have nurtured carefully so I can traverse these places with relative safety. Occasionally my foot slips, and I plunge.

24 JANUARY

Reaction to the *Arundel* exhibit seems to be rather more than negative, verging on the vicious.

A mystery confounds the problem of industry in art. In the last analysis, to work is simply not enough. But we have to act as if it were, leaving reward aside.

People who set their sails into art tend to work very hard. They train themselves in school; they practice and they read and they think and they talk. But for most of them there seems to be a more or less conscious cutoff point. It can be a point in time: "I will work until I am twenty-one [twenty-five, thirty, or forty]." Or a point in effort: "I will work three hours a day [or eight, or ten]." Or a point in pleasure: "I will work unless . . ." and here the "enemies of promise" harry the result. These are personal decisions, more or less of individual will. They depend on the scale of values according to which artists organize their lives. Artists have a modicum of control. Their development is open-ended. As the pressure of their work demands more and more of them, they can stretch to meet it. They can be open to themselves, and as brave as they can be to see who they are, what their work is teaching them. This is never easy. Every step forward is a new clearing through a thicket of reluctance and habit and natural indolence. And all the while they are at the mercy of events. They may have a crippling accident, or may find themselves yanked into a lifelong responsibility such as the necessity to support themselves and their families. Or a war may wipe out the cultural context on which they depend. Even the most fortunate have to adjust the demands of a personal obsession to the demands of daily life.

I have found this adjustment tricky. I began working in sculpture in 1948. Married, I had to fit my own work into a schedule of shopping, cooking, housecleaning, entertaining, and—very often—moving from city to city. My first child was born in 1955, followed by two more in 1958 and 1960. By 1961, when all of a sudden my work took a quantum jump into a range I recognized as preemptive, demanding, undeniable, totally categorical for me, I had a large and complicated setup within which I had to operate.

My husband was an enterprising journalist, which in Washington means a lot of entertaining and being entertained—very time-consuming, and energy-consuming too. I was expected to enter into his life with commitment to his career. And, within the context of marriage as we had defined it without thinking too much about it, I felt I should do so. My husband and I were both hospitable. We had houseguests continuously. Having been traditionally brought up, it did not occur to me to fight against this situation. I simply took it for granted that I had to fit what I wanted to do within it. My children were at that time six, three, and one. Their care came first. Doctors' appointments, reading to them, rocking the baby to sleep, car pools—all that had to be done, and done as well as I could, before I could turn to myself. Confronted by this situation, I made two major decisions.

The first was to invest in myself, as needed, the money I had inherited from my family. I simply poured my capital into my work. Fortunately—and indeed, more than fortunately, crucially—my husband underwrote the household expenses and I was able to have a very faithful live-in maid who was my friend as well and who shared household responsibilities with me. So I used my financial resources to the hilt.

The second major decision was to increase my energy output and to use it as wisely and as fully as I could. Again fortunately, during the years from 1948 to 1961 I had formed the habit of working in my studio almost every single day. Rain or shine, eager or dragging my feet, I just plain forced myself to work. This habitual discipline came up under me to support my revved-up schedule. I simply got up early every morning and worked straight through the day in one way or another,

either in my household or in my studio. Before I went to sleep, I loosely organized the following day's schedule—loosely because there were, of course, always unexpected events. But I tried to hold course in accordance with my values: first—husband, children, household; second—my work. The periods of time left over from my practical responsibilities were spent in the studio. If there were fifteen minutes between shopping and carpool, I used them. If I had an hour, or two hours, I rejoiced, but didn't even waste time feeling happy, just worked.

Something graceful and to be cherished, something delicate and sweet fell by the board with this obsession, which, in essence, still remains a mystery to me. Why am I so obsessed? I do not know.

One element is clear, however, and that is that the capacity to work feeds on itself and has its own course of development. This is what artists have going for them. From 1948 to 1961, I worked out of obsession, but obsession served by guilt: I felt uncomfortable if I failed to work every possible working day. In 1961, to my total astonishment, the guilt dropped away, replaced by an effortless, unstrained, well-motivated competence that I very soon was able simply to take for granted.

25 JANUARY

Two floors underground in the Washington Hilton Hotel yesterday afternoon, elevated by six inches of platform skirted with a red-pleated frill, I sat on a panel of five artists discussing how to endure in art. We said a good deal, but it all came down in the end to a stubborn feeling on our part that you just had to keep on going no matter what, and in

the face of not knowing what the results would be. It was Jack Tworkov who said it best. "Sometimes when you finish a painting," he said, "you look at it and it looks all right and that's a little touch of grace."

Alexander Giampietro, who taught me sculpture at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Washington from September 1948 to December 1949, appeared at the discussion. He is a noble man. I am blessed to have had him as a teacher and always knew so, but know it better in my maturity.

Alex's Italianness had a lot to do with placing my feet firmly in art. He radiates the Renaissance. His natural setting is Florence, in some open wooden structure strewn with tools and blocks of marble, ringing with the blows of mallet on chisel, and flooded with honey yellow light moted with marble dust. When I studied with him, I saw him thus, he the master, I the apprentice. I copied from him the muscular patterns of art, in a glow of enthusiasm partly generated by Alex's vitality and partly by my own romantic imagination and partly by a natural aptitude for movement, for action. And, as cogently, by my own passionate interest in process. I learned with the intentness of the child who had stood on short legs to watch the moist bricks go into the kiln and come out a different color, hot and hard.

Giampietro's training was as natural to me as breathing. I never stopped to question or even to think much. I just absorbed every single bit of information with every single bit of my body. The warmth of hardening plaster deepened my love for its having lent itself fluently to my hand. Plaster has such grace. Working with it is like making love. And the same with clay. The fascination of mixing clay: the wedging

of earth colors, minerals, back into the earth in order to make a new earth all of your own conception, consciously brought into being. The delicate strength of tools for work in clay and plaster; the ways in which they adroitly extend the sensual ability of the hand; their actual beauty in themselves—wire bound to wood, steel-toothed and curved and pimpled with rasp. My hands loved, too, the feel between them of what they had formed. This love is like that I later felt for my babies, the same quality of profound sensuous satisfaction. Nothing is missing from it. All is there, globed, whole, full, perfect.

It was not my eyes or my mind that learned. It was my body. I fell in love with the process of art, and I've never fallen out of it. I even loved the discomforts. At first my arms ached and trembled for an hour or so after carving stone; I remember sitting on the bus on the way home and feeling them shake uncontrollably. My blouse size increased by one as my shoulders broadened with muscle. My whole center of gravity changed. I learned to move from a center of strength and balance just below my navel. From this place, I could lift stones and I could touch the surface of clay as lightly as a butterfly's wing. I watched Alex move, and I copied. I watched how he paced himself, never hurrying and never stopping—except to sit in the sun occasionally—and I copied. I listened when he spoke of the turns of the earth and the moon and the stars in an order of which we, in our bustling studio, were a part. We must never forget this order, he kept saying, always place ourselves in proportion to it, always resound with it. I felt as if I had come home as I listened. When his seventh child was due to be born, he waited for the birth on the turn of the moon. On the twilight November evenings just before Sam's

birth, I remember looking at the sky and waiting myself for the moon's turn, which, sure enough, heralded his birth as it had that of Alex's child.

Never in all those golden quattrocento months during which I sat at Alex's feet was there a tawdry syllable. His purity enclosed and guarded ours. The world was, of course, out there. Occasionally I would pick up from him some anxiety, or we students would mention personal troubles, but only in intervals of application to our study. Talk about exhibiting was very rare. We were encouraged to feel secure, like the children we were, in art. Alex guarded our artistic childhood so we could mature like melons in the sun, growing slowly into sweetness. When I left his workshop, I took with me as his legacy this feeling of security, and it remains with me. In my studio I feel at home with myself, peaceful at heart, remote from the world, totally immersed in a process so absorbing as to be its own reward.

And so I was saved, in great part by the sanity of Giampietro's purity of heart and purpose, from the suffering the panel discussion of the 24th laid bare to my view: that of thinking of worldly result in the studio.

3 FEBRUARY

Yesterday I stood at the lectern in the Baltimore Museum of Art with my feet flat on the floor, my back straight, and my arms stretched comfortably out to the sides of the shelf. Twice my shoulders felt stiff and I relaxed them. Once I heard my voice tremble and I strengthened it. Speaking at first into a dark pit that only later as my eyes adjusted to the light became

visible as an audience, I felt alone, as I do in the studio. This is a good feeling for me. I was able to speak straight out of it.

Only one saddening note. My oldest friend, whom I have known ever since I can remember any friend at all, had driven some miles to hear me talk. When I saw her standing patiently at the back of a group waiting to speak to me after the lecture, I felt the bleak edge of separation, one of the subtle prices implicit in being a public figure, even in so modest a way.

Last night I slept well, and awoke this morning refreshed. I have quite a new feeling that I will be able to do this kind of lecture again with relative competence and ease. The experience gained at the Corcoran School of Art and at the University of South Carolina, plus the fact that I had thoroughly prepared and rehearsed the lecture, have combined to place me on a firm foundation.

During the question-and-answer period, I was asked where I thought art came from, from what part of the mind. I answered that I did not know but I thought it possible to put one's self in the way of art much in the same way that cloistered devotees place themselves in the way of religious experience. Art comes, if we are blessed with what Jack Tworkov called a "little touch of grace," into the highest part of the mind, that with which we can know the presence of God. But we have to pay attention to that area in order to notice the grace, or even perhaps to attract it.

When I painted a chair recently, I noticed that I put the paint on indifferently, smoothly but without particular attention. The results were satisfactory but not in any sense beautiful. Does the attention in itself with which paint is applied in art actually change the effect of the paint? Does

the kind of consciousness with which we act determine the quality of our actions? It would follow, if this were true, that the higher the degree of consciousness, the higher the quality of the art. I think it likely. Training in art is, then, a demand that students increase the consciousness with which they employ techniques that are, in themselves, ordinary.

7 FEBRUARY

Intellect can examine the force commonly called "God" only when it is manifest in phenomena, themselves limited to sensory apprehension. Its very use logically precludes knowledge of the force itself, such use being ipso facto rooted in duality: subject and object. This sound argument leads me flat up against the realization that, as clearly as I have ever known any fact, I know the existence of God. What with, is the question. It must necessarily be with equipment sensitive to a different range from that of my ordinary senses, which are firmly organized by my intellect. Here the facts of my own experience lead me, inexorably, to the postulation of a range in my own sensitivity that lies beyond my immediate consciousness.

9 FEBRUARY

I feel a little brittle and have decided to try to go to Ossabaw Island, off the coast of Georgia, for two weeks in late March. Work thins me out. We, my sculptures and I, are symbiotic while they are in process. My energy nourishes them to completion. And their completion depletes me.

Last night I didn't take off my work clothes until bedtime,

hoping to get back into the studio, but was in the end too tired to go. It just doesn't work well for me to push like that. And dinner is no fun for the children and me if I am on the wing.

12 FEBRUARY

Ramon Osuna of Pyramid Gallery here in Washington has suggested that I have an exhibit in the spring. And André Emmerich and I have decided to postpone my exhibit in New York with him until April 12th. For some mysterious reason, maybe because this particular exhibit for his gallery keeps kaleidoscoping in my mind, I feel enormously relieved, let off the hook. He proposes a small sculpture exhibit in the little room in which he customarily shows drawings at the Fifty-seventh Street gallery. So the plans fall into place: the Emmerich exhibit will open on April 12th and the Pyramid, also a sculpture exhibit, three days later.

I am glad that both will be in the spring. There is a grievous feeling around these days and we pick it up through our psychological pores, like pickles in brine. I understand the blessing of laughter better than I used to, having—I hope—outlasted some of the portentous solemnity to which, when I am tired or frightened or insecure, I am sadly prone. A light heart has more virtue than romantic agony.

17 FEBRUARY

At the beach a few days ago, sitting in my long wrapper and my Pooh Bear jacket on a round piling stump, steaming coffee mug in hand, facing across the pale sand into the rising sun, I