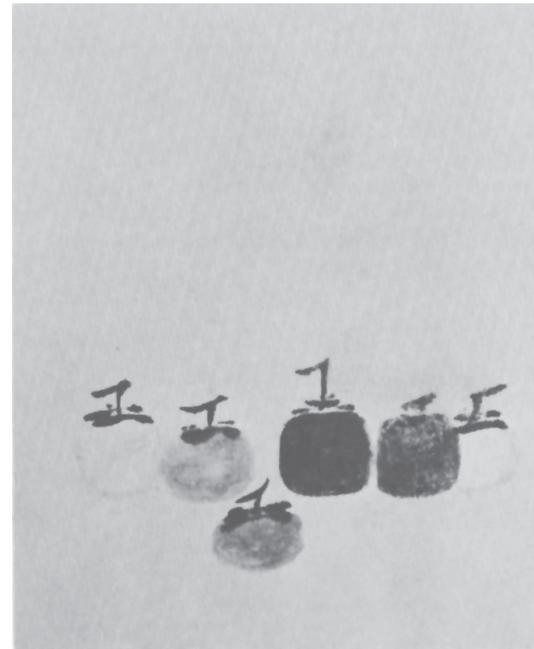


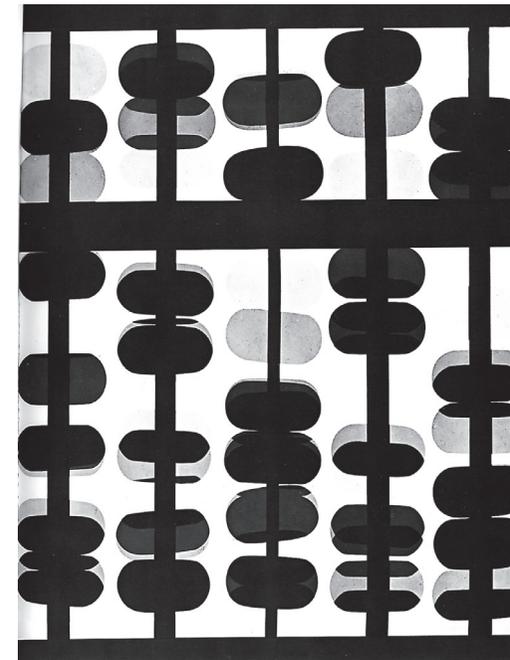
Mu Ch'i

This monochrome, Persimmons, by Mu Ch'i, a thirteenth century Zen priest and painter, is a splendid example of a painting in which the artist plays with contrasts (the male and female principle in Chinese and Japanese painting): rough and smooth, empty and full, one and many, line and mass, black and white, tint and shade, up and down. It is a study in the metamorphosis of a fruit, as well as of a painting. (The artist, incidentally, never used any color but black.)

The reader may find a parallel, at least in spirit, between this painting and the preceding one by Picasso. Both employ a single color, and exploit this limitation to achieve as much variety as possible, and both undoubtedly were painted very rapidly, a condition often conducive to utmost simplification and improvisation.



The Photogram



The idea of the photogram or cameraless photography goes back as far as the 19th century with Fox Talbot's photogenic drawings. In our time the pioneers of photography without use of a camera were Christian Schad, Man Ray, Moholy Nagy, and Kurt Schwitters. Among the first to apply this technique in advertising was the constructivist El Lissitzky. Later, Picasso experimented with the photogram. In advertising, the photogram has yet to be fully exploited.

Although the effectiveness of the photogram depends chiefly on straight-forward mechanical methods (light on sensitized paper), it offers the designer ample opportunity for aesthetic, manual control. In a sense, it is not a picture of the object but the object itself; and, as in stroboscopic photography, it makes picturization of continuous movement possible as in this photogram of an abacus, by the author. Although some of its effects may be approximated with pen, brush, or scissors, the quality inherent in the subtle light modulations can be achieved, perhaps, only by means of the photogram.