



Andrew Drummond
Images from Another Archaeology
15 December 1989 – 14 February 1990
An Auckland City Art Gallery Artist's Project

North Gallery
A Place for Supporting Limbs and Vessels 1989
copper, slate and alder

Andrew Drummond

Images from Another Archaeology

15 December 1989 – 14 February 1990

An Auckland City Art Gallery Artist's Project

Embodying Art

But just as the archaeologist builds up the walls of the building from the foundations that have remained standing, determines the number and positions of the columns from depressions in the floor and reconstructs the mural decorations and paintings from the remains found in the debris, so does the analyst proceed when he draws his inferences from the fragments of memories, from the associations and from the behaviour of the subject of analysis.

Sigmund Freud

Siting the Thought

That Freud should repeatedly have favoured archaeology as the analogue of his psychoanalytic explorations, and that Andrew Drummond should render his artistic explorations as *Images from Another Archaeology*, may seem a fragile coincidence. Or it will unless the fragmented physicality of the process of archaeological discovery and reconstruction is fully felt as a metaphor. Because for Freud, and for Drummond too, the archaeological shard is compulsively conceived as a very precise *kind* of fragment: a fragment of the body-self. And so, with Freud, and with Drummond, the reconstructive intent of archaeology is thought by analogy as the profoundly *corporeal* reconstruction of the self. For Freud, in an indispensably pivotal remark, 'The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego.'⁷² And for Drummond, in a remarkably sustained sequence of artistic thinking over a decade, art is first and foremost a bodily art.' Of neither, in the absence of the sense of body, of body as the repository of meaning for the self, is understanding plausible or even possible.

Of course Freud's recognition of the corporeal network of meaning by which the self comes to know itself is a conceptual and philosophical recognition. Drummond's recognition is more intimately – often more injuriously – personal, and disclosed in a form of visual thinking which neither seeks nor requires an invocation of theory. The meanings of the body are, for the artist, revealed in scarrings, ruptures, cripplement, malfunction – the meanings of ugliness which art seeks to bind and repair. If Freud measures Drummond's visual insights, then equally Drummond – any astute artist – measures Freud's theoretical insights.



Detail of a slate tablet
from *Repository for Dreams and Journeys* 1989

The astuteness of Drummond requires particular remark, though. For the mode of art which he practises – the multiply articulated sculptural assemblage – is perhaps the most perilous in all art. The mode works with large ideas, and demands – as large ideas must – a peculiar, rare, fluency of mind. In this, Drummond has been uniquely luminous for the mode of art in New Zealand. But the test for Drummond, in the international spread of his art,

can only be international. And, insofar as there is lineage for this mode of art (and sometimes further, in crude look-alike thinking of art, a presumed patriline for Drummond) in the influential work of Joseph Beuys, then there is one criterion. It is inconceivable, though, that the taut visual intelligence of the body with Drummond's art might disport itself in Beuysian sententiousness about 'sculpture of the social organism' or the claim that 'If human consciousness is changed, a

new conception of art will be formed.⁴ Fluency of mind in art is more demonstrated by a succinctness of human consciousness than by rambling alternations on the theme.

In succinct visual thinking, then, how does Drummond – in more prespacious patriline from Freud – figure the bodily fragments of self and consciousness?

Figuring the Body

In *Images from Another Archaeology* the body-self is articulated in three connecting spaces of the Auckland City Art Gallery. The heart of the work, *Transporter for an Outstretched Body*, occupies the corridor ramp linking the upper (south) gallery to the lower (north) gallery. The head of the work, *Repository for Dreams and Journeys*, occupies the upper gallery. The foundation, the cast, of the work, *A Place for Supporting Limbs and Vessels*, occupies the lower gallery.

Descriptive flatness – but flatter than that – is the propaedeutic of a first archaeological journey through the art: the primary sites are disclosed, the fragmented artefacts revealed, the possibilities of relation prefigured. But at first – one imagines the nervy awe of the archaeologist's first steps in an excavated, stratified site – the so-far unsynthesised shards arrest indiscriminate attention. Here, in the lower gallery, copper weavings depressed as if by some soft yet monumental weight. Here, in the corridor ramp, a fragile stripped-willow pole holds trigger-tension on a barrelling wheel. Here, in the upper gallery, incised slate tablets bear hieroglyphic messages, readable from strangely cushioned seats. It is, so far, an archaeology of artefact familiar in the scavenger-artist, the *bricoleur*, Drummond.⁵ Greedily, in the first flush of archaeological adventure and the delights of the *bricoleur's* cart, we seize upon beautiful things.

But, as the first journey through the spaces is completed, an insistence of bodily image through the artefacts begins to press. At the heart of the work, we see, a wall-mounted wheel bears an imprint of the chamber of the (male) human chest. In the foundational, cast belly of the work, we see that the copper-woven crutches are disposed for a prone human figure. At the head of the work, before what now seem like tablets of thought, we are invited to sit – or we have sat, for the beeswax cushionings of the stools are humanly impressed. The archaeological journey, it occurs, is a journey through the body: a map of art begins to form.

Mapping the Art

In the clustering images of art – any art – we find reconstructions, representations, reassemblings. There is not a propositional, narrative structure – else why visualise art at all? – but an accumulation of visualised, pictorial feelings. And, as the three chambers of *Images from Another*



Rotating device for a chest
– detail from *Transporter for an Outstretched Body* 1989

Archaeology are explored, those feelings fix in moods.

Repository for Dreams and Journeys, the head of the work, is a contemplative centre. Here, seated before the mind like some stilled scholar in an ancient library, archaeological shards of thoughts, of ideas, tablets of experience, are arrayed in front of us. There are interconnections, stratified layers, fractured edges which, like a jumbled jigsaw, clamour to fit. Yet, moving from thinking-seat to thinking-seat in this chamber, a unified perspective of reading is fugitive. The slate pages tell a fluid narrative, punctuated with precise, incised signs and symbols. There are sentences of life here, if only they could be parsed. And, the thought occurs, is this *my* cushioned seat for reading, this imprint of another bum?

Contemplation will slip in fatigue. In the heart of the work, *Transporter for an Outstretched Body*, the pump of living – battered and scarred with labour of hands and feet to drive it forward and up is perilously poised, propped in place, hair-triggered for relapse and descent. The bodily posture within the heart-wheel suggests Leonardo's Vitruvian man stretching the elastic square and circle by will alone. But, stopped, a frozen, chilling image is glimpsed through the

centre of the wheel: a memorial on the wall. It is the heart itself, its miniature valves spun out from the chest with a massive centrifugal force.

And then below, in the foundry of *A Place for Supporting Limbs and Vessels*, there is a cradle for the inert body: a resting-place and a last. Encased in glass on the walls are the tools for the fabrication of life; on the floor, a casting-box which models the wheel of the heart – but the glass is shattered. And beside the broken casting-box there is a stark, admonitory lectern – unoccupied – from where the lesson begins, and ends.

Bodily the Self

It is the lesson of Freud that the sense of the body is so primary, so ubiquitous, that it colours the self's very image of itself. It is a lesson discerned by the critic Adrian Stokes that 'art, and art alone, always haunted the position that...psychoanalysis has fortified impregnably with deep-dug entrenchments'.⁶ The images of art *are*, that is, the deep-dug, the delved, shards of a bodily archaeology of the self. And so, Stokes goes on to add in the painfully worked last essay, 'Art and Embodiment', written even as he was consumed by cancer:



Wall cabinet containing vessels
– detail from *A Place for Supporting Limbs and Vessels* 1989

whatever aesthetic object we contemplate, it serves also as a symbol for an aspect, or for many aspects, of our accumulated feelings and projections and introjections in regard to the body in which in our own selves and in the case of others we are tied not only indissolubly but without solution...⁷

Some time ago I wrote of the 'intensity of corporeal consciousness' which, for a decade, has

critically absorbed me in the art of Andrew Drummond – an absorption of thought which measures both Freud and Stokes.⁸ But as much as there is to absorb in such thinking, there is also the fear by which intensity makes itself known – the terrifying corporeal condition of *Images from Another Archaeology*.

Peter Leech

1 Sigmund Freud, 'Constructions in Analysis'; *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London 1953-), Vol. XXIII, p.259. For the same archaeological analogy see also Vol. IX, pp.40, 51; Vol. X, pp.176-7; Vol. XXI, pp.69-71.

2 Sigmund Freud, 'The ego and the id'; *Standard Edition*, op.cit., Vol. XIX, p.26.

3 Major works by the artist which explore the archaeology of the body include *Filter Action Aramoana* (1980), *Vein* (1981), *Nine Stoppages from the Journey of the Sensitive Cripple* (1982), *City Vein* (1983), *From the Valley Of the Shadow* (1984), *Vessels and Containers* (1987).

4 Cited in Christel Sauer, 'Josef Beuys'; catalogue of the Hallen für Neue Kunst, Schaffhausen, Switzerland (Schaffhausen 1986), pp.1-2.

5 The *bricoleur*, or 'handyman', who improvises only partly useful objects out of junk is a striking image originally used of human culture by Levi-Strauss. Discussion of the *bricoleur* issue in the philosophy of art can be found in, for example, Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects* (Harmondsworth 1975), pp.124-6.

6 Adrian Stokes, 'Art and Embodiment'; *The Critical Writings of Adrian Stokes*, ed. Lawrence Gowing (London 1978), Vol. III, p.328.

7 Adrian Stokes, 'Art and Embodiment'; op.cit., Vol. III, p.329.

8 Peter Leech, 'The Bodily Argument of Art', *Art New Zealand* 43, Winter 1987, pp.84-86. See also Peter Leech, 'Art and Narrative', *Art New Zealand* 16, pp.21-2; 'Process and Product', *Art New Zealand* 28, pp.16-17.

Brief Biography

Andrew Drummond was born in Nelson in 1951 and studied at Waterloo University in Canada. His work has been shown regularly in solo and group exhibitions in New Zealand and Australia since 1977 and more recently in England and Scotland. Drummond was Frances Hodgkins Fellow at the University of Otago in 1980; Artist in Residence in Orkney and Portsmouth in 1984; and Artist in Residence at the Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui, in 1987. Andrew Drummond is represented in all major collections in New Zealand. He lives in Auckland.

Works in this exhibition

North Gallery

A Place for Supporting Limbs and Vessels 1989
copper, slate and alder

South Gallery

Repository for Dreams and Journeys 1989
slate, beeswax, gold leaf and pigment

Ramp

Transporter for an Outstretched Body 1989
wood, copper, gold leaf, graphite and pigment

Design: Ross Ritchie
Editorial services: Michael Gilkins Associates
Typesetting: Artspec Imaging Ltd, Auckland
Printing: Academy Press, Auckland

ISBN 0 86463 175 8

Published on the occasion of
Images from Another Archaeology
An Auckland City Art Gallery Artist's Project
15 December 1989 – 14 February 1990



South Gallery
Repository for Dreams and Journeys 1989
slate, beeswax, gold leaf and pigment



Ramp

Transporter for an Outstretched Body 1989
wood, copper, gold leaf, graphite and pigment