

# Andrew Fekete

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*Nature is a temple where living pillars*

*Let escape sometimes confused words;*

From Charles Baudelaire *Correspondences*

The work of autodidact Andrew Fekete was made in the context of the sixties and seventies. Despite the separation of time between this period and that of the early twentieth century, Andrew Fekete's work parallels the genesis of twentieth century painting – a genesis which also went hand in hand with an appreciation for the visionary.

The period between 1976 and 1982 in which he did most of his painting and graphical work can be considered as an uncommonly intensive and productive one; it displays a diversity of styles that merits explanation. This is all the more so when we consider the early death of the artist and the relatively short period of time of his creative output, which also includes architectural projects and literary activities. His artistic oeuvre, produced over a period of less than a decade, encompasses almost every significant current of the avant-garde, ranging from geometric abstractionism, which touches upon the influence of his education in architecture, to a lyrical version of surrealism. Upon examination his work displays the characteristic hallmarks of the different stylistic epochs of the twentieth century; these all appear within the duration of his creative output. Nonetheless, this may be attributed to an instinctive desire on the artist's part to constantly develop and experiment with the symbols manifest in his work, and not to any specific attention on his part to the history of art per se. His art spans all the typical means of expression of the avant-garde and their corresponding intentions; yet goes beyond them as a result of the development, without pretence, of subconscious connections between his symbols and the imagery of the avant-garde. For example, Andrew Fekete's art reflects equally the detached imagery of fragmentation present in cubism and the soft musicality of the distinctive period of early abstractionism, and this representation may be looked upon as allusions to or quotations from these movements; nonetheless, his symbols are imbued with an excess of meaning that requires explanation. It would be vain to look for exact parallels to other artists, as it is not possible to demonstrate the extensive influence of any artist or single work upon his work; consequently, we must seek in another field for those impulses that affected his artistic evolution

*„Noli foreas ire, in interiore homine habitat veritas.*

*Do not seek outside of yourself; the truth lies within.*

(C.G Jung after Augustinus)

While the events of his life cannot be established objectively, we can definitely identify the correspondence that we are seeking in his subjective experience of the parallel between his world view and that of C.G. Jung. In his memoir, the *Voyage into Night*, which is one of the fragments that has come down to us, Andrew Fekete recalls visions and recurring dreams from his childhood; in his Diary he consciously reflects upon the duality of his ego, which is a phenomenon that Jung also writes about in relation to his own experiences as a youth; in these writings see the difficulty that a person confronts in the face of a natural dissociation between his first and second personality, that is, between the inner and outer person. Like Jung, Andrew Fekete expects the process of art to liberate him from the pressing issues of ego-bound consciousness; issues that manifest themselves in dreams and visions, while the works themselves were constructed in trances. Subsequently, he strives to interpret the subconscious contents of his pictures that describe those dreams and visions. (See C. G. Jung *Liber Novus*.) For Andrew Fekete's the purpose of a work of art was to make the imagery of a dream sensible. In this process, the imagery - the scene - and the manifest work that go beyond both of these, stand upon the boundary line between two the different spheres of conscious life that were at conflict in his own nature; we gain an insight into the "invisible", that is to say, his work mediates for us the reality of the "inner person". His imaginary spaces, which are plastically depicted on paper, have a psycho-physiological meaning, because they render into this visible world his experience from another world, experience that is almost tangible and sometimes almost audible.

What kind of reality is recorded by Andrew Fekete's symbols? The geometric spaces of the black and white graphite drawings from 1979 attempt the complete deconstruction of the vision. *Intersections I, II and III* create a space that recedes towards the vanishing point at infinity by means of a random selection of light and dark passages, and relate to the mystical source of light that are known from the windows of Delunay or the compositions of rayonism, this makes the space into a living one. At times, (*The Sentinel, The Ruins of the Burial Vault*) this strict geometry is exchanged for compositions that are constructed from organic forms which make the spatial element all the more palpable. These spaces appear repeatedly as depicted between amorphous columns that imply depth, and in their mysteriousness convey "worrying modality" (Freud), and anticipate the later works with their complex symbolism. He was progressively exchanging the intense meticulousness of the black and white drawings in favour of an original version of gesture painting that he worked out himself, which is less dramatic since it is not accompanied by the motion of some spectacle or action. It is these works that are pervaded by the lyricism that is characteristic of the beginnings of early abstractionism, similar to the work of Kandinsky and the Blaue Reiter; in them we recover references to the physical world, mainly to landscapes.

(*Landscape sketches*.) At the same time Andrew Fekete was interested in the radical lack of the figurative, characteristic of abstract expressionism (*Black and Pink*). He called this style “lyrical abstract expressionism”. This was a period full of colour and imagery that can be identified typically in his landscapes and whose characteristics he distilled from the techniques of abstraction of the fifties and sixties. Nonetheless, the expressionism of this period does not relate to the architectonic symbolism that appeared here and there in the earlier graphite drawings. The most important pictorial formation of the symbolism of these works is the church-like metaphysical configuration which refers to the sacred. Within his landscapes the rocks become the *living columns of nature*, suggestive by the way in which the viewer can barely see them, of the human figures, faces and “witnesses” of the invisible world. In his paintings, the motif of the gate, which can be monumental or similar to the opening of a cave, is the living symbol of both the engagement and the separation of the visible and the invisible. His last works are mainly figurative constructions in which we can see religious symbols; these, however, are not reinterpretations of the repository of Christian symbolism, but rather drawn from the motifs of Buddhism or the ancient Egyptian cult of Aton. By his own account Andrew Fekete never queried the priority of the Roman Catholic religion; nevertheless his interest in alternative myths of creation and in ancient beliefs and their symbols may be attributed to his search for the meaning of the things he saw in his dreams. The imagery drawn from archaic sources may again be seen in his enigmatic pictorial forms which invoke the possibility of their reinterpretation and anticipate the transcendent sphere of invisible reality, rendering into flesh its otherwise total isolation from the art. Thus, Andrew Fekete draws from the well of the most ancient function of art, which has so often fallen into oblivion, namely the representation of the infinite subconscious world.