

Andrew Fekete

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At the outset of 2014 the National Dance Theatre will be host to a rare exhibition. Visitors will have an unusual opportunity to experience an intimate psychological portrait of an artist through two artistic media – writing and painting.

The painter in question, Andrew Fekete, in addition to making drawings and paintings from his early teens wrote diaries, poems, essays and novels. The diaries and paintings intertwine and together present a complex image of an artist's development both artistically and personally – and tell how he progressed from recalling childhood memories through spontaneous drawing to painting from actual dreams and visions.

From a psychoanalytical point of view the most prominent features in the works of Andrew Fekete are the search for identity and the subjectivisation of inner conflicts. As a son of Hungarian parents in England, he was an obsessed artist in a material world; he constantly had to confront being in a kind of outcast state, but he could not give up his artistic freedom, and he led a life of total commitment to art, which arguably predestined him to untimely death.

Although the period in which he was actively painting lasted only 17 years, his works exhibit a definite division between his early geometric compositions and what he called his lyrical abstract expressionism. He studied architecture in Liverpool, and architecture remained a formative influence upon his art. Most of his works from 1978-1979 are strictly geometrical with overlapping architectural elements. Perfect order rules these works; the strict geometry is the colourful projection of the artist who struggles with inner conflicts and seeks to keep the situation under control (Compositional Study No. 1 – No. 3). These expressively coloured paintings were followed by fantastically elaborate graphite drawings, the black and white visions of the depressed artist depicting colliding squares (Colliding Squares, Random Elements, What a Square!). During this period Andrew was reading the works of Jung, and he started his spiritual journey into the realms of the unconscious, feeling that his hallucinations, dreams and communications with his complexes were in synchrony with Jung's theories. His diaries and paintings describe his inner journey in parallel as a kind of dual narrative.

His continues to progress towards cubism, painting analytic and expressive cubist pictures in the style of Picasso and Braque, Duchamp and Picabia (Abstract Composition No. 1 – 3.); these influences can also be seen in his other works (Homage to Duchamp). However, the constructivist-cubist tendency is gradually replaced by organic, rounded motifs and their free movement and at the end of 1979 these motifs start to take the form of cities and labyrinths (The Sentinel, Ruins of the Burial Vault), foreshadowing the mythological landscapes of the forthcoming years. In his diaries he records his series of pictorial autobiographies, marking the stations in his life. Abstract expressionism, spontaneity, freely moving elements and the works of Kandinsky and Delaunay seem to have a growing influence upon him.

From the outset of 1980 he starts to paint landscapes. He continues reading Jung, Freud and Hesse and his diaries become more detailed and serve as a kind of meta-commentary to his paintings which stem directly from his dreams, hallucinations and encounters with the unconscious. He describes his style as lyrical abstract expressionism. Colours convey his feelings in creative, visionary, mountainous landscapes – works that might recall those of Odilon Redon (Landscape Sketch No. 1 – 7.) His inner travel continues and he reaches deeper and deeper into the unconscious. He sets out on his Campbellian, heroic journey to the underworld (the unconscious), a realm populated by Jungian archetypes, and a journey also marked by the writing of his autobiographical essay, the *Voyage into Night*.

The spontaneous inner landscapes get populated in 1981. The forms and figures that emerge from the rocks embody the conscious experiences and knowledge of images acquired prior to the act of painting. Jung, Freud, the I Ching, the Buddha and the pharaoh Akhenaton, all melded in the unconscious, appear as archetypal visions, the embodiments of his complexes and desires (The Living Rock, Gotama Gate). The most often recurring element in these works is the column or tower motif, which symbolises spiritual force and endurance, the support and the axis mundi. It can also be seen as a building reaching for the sky that assists ascension, the connection between heaven and earth, depicting the transcendental heights and in artistic parlance, a synonym for the poetic ivory tower while simultaneously a phallic symbol (Mysterious landscape).

The dramatis personae of the Jungian unconscious, the archetypes – similarly to the works of Belgian symbolist artist de Nuncques – appear as figures and symbols emerging from rocks, wishing to speak from the depth of the unconscious as bearers of ancient wisdom, representatives of ancestral roots, the symbols of his wish for belonging (The Opening – The Totem of the Ancestors, Akhenaton and the World Egg). The blending and unification of his unresolved complexes, conflicts and oppositions, the male and female principles, the lingam and yoni, the transcendent, creative male and female energies, the discovery of the deepest source of all being become possible through visionary experiences (In the Hall of the Lingam and Yoni).

He made his last drawing in 1983, after which he only produced autobiographical creative writing and poems until his death in 1986. The title of his last work became tragically prophetic: Deir el-Bahari, the name of the famous Egyptian temple and tomb complex, a burial vault a hundred metres deep down in the earth.

The underworld.

The depths of the unconscious.