

Dedications :

For my daughters Ruby and Molly and
in memory Karole Robinson (1963-2005)

Acknowledgments :

Julie Revell - Myles Meehan Gallery
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Kevin Edwards - Darlington Arts centre
Josie Bland - Catalogue Essay
Bill Sinclair - Foreword
Graeme Johnson - Catalogue Design

Foreword

In the twelve years I've known Lewis Robinson I've seen his work develop and mature over that time. We've spent many hours knocking around our opinions of other artists' work. I've always sort of known when Lewis has been working on new pieces or is exploring a fresh theme, because he doesn't talk about it. Lewis will happily chat about technique, materials and the challenges of assembling work but he's never been one to drone on about meaning and the struggle for expression. Lewis has always allowed the work to speak for itself.

As Lewis has become more certain in his approach to materials he's become less certain but more open to the possibilities of expression. He has extended his visual and tactile vocabulary through exploring his approach to life.

There is a hard-wrought integrity at the core of his work and its sometimes hard, raw edges belie a tender sensitivity and a playful optimism. Overall the work has a fragile muscularity. There is an almost balletic precariousness in some of the work; but we also somehow know that if the work were to metaphorically fall or topple over it would bounce right back into place. For me Lewis's work is really about resilience, it is about taking knocks and bruises and, undimmed and never falling prey to caution, getting back up and getting on with it. Pretty much, I suppose, how I imagine Lewis used to play football. And pretty much I think, the way he rides his motorbike.

I hope you enjoy the exhibition-it is an impressive collection of work from one of the UK's most able sculptors.

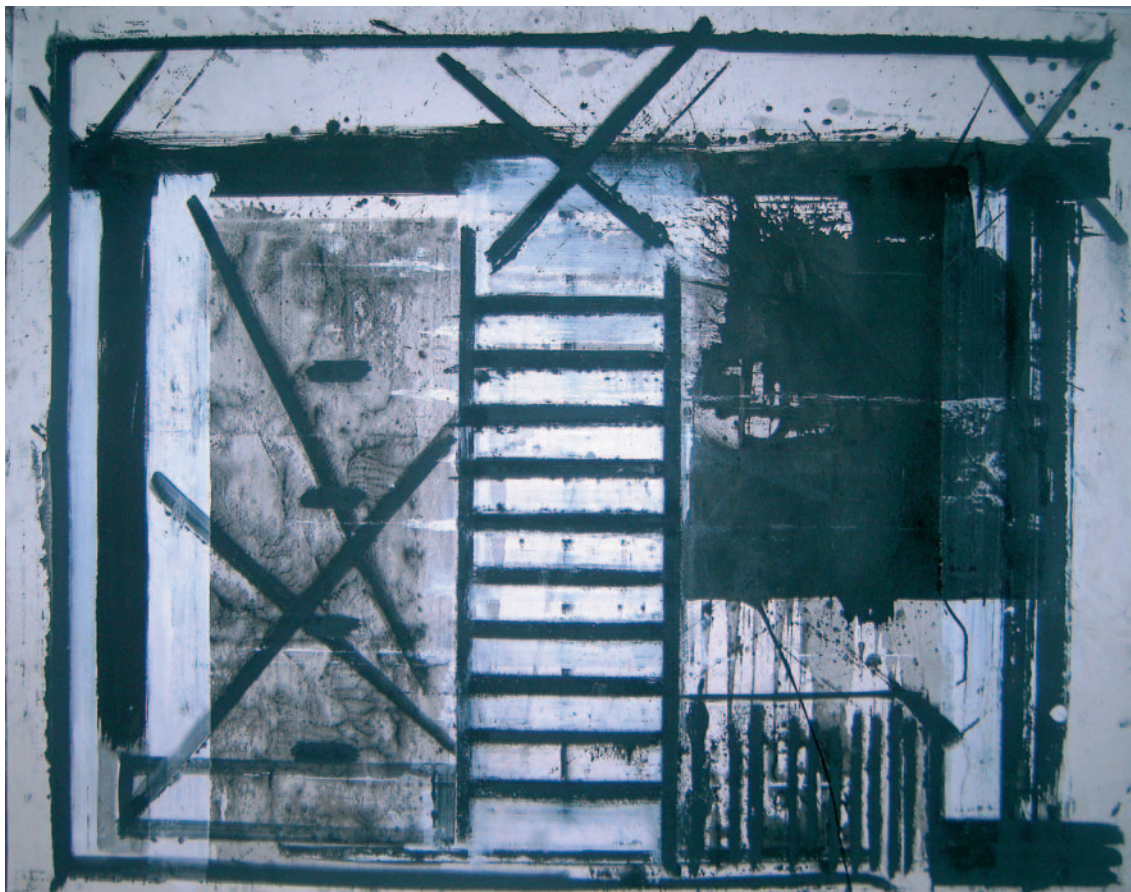
Bill Sinclair – (Imaginateur) 2007

Reclamation

Reclaim - recover, regain, retrieve, repossess, recoup, salvage, rescue - a list of active, hopeful verbs that lead to ways of thinking about the work shown in this exhibition. They describe the mental and physical processes that enabled the pieces to evolve, works made by a sculptor who enjoys the physical piecing together of fragments and remnants that, juxtaposed, produce new chains of signification.

The material that makes up the work both actual and psychological is fall- out from Robinson's world. His wife's illness and untimely death has had its part in this, but in a wider context he is fascinated by human resilience and the way we mend and improvise spiritually, physically and psychologically in order to cope and move on through life. He uses what he calls "allotment technology" as a metaphor for this process. Salvaged, rescued and reassembled, domestic objects are reshaped to suggest how lives that have been blown apart can be put back together in a different way. Some of these *Memento Mori* are elegies to loss, whilst the precarious balance of others evokes the regaining of a fragile equilibrium.

Freud used the term *Unheimlich* - literally 'unhomely' to describe 'the return of the repressed' a process whereby the mind involuntarily throws up images of trauma, representing them as familiar yet strange. Freud's term was carefully considered; as the home, which should provide physical and emotional shelter, can also be a theatre of the absurd where tragedy takes centre stage. Unhomely is what these pieces are. Familiar pieces of furniture - a chair, a table, a cupboard - are split, pulled apart, reassembled or covered in lead. No longer the comfortable objects of the everyday they are made strange, uncanny. They exist at the limits of language; awkward, uneasy and disquieting.



ASCENSION (2005)
Mixed Media (Drawing), 120cms x 150cms.

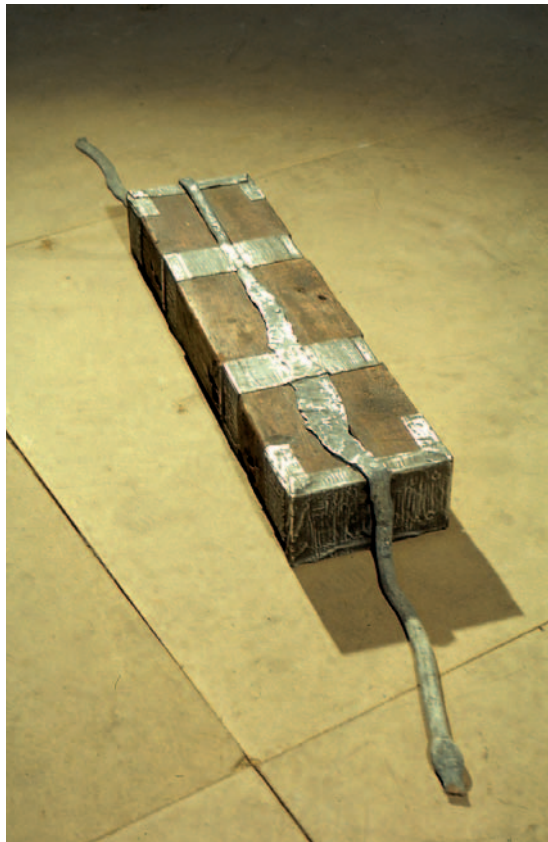


RAFT (2005)
Steel | Cloth | Wood | Plastic, 63cms x 37cms x 29cms

The journey round the exhibition traces a psychological voyage from trauma and loss to acceptance and hope. The journey begins with *Imminent*, a tiny wooden house poised under a food slicer, waiting silently for its inevitable destruction as the guillotine cutter drops. The house is found again in *Reprieve*, this time leaning precariously against a cage containing a dark, organic and threatening mass. For the time being the threat is contained but then we encounter a house wrapped in a rusting cloth. Balanced on an old lobster pot it is something washed up on the beach, a home cast adrift. This is *Raft* and it is heartbreaking.

On the floor is the coffin-shaped block of *Memento Mori*. Bound with strips of lead, a rivulet of lead flows along its centre and oozes out of the two ends of the block revealing itself as old piping. Once a conduit of life-giving water, the pipe is now crushed, dry and inert. Indeed, lead plays a major role in these pieces - soft and malleable it can undergo a metamorphosis into new forms or chameleon-like surfaces that can replicate the texture of that which it covers. It protects from radiation but is itself toxic.

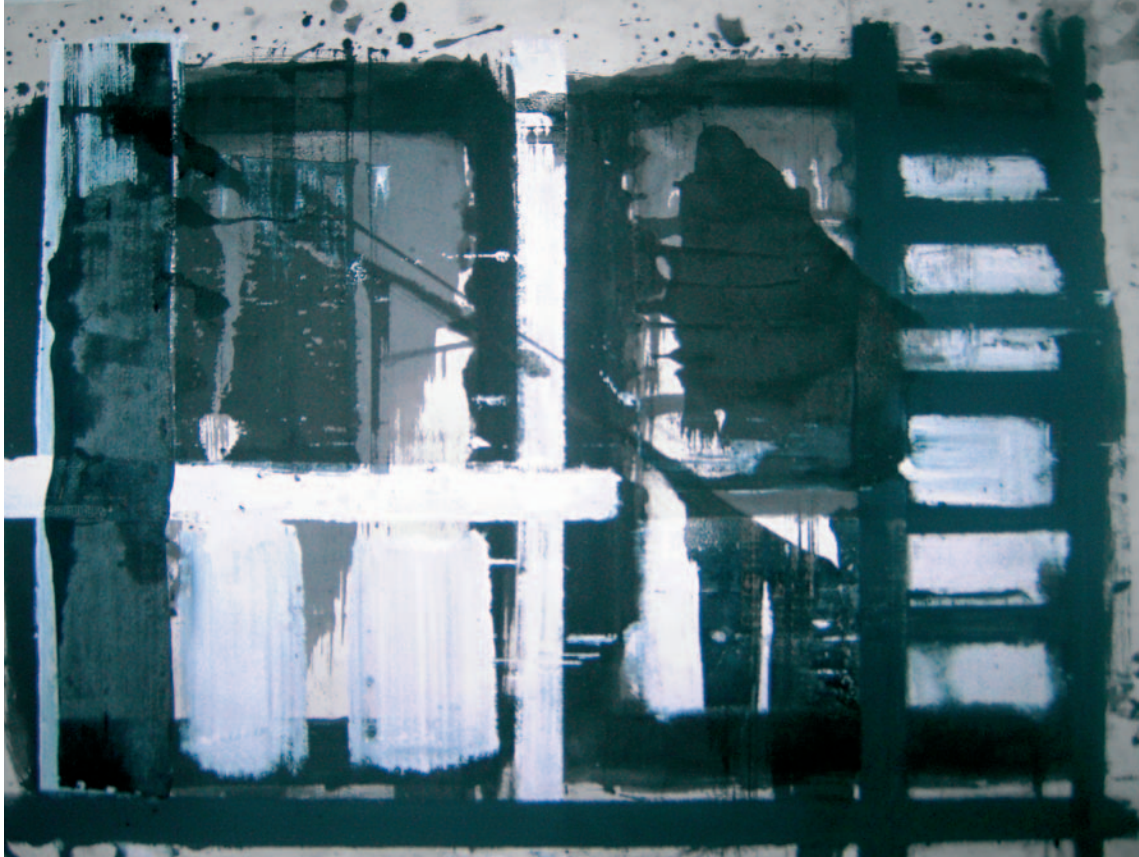
After a death there are things left behind, fragments of a life and this is poignantly depicted in *Remnant 1* and *Remnant 11*. *Remnant 1* is a small cupboard covered in lead-like material, its doors firmly and permanently closed. A small, rolled - up mattress rests on it - its stillness and blackness symbolic of finality. *Remnant 11* is a chair, a pile of clothes on its seat. Like insects in amber, chair and clothes are encased in pure white resin creating an object of quiet contemplation. Two wickerwork shell - shapes cast in white plaster, their join tied round with a strip of linen, form *Closure*, a poignant object that speaks both literally and symbolically of an ending.



MEMENTO MORI (2006)
Wood | Lead | Flashing, 12cms x 172cms x 22cms



REMNANT II (2007)
Wood | Plaster | Cloth | Resin | Paint, 95cms x 75cms x 65cms



STUDY ASCENSION (2005)
Mix media, 120cms x 150cms

The final leg of the journey is the reclamation of the exhibition's title, the reclaiming of hope and the drive to produce work. *Broken Dreams* began with a table – a family table from the heart of the home. But this table is sawn apart and reassembled rather as a cubist painting; one end dangerously propped up, a lead capped vase balancing on its far edge. But, however dangerously, the elements are balanced, they haven't fallen down and there is equilibrium of sorts. *Makeshift 11* is a strangely dislocated house whilst *Rebuild* and *Reparation* are manic deconstructions of wooden chairs rebuilt to defy logic. *Rebuild* is a chair that exists on two levels, one half supported by the beginnings of a makeshift floor. A central brace holds the uncoordinated sections together and also appears to support a hauntingly figurative tree branch. *Reparation* is also cut in half, one half further cut into chunks which are then piled chaotically on the seat. This pile in turn forms a wall which is, on the outside, covered in lead. These two sculptures remind us yet again of the ways in which the chains of making and meaning in the work endlessly form and reform.

Robinson's drawings complete the show, their symbolic ladders and black crosses, their play of open and claustrophobic space underwrite the complex intertwining of object and meaning which is at the heart of this exhibition. And, as in all compelling art, it is an intertwining which cannot be separated.

Reclaim, retrieve, rescue, recover, reform, reassemble, remake, rediscover, regain...

Josie Bland 2007

(lecturer in Contextual studies - University of Teesside)



BROKEN DREAM (2006-07)
Wood | Flashing, 98cms x 100cms x 68cms.

LIST OF WORKS

SCULPTURE (includes floor and wall based work)

Title	Medium	Dimensions (cms)	Date
Raft	steel, wood, cloth, plastic	63x37x29	04
Reprieve	plaster, wood, mesh, lead	26x36x27	04
Brace *	wood, flashing, paint.	82x20x26	05
Protected *	wood, lead	28x6x3	06
Departure *	tree branch, wood, lead	20x64x12	06
Imminent	wood, wax, found object	69x19x13	06
Memento Mori	wood, lead, flashing	12x172x22	06
Reparation	wood, lead	91x31x57	06
Closure	cast plaster, resin, cloth, paint	68x25x25	06
Rebuild	wood, lead, flashing	110x104x83	06
Makeshift 2	wood, lead	47x45x37	07
Broken Dream	wood, flashing, lead	98x100xx68	07
Remnant 1	wood, mattress/resin /flashing, paint	114x43x37	07
Remnant 2	wood, plaster, cloth, resin, paint	95x75x65	07
Keep	wood, flashing, expanded-foam, Cloth, paperbacks, ceramic jug, paint	220x48x68	07

* wall based objects

DRAWINGS

Title	Medium	Dimensions (cms) (Incl frames)	Date
Tamed Desire	ink, compressed charcoal	56x76	03
Entrapped	ink, compressed charcoal	56x76	03
Barrier	ink, compressed charcoal	56x76	03
New horizons	ink, compressed charcoal	56x76	03
Study for Ascension	ink, acrylic, charcoal, emulsion	56x7605	
Ascension	ink, acrylic, charcoal, emulsion	150x120	05
Veil	ink, acrylic, charcoal, emulsion	150x120	05
Departure	ink, compressed charcoal.	140x100	06
Screen	ink, acrylic, charcoal, emulsion	140x100	06

BIOGRAPHY (selected)

BORN: 1960 Leicester, England

EDUCATION

1986-88 MA Fine Art – Newcastle Polytechnic (University of Northumbria)
1979-82 BA (Hons) Fine Art. Hull College of H.E, School of Art Design
1978-79 Foundation Diploma – Loughborough College of Art & Design

EXHIBITIONS (Solo)

2007 Myles Meehan Gallery, Darlington Arts centre, Co Durham.
2004-05 Arc, Stockton on Tees.
2000 The Rotunda Gallery, University of Durham, Stockton Campus
1998 Gallerie 175, Dozule, France
1995 Saltburn Artists Gallery – Cleveland
1994 Middlesbrough Art Gallery – ‘Artist in Focus’
1992 Cleveland College of Art & Design Gallery – Middlesbrough
1990 Calouste Gulbenkian Gallery – Newcastle
1988 The Laing Art Gallery ‘Freedom to Touch’ Showcase, Newcastle.
1988 The Long Gallery – University of Newcastle
1984 Hull Artists Association Gallery

EXHIBITIONS (selected Group)

2003 Pinkard Gallery, Maryland Institute of Contemporary Art, Baltimore, USA
2000 Socha A Objekt V, Bratislava, Slovakia
1999 Royal West of England Academy, Triennial Sculpture Open, Bristol (Cat)
1997 Cleveland Gallery – ‘Cleveland Open’
1996 Royal West of England Academy, Bristol – 2nd Sculpture Open (cat)
1993 Royal West of England Academy, Bristol – 1st Sculpture Open (cat)
Smiths Galleries, Covent Garden, London
1991 Kirkley Hall Gardens, Northumberland (catalogue)
Brewery Arts Centre, Warehouse Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria
1990 Holmefirth Art Gallery – ‘The Latest Form’
1989 Cleveland College of Art & Design – ‘Third Dimension’
Cleveland College of Art & Design, (Two person show)
The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne – ‘Freedom to Touch’
The Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne – ‘Real Connections’ (cat)
The City Gallery, Leicester ‘From the North’ (cat)
1988 University of Northumbria –MA Degree Final Exhibition (cat)
1987 Hull College of Higher Education, Tenth Anniversary
University of York, Heslington hall – ‘Under One Roof’
1986 Newcastle Fringe Festival, Tyne-side Artists Contact Group
Matilda Street Gallery, Sheffield, York Artspace
Hull Artists in Japan (Artspace Exchange)
1983 Artists Association – Hull College of Higher Education
1982 The Ferens Art Gallery, Hull – ‘Winter Exhibition’

COMMISSIONS (selected)

2007 ‘Atonement’ Public sculpture for Redcar sea front, Cleveland
2004/05 E.A.Z Steel chimes sculpture. Badger Hill School, Brotton, Saltburn
2000-02 Ouseburn Way markers x4 and incidental walkway features,
Ouseburn Valley, Newcastle-u-Tyne (Arts Lottery funded).
Cleveland Arts Mentor –ARTS Disability Project.
2001 Victoria Tunnel Railings, (commissioned Designs) Ouseburn Heritage
Group Newcastle-u-Tyne.
1999 Railings for Normanby Road, South Bank, Middlesbrough.
Cleveland Arts, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, S.R.B.
1994 Cleveland County Council, Flatts Lane Woodland Country Park.
1989 St Oswald’s Hospice, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

2000 Bratislava Council Collection, Slovakia.
1995 Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.
1989 Northern Arts Collection.

AWARDS

2003 Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
2000-02 Redcar and Cleveland Design award
(Up Front Railings -South Bank, Middlesbrough.)
1988/89/ Northern Arts
94/98/00
1996 Teesside Arts Award – Teesside Development Corporation
1995 Redcar & Cleveland Arts Development Agency.

RESIDENCIES

2003 Artists Studio residency, Custom House Studios, Westport,
Co. Mayo, Ireland.
2000-02 Ouseburn Valley. Newcastle -upon-Tyne
1989 Gosforth C.M School. Newcastle-upon-Tyne-‘Real connections’
1982-83 Hull college of higher Education, Sculpture Studentship

PUBLICATIONS

2000-03 Commissions in the North of England, Arts Council N.E
2001 Public Art in Newcastle- A guide
1999 ‘Up Front’ – Lewis Robinson – A Public Arts Project in
Collaboration with Cleveland Arts, Redcar & Borough Council
and South Bank Community Forum.
1998 Sculpture and Drawings 1994 – 1998