
From painting to sculpture and back again

For Julian Schnabel art is boundless. His personality and his work are direct and spontaneous. Art and life flow into each other simply and effortlessly. The free choice of subject matter underscores Schnabel's conviction that anything can be the model for a painting or a sculpture. "I try to surprise myself... I've never made anything to illustrate what I already knew. I had to make it in order to find out what it was".

At age 26 he wrote: "I want my life to be embedded in my work, crushed into my painting, like a pressed car".¹ This already sounds like sculpture, although Schnabel would make a name for himself as a painter in the subsequent five years. His paintings have many different appearances. There is an order to them that can help us understand more about the origin of his sculptures. The first group of paintings that can be attributed to the artist's mature work were done in the second half of the seventies, and are referred to collectively as the wax paintings. Various abstract, like *Shoeshine* (for Vittorio de Sica), 1976, or diagrammatically figurative, such as *Accattone*, 1978, they are marked by the flatness of the drawing on them a topography of the surface of the painting rather than an attempt to fill it in. The image is on a skin which belongs to the body of the painting and which also consists of the wax in the paint and holes, protrusions and undulations. Three-dimensionality gives the canvases presence and illustrates the conflict between the pictorial and the physical which is a constant quality of Schnabel's work. An instructive example that just predates the wax paintings is *This is Luke Talbot*, 1975. It does not look like a painting or even a sculpture.

The plate paintings continue to examine painting's objectness and its relationship to the image drawn on it. The plates break up the image but at the same time have a unifying effect on the painting as a whole. They provide a skeleton on which the paint can be applied like flesh. These paintings, such as *The Patients and the Doctors*, 1978, and *Circumnavigating the Sea of Shit*, 1979, have a surface which is rough because of the plates and a three dimensional support which is thicker than regular paintings. The paintings have a pronounced plasticity.

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The antler paintings form a small but significant group which was painted directly after the earliest plate paintings. Schnabel was attracted to the antlers because of their thorn and veinlike shape, the beautiful material and the memory of death that hovers around them. These paintings, particularly *Exile*, 1980, and *Prehistory: Glory, Honor, Privilege and Poverty*, 1981, use the antlers not to disjoin the surface of the painting as the plates do but to add another distinct element of drawing to the composition. If cubism can be understood as the attempt to capture three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface, then Schnabel's paintings seek to reverse that process. Confronted with painting as a predetermined discipline, the artist escapes its dictates by adding physical depth, in the same way that Donald Judd abandoned his early painting in favour of creating works of art which were more tangible and concrete. Judd creates a situation where colour is isolated from its objectness by the reflective and refractive nature of the materials chosen, while Schnabel seeks to harness the physical qualities of the available materials in his work.

The increasing three-dimensionality of Schnabel's work was shown to the public in an exhibition at the Mary Boone Gallery in 1982 which included paintings with even more clearly defined sculptural elements, for example *Rest*, 1982. Two other works included in that exhibition, however, represent the first steps into the realm of bronze sculpture: *The Mud in Mudanza*, 1982, which has a cast bronze cross and cast antlers in its centre, and *The Raft*, 1982, featuring a bronze tree struck boldly through its surface.² It is at this stage, with the necessity of casting in bronze, that the sculptures or "objects", as the artist first referred to them, were born.

Schnabel has stated that there was no conscious decision to embark on a series of sculptures, but the possibilities the foundry offered and an interest in the bronze casting process quickly led to a number of them being made. "I just wanted to have these things around - like friends". More resistant and less easy to manipulate than the paintings, they retain a certain autonomy and independence from the

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artist. Although they are clearly his creatures, they often seem to have a mind of their own.

In 1984, two years after the bronzes are started, we can see an extraordinary example of a painting giving birth to sculpture. Religious Painting (for Michael Tracy), 1975, was cast seven times in aluminium.³ Each cast was painted, sometimes upside down, to see what different paintings could happen on the same object. It remains a moot question whether the result is another painting or a sculpture. The point is that the distinction between the two dissolves. This does not mean that several versions of an idea are not possible. Sometimes several experiments are necessary to crystallise an idea. Piston for the Epistemological, 1983, has a powerful three-dimensional volume which records Schnabel's interest in the first sculptures he was making around that time. It is a version of Head on a Stick, 1983, and bears a resemblance to the sculpture Napoleon, 1991.

"The pictoriality of drawing on sculpture is the same as drawing in painting, with one difference. In the paintings pictoriality can create an inside. In sculpture it always remains on the outside". There are relatively few instances of drawing or writing in Schnabel's sculpture, such as the triple helix in 2804, 1983, and the letters written on Freud, 1986. Only when a sculpture is recycled, as in the case of Head on a Ramp, 1983-89, which is the same form as CVJ, 1983, does writing and drawing on the surface become a distinguishing characteristic of the work. Schnabel's use of patina is also important. In many cases the individual sculptures within an edition, usually four with two artist's proofs, have an obviously different patina, making each work's surface and hence overall feel unique within that edition.

After 1982 the sculptures are pursued as a separate and parallel discipline. The paintings become flatter and sometimes more sparse. The artist becomes more accepting of a two-dimensional surface, even though he sometimes uses a great deal of it to generate the sense of

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scale and bulk he wants. Different types of material are used as supports:

Japanese Kabuki Theatre backdrops, velvet, rugs, printed linoleum and other materials. The "tarp" paintings, made between 1986 and 1988, use tarpaulins for supports that previously covered army trucks. They are stretched and then painted or treated in some way by the artist. The random nature of the patterning caused by the wear to the tarpaulin provides the artist with a point of departure. It avoids the conscious or unconscious decision of where to put the holes, plates or antlers and how to manipulate the shape of the underlying support, because the tarpaulin has already been used. Sometimes Schnabel fixes them behind a car and drags them over asphalt, marking the surface on which he then paints. The rich surface he starts with requires little additions to become a painting. The result is an engaging finish which has lumps and holes and is definitely not the pristine support that we have known for paintings in the past. In *La Macule*, 1988, Schnabel adds a flag used in a procession as the center of a composition to create what is one of the most memorable "tarp" paintings. "The physical manipulation of the canvas makes for a painting that has an object-like identity normally reserved for sculpture, which disintegrates the limitations of different categories of art".

At the beginning of the nineties, Schnabel throws tablecloths soaked with paint on canvases and uses resin which covers the painting in a free and unpredictable way to introduce elements of chance into the artistic process. Sometimes the result looks like it was made by body fluid more than by paint. Towards the mid nineties hand painting becomes his preferred method of expression, starting in the *La Voz de Antonio Molina*, 1992, and *Des and Gina*, 1994, paintings.

After 1991 there are no new sculptures, although casting continues to the present day, and the artist is planning to make more sculptures. It is therefore not surprising to find sculptural elements returning to the paintings. The recent portraits, begun in early 1997, have an 'old master' sensibility. A heavy coat of coloured resin applied over the entirety of the surface seals them hermetically. They come with artist's

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frames which give the unit of painting and frame a chunky and object-like feel. The frames seem coarse and primary because they are unpainted fiberglass casts based on a smaller Italian frame. The width of the moulding remains the same but becomes longer as required by the painting.

Some may frown on the use of this frame, preferring something more simple. But minimalism can be dangerous, and a policy of always framing as simply as possible runs the risk of becoming Heinz Berggruen has described as purism which degenerates into barbarism.⁴ Berggruen himself had spent the best part of his career matching frames to paintings, and was dismayed when the conservators at the Metropolitan Museum in New York dismantled the carefully chosen frames in his large donation of Paul Klee's work. Schnabel feels similarly about the question of framing, "Taste is choosing what you like. Some have good taste and some don't. It depends on who you ask. And who agrees with you." In any case, the sense of mass and scale of these portrait paintings is supported by the frames, the shiny surface. coat and, on occasion, white blobs which "connect the paintings to their objectness".

For Schnabel the effect of his individual works depends on a "cumulative poetic result". "My works are all aspects of the same sensibility, the same needs". The sculptures deal with the physicality of the work, a key element in Schnabel's earlier painting. The narrative

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in the early paintings is articulated in Schnabel's later writing, which, true to his general approach, is autobiographical. The book C.V.J 5 is not only a Rake's Progress, but has a verbally articulated sense of purpose it is a collection of on-the-job training notes. Barnett Newman's famous dictum comes to mind: "An artist paints so that he will have something to look at; at times, he must write so that he will also have something to read".⁶

Schnabel is attracted by films. Rest, for instance, is inspired by an image in Ben Hur. The artist will usually only leave home for a trip armed with several video cassettes, including Godfather I and II and Raging Bull. He has an uncanny gift for spotting details and uses films as an inspiration in his art and sometimes in his conversation. Basquiat, the film written and directed by Schnabel and released in 1996, is about the young black painter's rise to early fame and his untimely death in 1988, but the fictional character Milo is unmistakably Schnabel himself, and the film is a brusque concatenation of anecdotes which involve Schnabel, Basquiat and mutual friends and acquaintances. The film creates a past as a touching tribute, but never strays too far from Schnabel's own experience.

Basquiat allows him to retell some of the C.V.J story in colour, with movement, and in pictorial terms impossible to achieve in print. The book provides a structural plan for the film which is then fleshed out with the detail which we see on the screen. We perceive an accumulation of vignettes which explain why the film has a formal physicality, the presence of an object which a simple narrative would not have. The film, like Schnabel called painting, is a bouquet of mistakes. His second film, When Night Falls, which came out in 2001, is the story of a gay Cuban poet who becomes a victim of the Castro regime. Schnabel uses the story to illustrate the struggle of art against oppression, a theme which features prominently in all his work.

Schnabel is busy constructing his own world: bronze racks, doors, armoires, candle sticks, walls, swimming pools, an Azzedine Alaïa store or a house in Bridgehampton. The most complete example is his home on West 11th Street in New York. Among the first pieces of furniture to

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be made in 1983 were two bronze and tile tables. A characteristic element of these tables is the left over funnel rod which is used for legs. Originally a spew, it is a vein-like by-product of the casting process which the artist discovered at the foundry. Schnabel has continued to make furniture whenever he felt that there was a need. Most notably he has made a number of beds for some of his do friends.

The first bronze, Marie, 1982, was made by wrapping plaster soaked burlap around itself to form an elongated, cigar-shaped mass. There are no preparatory sketches or models which are then enlarged. Since scale and spontaneity are of central importance a model can have no place in the creation of the sculptures. "I make things the size the are". The methodology of the first sculptures is a direct extension of Schnabel's wish to produce a shape as the result of a process rather than as the rendering of a precise vision in his head.

There are many iconographic antecedents to Marie's shape. The cypress trees in Pisa 1976-77, inverted, or the cone casting a shadow in *The Patients and the Doctors*, 1978, are good examples. A bandaged figure not dissimilar to Marie's shape and drawn as if blueprint for the method used for creating her can be found in the *Madrid Notebooks*, 1978.⁷ Apart from simply being a shape of interest to the artist, it has been variously interpreted to represent a mummy, a stone-age artifact, a botanical study, a pine cone, a cocoon, or just a carrot. This basic shape dominates the first set of sculptures. Marie, named after Quasimodo's favourite bell, the one that made him deaf, can be hung by a rope or chain and rung - a task reserved for those with courage and a sporting inclination to move it.

In 1997 Marie was hung from the ceiling at the top of a tower in the re-opening installation of P.S.1, Long Island City, thereby transforming it into a belfry. *Mom*, 1989, was installed vertically against one of the pillars of the tower like a caryatid to hold up the combined weight of the roof, Marie and *Portrait of Father Peter Jacobs*, 1997. As gusts of wind blew through the windows, Marie would start to ring, letting out a soft and mysterious call to the people in the streets below. After the

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opening, Schnabel added a table and some benches "so people could eat up there on warm days".

Vito, 1982, and Balzac, 1982, are Marie's two younger brothers. Vito, like Marie, does not have a base and is usually stood against a wall or in a corner. Balzac, with branches sticking out of its head, is the first sculpture which has a base. Part of the aesthetic experience is founded on the shape's ambiguity. There is no clear front and back, or even up and down.

The surface texture of the wax paintings and the mummy sculptures is similar. The gauze only becomes visible intermittently, the plaster on top of it having much the same appearance as wax. The various patinating agents, brown, green, red, white and black mix together to form an undulating surface, something like the bark of a tree which invites the onlooker to touch. Marie, Vito and Balzac are the foundation that many of the later sculptures are built on. The subsequent sculptures can be understood as a documentation of the working process, as a revolving creative system in which the foregoing sculptures provide feedback and input for the next. "I kept recycling the forms and materials of sculptures. They gave birth to each other like people".

The family tree on the foldout pages will show the interconnection of the sculptures diagrammatically. The three mummy pieces from 1982 are linked by the method of their creation. 2804, 1983, is the Vito shape reused, but with a base and painted with a number and a sign. The number is the identifier the cast for Vito was given at the foundry. A horizontal double helix is the sign for infinity. "The triple helix means beyond infinity to me".

Joe, 1983, is the next manifestation of the mummy shape, this time with the addition of foundry ladles that function like arms, making a cross. The sculpture was named after Schnabel's long time friend Joe Glasco. Out of the foundry process of the sculpture Joe come both Mom and Dad, 1989. They look like slices of a huge orange which were created when parts of the moulding were cut away to allow the fully

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cast Joe to see the light of day. Their shapes have a protective quality which inspired their names.

Schnabel is making sculptures of moulds. A detractor once said that Schnabel knows how to take garbage and turn it into garbage.⁸ By using the moulds he shows us a step in the artistic process we would otherwise never see. The mummy makes its last appearance, inverted and with a torso strapped on top of it, in *Selfportrait as a Champagne Glass*, 1989. The torso is a bronze cast of a part of a wooden figure from New Guinea.

Helen of Troy I and II, 1983, were both made out of the broken parts of *Balzae*. In the Greek myth, Helen was captured by the Trojans. She was said to be the most beautiful woman who ever lived, and a flotilla of 1,000 ships was launched to save her. *Helen of Troy I* will presumably be the first sculpture that launches a thousand ships. *Helen of Troy II*, while still the same shape, is painted partly white and raised on a pyramid type base. It is almost as if in this second version we are allowed to peek under her skirt. Troy finally fell after a horse with soldiers inside it was left as a "gift" to the town that had been beleaguered for so long. Perhaps we should worry what things are inside this imposing sculpture, waiting for the right moment to come out.

Parts from the moulding process for *Helen of Troy I and II* are used as the crescent moon head and tubular body of *Gradiva*, 1986. Continuing the theme of antiquity, the title means the "beautifully striding" in Latin, and was made famous by Freud (whose name inspires a contemporaneous Schnabel sculpture which will be dealt with later) in his analysis of a novel of that title. In it, a young man becomes obsessed with a Roman relief and travels to Pompei to find a footprint of the woman depicted in it. Once there he mistakes a girl for the statue, and imagines that he has been transported back to the time before Vesuvius buried the town. With her help he snaps out of his delusion, and they fall in love.⁹

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Gradiva's entire mould becomes Golem, also of 1986. The strengthening of the outside of the mould is the "tartan it is wearing. The gridwork appears in other sculptures and it is clear that these too are casts made of moulds.

The sleek Columns of 1982 can be treated as unique forays into a different area of sculpture because their principle characteristic, unlike the rest of Schnabel's sculptures, is an examination of symmetry and rhythm. They were actually intended for use as the columns for an outdoor studio in St. Barts that would have had a view over the bay of St. Jean, but the studio was never built. The Columns are Brancusi's Infinite Column made out of utilitarian parts. The vases, or amphoras, were bought in a hardware store in Orbetello, Italy and taken back to New York, where they were cast and stacked on top of each other. Originally, the stack was six vases high,¹⁰ but later it was cut and transformed into three separate stacks of four each. The Columns in this book consist of different arrangements of three different vases. The multiple use of the same vases in subsequent stacks may explain why each combination, A, B and C, has remained unique rather than be editioned.

The Columns have their own offspring, which came into being in a very similar way to their cousins from the mummy family. A fragment of the mould from the Orbetello vases finds itself called to a new life and cast again atop a long pole in OTTO, 1982, which spelled backwards is still OTTO¹¹. This lack of front or back, or the negation of these terms, is similar to the disorientation that the mummy shapes generate. Another mould fragment from the Columns is used in Capital with Boxes and Capital with Balls, 1982. "When casting the vase columns the moulds looked like torsos; rightly so. They have necks and arms and in this case, balls too". Immediately after its creation another work similar to OTTO is put on a pole of variable height, to position it the correct distance from the ceiling, and becomes Adjustable Column with Head, 1982-87. In 1987 Schnabel made a final decision as to its height, hence the date of the piece. "But it's still adjustable. Like most things". The column sculptures' elegant vertical shape would be used in several further sculptures, each time with very different effect. In

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John Cassavetes and Ben Gazzara, 1985, Myron, 1988-89, and Yoyo, 1988-89,¹² the impression given is tall and well-bred, even though they sometimes have two heads. They have an almost feminine appeal. By contrast *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 1983, and *Head on a Stick*, 1983, are tough, dark and foreboding - the latter recalling a guillotined head on a spear or lance and the former having been used as a sentinel to ward off intruders at the artist's former house in Bridgehampton. A tall figure is later cut down and incorporated in *Oliver Cromwell*, 1985, which takes its title from the exhumation and public display of Cromwell's body after the English monarchy was restored.

Some of these long, tall sculptures are intimidating, even frightening, and are intended to examine and confront fear and violence. But there are moments of relief. *Head on a Stick* consists of a long rafter and a moulding from a foundry which is its head. At the front there is a hole. The sculpture sometimes gives lucky onlookers the pleasure of seeing a sparrow fly out of its nose.

The Columns are linked to a group of sculptures started in 1989 which involves tables. In *Galileo's Table*, 1989, one very clear link can be seen: the vases are used as legs. But the conceptual connection is that the table sculptures also use a utilitarian object to make sculpture. Bases are usually contrived objects, but tables are not. They are made to put things on, and as objects of daily life they are direct and immediately relevant. They exhibit several qualities that we recognize in sculpture. They go in the middle of rooms. They need space. "And they seem to float down the river of memory with all of my other personal belongings". The first sculpture with a table is *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1989. The table used in this sculpture is the bronze cast of a side-board designed by Vladimir Kagan.

Tables are used by Schnabel as a starting point to which things are added until the result has been reached. Sometimes they become more integrally part of the sculpture, as in *La Nil*, 1989. Schnabel found this table in the Kunsthalle Basel, and Thomas Kellein, the

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director, gave it to him to use as a unique wood base for the previously executed sculpture, *Jacqueline*, 1986-87. The table would be used again and cast in bronze for *Physician Heal Tkyselj*, 1989-90.

The small, round, three legged table used in *Lady Macbeth*, 1989-90, would similarly be used a second time in *Esso Es*, 1990. The latter is a good example of how different influences can impact Schnabel's work. The dog shape at right is a cast of a blow-up plastic German Shepherd which was being given away at Esso, formerly known as Standard Oil (hence S.O.). The dog was integrated into the sculpture, perched impossibly on a thin metal see-saw but remaining totally composed and calm. The name Esso, which is printed on its underside, went into the title, and can be interpreted to mean S.O.S., but the real influence comes from Robert DeNiro's line in *The Deerhunter*, "This is this", referring to a bullet, and that, in Spanish, gives the sculpture its name. The cable spool used in the middle of *Esso Es* is used again in *Napoleon*, 1991. However, *Napoleon* is linked more directly to the vase family than the cable spool. Its base is a mould for one of the vases used in the *Columns*.

There are two peaks in Schnabel's sculptural output. The first is based on the use of cast bronze elements in the paintings of 1982. The second takes place around 1989, and is linked to *Tomb for Joseph Beuys*, 1986-87. The casting in bronze of parts of *Tomb...* to create the *Epitaphs I-V*, 1989, creates an impetus for the creation and casting of a large group of sculptures which includes the largest bronze, *Ozymandias*, 1986-89.

Schnabel has always been obsessed by death. Several paintings have been made treating this subject: *13 Death of a Mountain Guide*, 1986; *For Jean Michel*, 1988, painted to commemorate the death of Jean-Michel Basquiat, and the *SL Paolo Malfi* series, a tribute to a friend of Francesco Clemente and Schnabel, Paolo Malfi, who died in a road accident in Italy in 1995. Nowhere does the subject of death get treated more thoroughly than in *Tomb for Joseph Beuys*, which was shown at the Yvon Lambert Gallery, Paris in 1988. There is a connection between Beuys and Schnabel, especially in the rough

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assemblages of found objects, often with autobiographical relevance, which are appropriated and transformed into an artistic statement.

Beuys' magical aura imbued his works with life, like a film projector animates a screen. When Beuys died his work was left without his energy, and the absence was felt strongly. Tomb... is conceived not only as a tribute to Beuys, to keep him among us in some way, but also to others close to Schnabel. The letters on the top of the tomb spell out the initials of Joseph Beuys. On the sides of the tomb we can see other initials. CT refers to Cy Twombly, an artist who Schnabel has always thought highly of, and FC to Francesco Clemente. LSJ stands for Lola and Stella, the artist's two daughters, and Jacqueline, his first wife. The inclusion of these initials, "stencilled like letters on high school sweaters", add a characteristic personal touch to the sculpture. "Tomb is a life raft for my son Vito, who had not yet been born".

All the elements of Tomb... are made of fiberglass. Like bronze it is a material which is moulded. Tomb... is important both as an independent work of art and as a source of further sculpture. The accompanying panels on the walls are fiberglass casts of the top of Tomb..., and they were recast and reversed in bronze to become Epitaph I-V, a series which at first glance might recall Matisse's series of nudes, a version of which is in the sculpture garden at MoMA, New York.

The plaster and wood moulds for Tomb... were clasped in bronze brackets and supports and covered by a thick sheet of glass and used as showcases in the Azzedine Alaïa boutique in New York, a store which was designed and made by Schnabel. Several pieces from this interior were subsequently moved to the Alaïa boutique in Paris, where they can now be seen.

Freud, 1986, is not as elaborate as Tomb... It is more straightforward than that. It is a coffin. Rather than giving the impression that the old man is physically in there, as Tomb... does, it is an abstract pun. The two works based on Freud, Young Girl in a Bathtub, 1986, and Girl in a

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Boat, 1987, turn the spookiness of the coffin into the goofiness of children's toys. The character of a girl is frozen succinctly in bronze, due no doubt to the fact that the heads of both are the mould from the top part of the sculpture Jacqueline.

Wood objects found at the beach appear in the paintings around the time of the first sculptures. Both *The Sea*, 1981, and *Affection for Suifing*, 1983, have such elements. The sculpture *Ozymandias* was originally a washed up log on one of the beaches on Long Island. It was taken to the artist's home in Bridgehampton as early as 1983 and a sculpture was finished by 1986, carrying the title *Younger Sister of the Mountain Princess or You Want to Meet My Sister*. This wood sculpture was used to make two bronzes. The head was cast and became *Macbeth*, 1986-89. One leg of *Younger Sister* was taken off and the trunk laid down horizontally to make *Ozymandias*, a wry autobiographical metaphor about the permanence of things. The thought of a fall after a rise was what prompted its inception, and lying on its back like a felled tree *Ozymandias'* greatness is reduced to the distant memory of a bygone civilization. Schnabel was asked to install the work at the Seagram Building in New York. He rose to the occasion by painting it over on location.

In the wave of sculptural activity in 1989 there is a fusing together of disparate elements in bronze. A large number of the sculptures incorporate objects which were made during the pouring of other sculptures, or other tools and paraphernalia which were immediately to hand. The inclusion of them in sculptures document the working process. For Schnabel foundry means a place where things get found to put into sculpture, not only where they are then cast in bronze. If there is any one discipline in which Schnabel excels, it is the ability to recognize which objects can be transformed into art with a minimum of action. Hence one of the most positive things he knows to say: "Not doing too much". A large amount of the working process is devoted to looking, which becomes a devouring of images and objects. The result has an unmistakable materiality. The sculptures are obviously possessions and have a powerful sense of immediacy. They are objects which open gateways to another world but make themselves felt, forcibly, in ours.

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In the assemblages Schnabel jams together elements in unlikely combinations to form a tense, even uneasy but ultimately satisfying whole. The objects used, although familiar, are rendered distant by their representational context and their casting, "like the physical realization of Antonin Artaud's drawings". The materiality of the objects in the assemblage is alienated and neutralised by casting them in bronze, even though the decision to use bronze was not easy, because it can look too precious. But it is durable and can stabilise shapes permanently. Casting an object or collection of objects prevents them getting away, as so many moments do over the course of time. Until the sculptures are cast they have a temporary quality, they can be rearranged. "Bronze fixes things".

The assemblages cram things together that don't fit, the result being complicated and democratic. They consist of a formal analysis in which tendencies towards the consolidation and disintegration of form are in balance, "keeping the imbalances in balance". Some of the assemblages look much like paintings, because they are two-dimensional, sparse, and derive much of their power from composition. *Crewcut*, 1987, a unique sculpture made of steel, and the *Epitaphs* explore sculpture in this way. Some of the paintings made around the same time, such as *Jerusalem and Palestine*, both 1988, could also be treated as sculptural assemblages rather than paintings. The boundaries are again dissolved.

Other bronze sculptures, because of their shape, are to be seen from the front, although they are more three-dimensional. Examples are *The Singer Must Die for the Lie in His Song (to Leonard Cohen)*, 1987, and *Celtic Hook with Mirrorbacks*, 1987.

Some of the sculptures are busts, the first to be realised being *CVJ*, or *Come Va Jacqueline*. Like *Vito*, it must be propped against a wall to stand. *CVJ* is an assemblage of sorts, since the head at the top is an *objet trouve'*, and an appropriate body was made for it. The second bust, *Jacqueline*, is also dedicated to the artist's first wife but the equation is reversed, the torso found and the head formed by hand. Beauty here is dealt with more realistically. To finally let go

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of his first marriage, the artist takes Jacqueline, hangs two drawings around it, puts it onto a table and waits for it to "sail down the Nile" as *La Nil*, which has been discussed. The busts done after Jacqueline are more sinister and hark back to works such as *Head on a Stick*. *Head on a Stump*, 1989-90, is contorted and full of expression. Like the howling man in the iron mask, it is the face you can never see. *Mutti kuck mal*, *Otto glaubt nicht, dass du schielst*, 1990, also has a menacing, scowling aspect, standing on a tilt as if drunk, but its title has humour. In translation it means "Mommy, look, Otto doesn't believe you are cross-eyed". *Selfportrait with Champagne Glass*, *Macbeth*, and even *Lady Macbeth*, 1989-90, can be considered part of this group. The busts are the only sculptures which use a traditional motif, and as a consequence they have a classical feel the others do not. *Napoleon*, 1991, is the last bronze made to date, and is also *The second to last sculpture*, *Dan ton*, 1990, which was only recently cast, has an autobiographical reference. "It's hard to watch your step".

Looking at the world from the Australian coast in 1985, Schnabel started collecting South Sea figures, wood constructions which originally had mystic value but which, in the artist's mind, had already become "airport art". These figures were brought back and included in sculptures, although the final execution and casting took place in 1989.

The first work to include a tribal figure is *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1989, which was quickly followed by *Galileo's Table*, 1989, and *Leutwylerfor BB*, 1989. The latter does not literally include a tribal figure, but it was made to look like a South Sea drum. The form is obviously the outside of a cast, similar to *Gradiva*. In *Physician Heal Thyself*, 1989-90, Schnabel takes one more step - a New Guinea sculpture is reorganised and the pieces strewn over a table. His paintings also deal with many of the same issues in more strictly pictorial terms, brilliantly in *The Aborigine Painting*, 1980, and more specifically in the *Ethnic Types* paintings of 1984.

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Si Tacuisses, 1990, can also be included in this tribal group although its association is more loose. It appeared to Schnabel that existential pilgrims who went to North Africa always spent the obligatory evening in Tangiers dining with Paul Bowles. With the disappointment of hearing of yet another tourist's dinner Schnabel invokes a Latin saying: "If you had remained silent, you would have been a philosopher".¹⁴ The choice of a palm tree in the sculpture may have predated the text on the sign. ¹⁵ Schnabel loves palm trees, because they represent the south and warm weather, possibly a reminder of Mexico and his childhood days in Texas.

Schnabel's work was shown in 1988 in an abandoned military barracks, previously a convent in the centre of Seville, known as the Cuartel del Carmen. In the midst of the architectural decay and urban neglect Schnabel installed his tarpaulin paintings, collectively referred to as Recognitions ¹⁶ To complete the exhibition and as a juxtaposition to the paintings, Schnabel made two sculptures from the objects which he found there. He had several timbers removed from a collapsed roof in an adjacent wing of the building and thrown through windows down into the courtyard. These were then assembled together and lifted to form a huge cross on which Schnabel painted words, attached various found objects to the basic design and finally wrote IDIOTA in large, white letters over the front of the cross-beam. There are many names written on the cross, some of men who built it. A second sculpture was also assembled and painted directly on site, the table and chair that became Garcia Lorca and Luis Buhuel, 1988. Both sculptures were subsequently moved to New York to be cast in bronze.

Although the majority of Schnabel's exhibitions have been devoted, at least principally, to paintings, there have been six major exhibitions focusing on sculpture, at Bruno Bischofberger Gallery, installed in the garden of Dr. T. Preiss, Zurich in 1983-84, at Yvon Lambert, Paris in 1986-87, Castello di Rivoli, Turin in 1987-88, Pace Gallery, New York in 1990, Bruno Bischofberger Gallery, St. Moritz, and Soledad Lorenzo, Madrid in 1991.

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In 1990 Pace Gallery opened a gallery in downtown Manhattan. A selection of Schnabel's sculptures was chosen for the inaugural exhibition, and the space was tailored specifically to their needs. A large majority of the sculptures were assemblages, and crowded together they at first appeared to be one sculpture, an assemblage of assemblages. On closer inspection they looked like pieces of jewellery of titanic proportions, probably due to the white neutrality of the gallery, such a huge contrast to the trees, plants and open spaces that usually provide the backdrop for them.

In the winter of 1990-91, on a plateau which used to be the ice rink of the once majestic edifice of the Hotel Chantarella, looking across the Engadine valley and the town of St. Moritz, the largest single exhibition of Schnabel's sculptures was organised by Bruno Bischofberger Gallery. The five Epitaphs acted as a demarcation line between man and the nature. Inside the perimeter stood Lady Macbeth, Ozymandias, Si Tacuisses, Golem, Gradiva and others. They looked like huge chess pieces on a half-finished board. Each sculpture is a fragment of a whole, surrounded by white and emanating warmth and the permanence of rocks. They appear to have always existed, as if they were nomads, moving from Egypt over the Alps, caught at different times of day in the snow.

The sculptures stand mute, but eloquent about their nature and their past. A proto-civilization, a tribe of warriors, they fight the artist's constant battle between substance and invisibility.

FOOTNOTES

1 From the Madrid Notebook~, 1978, reproduced in Julian Schnabel, C.VJ Nicknames of Maitre d's and Other Excerpts from Lfe, Random House,

New York, 1987, p.146.

2 This tree had been dug out from the sand at a beach near Amaganssett on Long Island. Bruno Bischofberger, who was helping secure the tree, recalls

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- Schnabel looking at it and saying "I think I'll cast this in bronze".
- 3 Which were shown in Japan. See Julian Schnabel: The Aluminum Paintings, Akira Ikeda Gallery, Tokyo, 1984.
- 4 Heinz Betggruen, Hauptweg und Nebenwege - Erinnerungen eines Kunstsommlers, Nicolai, Berlin, 1996, p. 187.
- 5 Julian Schnabel, C.VJ Nicknames of Maître d's and Other Excerpts from Life, Random House, New York, 1986.
- 6 Published in Tiger's Eye, December 1947.
- 7 Julian Schnabel, Work on Paper]975-]988, Prestel, Munich, 1990, Plate 4.
- 8 Borrowing an expression recorded in John Canaday, Embattled Critic, Noonday Press New York, 1961.
- 9 Sigmund Freud, Der Waha und die Trdume in W Jensens "Gradivo", originally published by B. Urban, Verlag Hugo Heller & Co., Leipzig and Vienna, 1907.
- 10 Such a version was shown at the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 1983.
- 11 A palindrome.
- 12 This sculpture derives its name from Bruno Bischolberger's wife Christina, who is known as Yoyo.
- 13 See also the aluminium paintings based on Religious Painting (for Michael Tracy): One painting is entitled The Guests at My Uncle George's Funeral, another is called Mirn Entering Heaven (both 1984).
- 14 Si tacuisses, philosophus mansisses. Boethius, Consolatin philosophiae 2,7.
- 15 "I went to Tangiers and had dinner with Paul Bowles".
- 16 This exhibition would, for the most part, travel to the Kunsthalle Basel, where Jacqueline would be used to make La Nil. The title is taken from the book by a friend of Schnabel's which plays, in part, in Spain. See The Recognitions, William Gaddis, Harcourt Brace, 1955.