

LIKE A SNAIL.

'What is said in the text is always said in the light of limitations of the text. The text is, therefore, never a given, a static object which can be examined as one would examine a statue. Instead there is a movement, a tension, between what can be said and what cannot be said.'

Hilary Lawson; Reflexivity, The Post Modern Predicament; Hutchinson 1985

It's not quite true to say that the content of my work has nothing to do with place. However it may not be obvious. Let me explain.

The Kiepenkerl is an interesting monument. A man smoking a pipe, carries on his back a basket of goods. He holds a stick, there is a second basket at his feet. The basket he carries is constructed in such a way that its contents can clearly be seen. It is in any case so full of potatoes that a dead hare seems to spill over the top and there is no room for the pigeons which swing underneath. The contents of the second basket are hidden - it's not an open work construction and the plinth is too high to allow you to see in.

It was the fullness of the first basket which first aroused my curiosity. It's a big basket and so much stuff must weigh heavy. Indeed the hare and the pigeons let it be known that this is a 'dead weight'. The hare is no longer quick, the pigeons no longer fly (they swing by their feet), the potatoes are out of the earth (German and French 'earth apples'), 'dead' weight indeed. This man, I thought, like the snail carries something of importance on his back.

The Kiepenkerl smokes a pipe, he, the man is between something which vanishes, goes up in smoke, and something which weighs down to the ground, between the transient and the permanent.

Of course the man is not a man, the hare is not a hare, the pigeons are not pigeons and the potatoes are not potatoes. They are likenesses and have the most primitive relationship, that of external similitude, to their depicted objects. The baskets though are a different matter. In a sense they are baskets - the sense in which both plastic and metal buckets are buckets. The relationship to an original is, for them, more complex. That complexity is echoed in their differences, one an open structure visibly full the other a closed structure (perhaps empty) whatever contents it may have certainly invisible. One basket is carried the other sits on the base of the monument (on the ground of representation perhaps).

There are three levels of denotation; that of metaphor, that of likeness and that of structure linked together in my description of the monument. Representation binds them together, the underlying theme of their

interrelationship having to do with appearance, with how one comes to live with, for example, ones acquaintance with ones face as against the experience of ones body. It also positions that appearance between the passage of breath (smoke) and the weight of the certainty of death. Like a snail, carrying something of importance.