

Criticism

In reference to “Heads”

What is this Witness -Head if not a “stalactite” – this frenzied mass which knows no compassion but simply spreads through the power of blindness, the power of death? If you will, it is a head formed by its own burial, by the mud to which it has returned.

In this Witness-Head, the divinity is banished from the witness and the material alike. This is requiem for man and God, a Parmenideanism which gives no chance to the spirit.”

“With his new sculptures, Lachman has not only placed himself in the first rank of Israeli sculptors, but he has reached a sculptural level which has never been surpassed in this country”.

Gideon Ofrat, Israel (from Ransom of the Father, 1999).

“At the moment of eruption, when the shapes are being formed, this sculpture acquires the quality of bursting lava. As in nature, so for the sculptor, the fire melts the material, changing its state of matter, aspiring to tame and culture it. Both Nature and the sculptor release the spell of fire in its unrestrained power. The sculpture is the making of opposites. On the one hand, the form freezes for ever as the bronze is cooling and becoming cold metal; on the other hand, and here lies Lachman’s power, the sculpture is constantly altering in the viewer’s eye, the light, changing intensity, shifting position along the orbit, in the gaze of the beholder.”

Yoav Dagon (on the occasion of the inauguration of “Conventional Head III”, in Reichman Interdisciplinary Center, Herzlia , 2001).

“Lachman’s sculptures give us an image of ourselves in a precarious relation to space. Through form which repeats this message to sophisticate and novice alike he is able to lift the everyday common-place of the human figure to the abstract realm”.

Bruce Gagner, New York (from Head, 1993).

Redemption of the Son, Redemption of the Father (excerpt)

Gideon Ofrat

Isaac | The left-hand stump is weakened as though hanging from a cross. Isaac crucified? Is his right arm no more than a bone? The nape of his neck is lowered. Isaac is routed, defeated. Isaac., whose arms are not doing anything and whose head makes no resistance. Can this be Isaac? We are confronted with a man of the age of a father, or, in other words, Abraham. Isaac as Abraham? And, at the same time, look at the shoulder, the nape and the head put together as a kind of saddle, a place to put a small child on the way to his Akkedah. Isaac as the ass? And one shouldn't miss the view from the side: the double vav (vav=reversal, the letter which overturns destiny), signifying gallows.

It is a sculpture which engages in a dialogue with the heroics of the body and the ethos of the sacrifice – the ethos which quietly overawes the oriental, Temple-like, or perhaps sarcophagus-like base (at least, from the point of view of Isaac, standing over his grave), imbuing it with tranquility and sadness. It would seem that, before it can raise a man from the sacrificial altar, the sculpture is eclipsed from above by the head bent in resignation, by the eyes that are eaten away or Blinded.

This sculpture of a blind Isaac, raised on a high pedestal (here we have the echo of the architecture of a temple, or a memorial stele or coffin), is an anti-monument, the answer to the statues of generals and kings proudly placed on columns. This figure, whose physical bulk is neglected in favour of the head, preserves the drippings of wax melted with fire. One can therefore say it is a sculpture which retains the process of loss and is even created out of it. This sculpture created from loss is created through the action of fire as a sacrifice and as a sanctification of the Name. The metaphysical Akkedah in which the sacrifice is God.

It is doubtful if Israeli sculpture has ever known such a profound theological moment. Zvi Lachman's Akkedot are outstanding religious statements, silencing by means of Being and absence a negative theology.

From Ransom of the Father (1999)

“An extraordinary exhibition (Ransom of the Father) by Zvi Lachman. Sculpture which is conservative, independent, monumental, personal, physical, psychic, philosophical, symbolic, concrete, protesting and comforting. All in one. Sculpture which is devoted to the “Akeda”, to the figure of the father, to memory, to witnessing, to chiseling the core, and to the very act of sculpture. The son redeems his father by sculptural means which bring in echoes of Giacometti and Rosso capturing of the movement. Set apart of almost any present Israeli identity. Pure quality”.

Adam Baruch (“Shishi”, Maariv January 2000).

Lachman innovates the quest undertaken by Rodin, Rosso and Giacometti before him, and re-shapes Man’s tragedy and his spiritual struggle. Neither the body’s contours, nor the lines of a face are ever presented to the viewer in their wholeness. They burst into space as if dug by a subterranean force, as if time has consumed and corroded them. Notwithstanding, a vitality not engulfed by the corrosion of matter emerges from these works. This vitality is the mark of a powerful interiority which beats inside them and allows them to exist in the grace of threatened light and a vulnerable humanity.

Stephania Aluigi (From “Il Dolore della Materia”, a review in Coevit, Bologna, 2001).