



TONY MOORE

TONY MOORE: LYRICIST IN A TIME OF WAR

By Roger Lipsey

It is not the artist who is divided, it is the times. Tony Moore's new work in clay captures the mixed realities of American experience in autumn 2004: on the one hand, those things many of us care for and surely hope always to care for; on the other hand, the violence of 9/11 and the wars that have followed. Lyricist in a time of war, Moore offers both the loveliest of studies in quiet clay and something like the portrait of blind militarism. The first theme draws on the heritage of 20th century art in ways that recall Constructivist design and the clean late Cubism of his fellow Englishman, Ben Nicholson. The second theme draws on the language of Surrealism to give a shape to irony and sorrow. As well, a current of archaism reaches back to the most distant era of image-making for impressions of hand and foot that signal in the simplest way the human presence. Is the artist bound by some rule or convention to present a single vision? Not in times when there is no single vision, when contradiction and complexity prevail. But the artist is

bound to show us well and freshly what he sees. By this measure, the exhibition is strong.

The two major themes, war and a poetry that knows nothing of war, approach each other in two works that share formal similarities: "2004 A.D." and "Resurrection of the Spirit." One is the closed—and bandaged—version of the other; one is the open, tender version of the other. "2004 A.D" presents with Surreal intensity a wholly bandaged head, or something very like. The viewer reads it as thick, harmed, and closed off. It recalls the repertory of images we share from the wars of the 20th century: among so many others, that of wounded soldiers, scarcely visible beneath their dressings. Looking across to the miniature shrine, one sees much the same form but opened out and modeled with childlike attention. Tell me which is true? They are both true.

A similar approach of the two themes occurs in a work such as "Before God." The artist refers to this and works like it

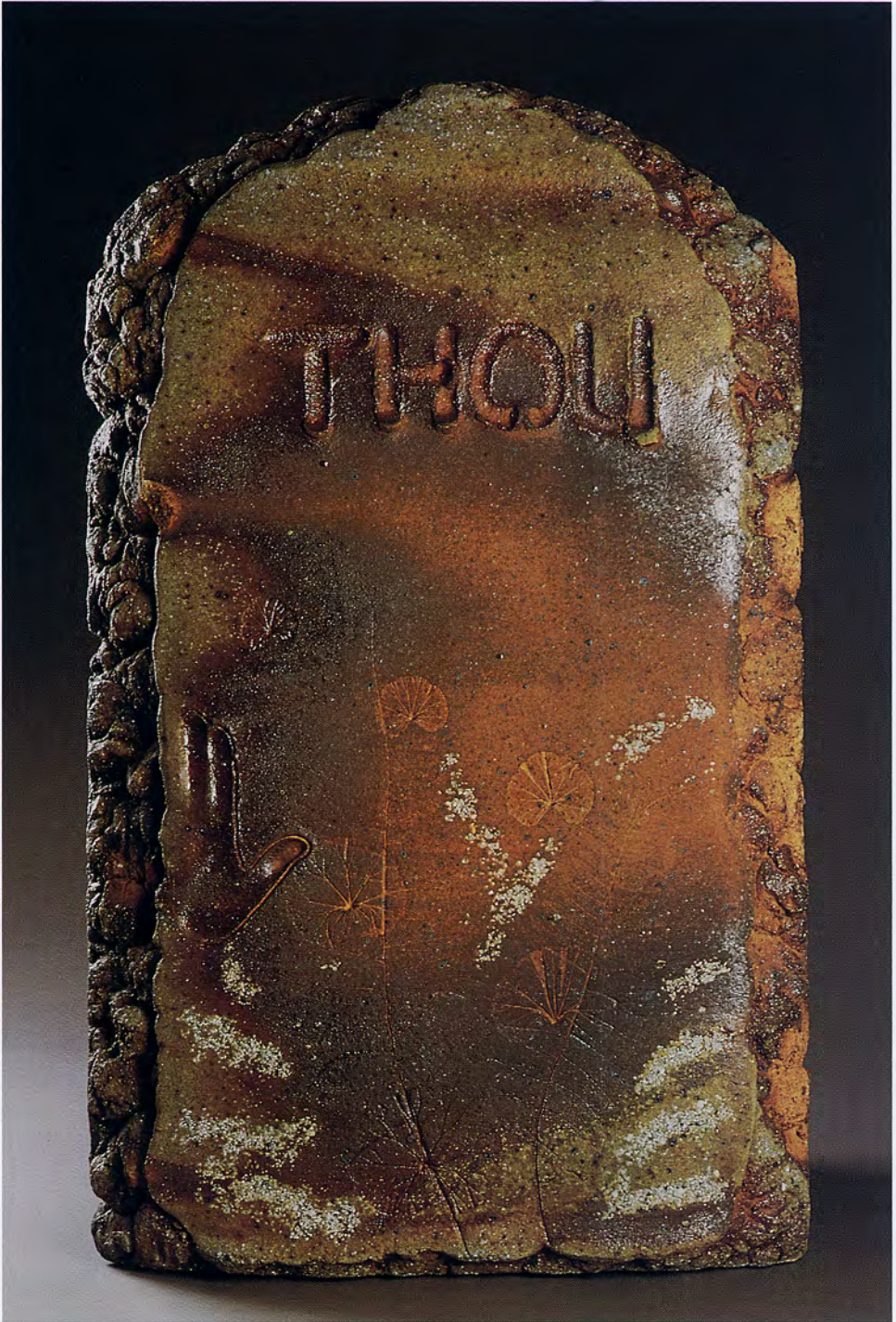
as tablets—but surely he will not quarrel with us if we see something more specific, namely, memorial stones. Yet on this memorial stone is inscribed in low relief—with superb textures and colors owed to the wood-fired kiln—a Constructivist or late-Cubist pattern that recalls nothing so much as the elegant, lyrical art of Ben Nicholson. One stops before this work. It is both light and dark, warmly poetic and unyielding. How can this be? Ask the times.

Moore is able, both as a witness to war and as a poet who cares for small but telling things. The poet looks at how fire moves across clay surfaces and deposits marks, how the impress of a leaf before the firing leaves behind a fossil-like, detailed image, how a strangely eloquent Sign of the Cross can emerge from a complex technical sequence of superposed tiles, clay slip, and the heat of an extended, six-day kiln firing. The multi-part work called “Meditation” reflects the interests of a poet and an inquirer into the meeting place of technique and image-making. Like many works in this exhibition, “Meditation” has its good ancestry—the art of Kasimir Malevich, who first offered simple geometries as spiritual icons; and the Black Paintings of Ad Reinhardt, the American Abstract

Expressionist who recognized in his own way the eloquence of simple geometry. But all of that, so much a part of our shared heritage from 20th century art, is transformed into a new experience by Moore’s medium, the wood-fired kiln. In “Meditation” one comes upon Moore’s lyricism, free of our conflicted times and exercising itself in the realm he knows to be his home ground: clay and the wood-fired kiln. On the hill where he lives in Cold Spring, New York, in the Hudson Valley, Moore has built a kiln where these kinds of thing can happen.

“Thine is the day, thine also the night,” sang the Psalmist long ago (Psalm 74). In these words, though poetically coded, may be a hint for artists in our time, and for us all: to look at all things straight on, to hold dear and practice what we have always held dear and practiced, yet not to avert our eyes from the night, from the difficulties we all face. Tony Moore’s new work, in its lyricism and harshness, neither ignores our time nor scedes his art to it.

*An independent critic and scholar,
Roger Lipsey is the author of
The Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art
(a Dover Books reissue, 2004).*



THOU, 36 1/2" X 22 1/2" X 3 1/4" Woodfired Ceramic, Fired 6 Days

TONY MOORE

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MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
Greenville Museum of Art, Greenville, NC
Derby Museum, Derbyshire, UK
Yorkshire Museum, York, UK

EDUCATION

1971-73 Master of Fine Arts, Yale University, New Haven, CT (Scholarship)

AWARDS

1989 The Avery Fellow, Millay Colony For The Arts, Austerlitz, NY
1983 Louis Comfort Tiffany Award
1978 CAPS Grant. Creative Artists Public Service Program, NY
1970 1st Prize, Arts Council of Great Britain THE NATIONAL YOUNG CONTEMPORARIES,
Royal Academy of Art, London, UK

FELLOWSHIPS

1997 Ceramic Artist Residency, Byrdcliffe Arts Colony, Woodstock, NY
1994 Visual Artist Fellowship, Ucross Foundation, Clearmont, WY
1991 Visual Artist Residency, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT
1989 Visual Artist Fellowship, Millay Colony for the Arts, Austerlitz, NY
1988 Visual Artist Fellowship, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Sweet Briar, VA
1984 Visual Artist Fellowship, Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, NY

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2004 ONE PERSON EXHIBITION, Van Brunt Gallery, Beacon, NY
15th SAN ANGELO NATIONAL, San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, San Angelo, TX
POTTER'S GOLD: WOODFIRED CERAMICS, (Tony Moore, Tim Rowan, Jack Troy, others),
Belskie Museum of Art, Closter, NJ
CERAMIC BIENNIAL, New Hampshire Institute of Art, Manchester, NH
BOWL'D AND BEAUTIFUL, Ceramic Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia
FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION, Lillstreet Art Center, Chicago, IL
CERAMIC SCULPTURE, Celadon Gallery, Water Mill, NY
GEMS FROM THE FIRE, Kirkwood College, Cedar Rapids, IA
IT'S ONLY CLAY, Bemidji Community College, Bemidji, MN
FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE, A.D.D. Gallery, Hudson, NY
JERSEY SHORE NATIONAL, m. t. Burton Gallery, Surf City, NJ
CONVERSATIONS, Levine Art Gallery, Putnam Arts Council, Mahopac, NY
STUDIO POTTER BENEFIT, NCECA 2004, Indianapolis, IN
2004 JURIED ANNUAL, WAD Clay Institute, Pittsburgh, PA
2003 PASSIONATE FIRE: WOODFIRED CERAMICS, (Roger Baumann, Joy Brown, Peter Callas,
Paul Chaleff, Tony Moore, Tim Rowan, Jeff Shapiro), Germaine Keller Gallery, Garrison, NY
VESSELS, (Joy Brown, Tony Moore, Jeff Shapiro, others), Bachelier-Cardonsky Gallery, Kent, CT

vanbruntgallery

460 Main Street, Beacon, NY 12508

845.838.2995

www.vanbruntgallery.com

Hours: 11-6 pm

Open: Thursday—Sunday or by appointment

TONY MOORE

LYRICIST IN A TIME OF WAR

Woodfired Ceramic Sculpture

November 27 — January 9

Artist Reception:

Saturday, November 27, 6-9