

DAN DEMPSTER

23 October - 7 December, 1997



"Pleurand" zinc 48 x 42 inches © Daniel C. Dempster 1997

"TIMEWRACK & TIDE"
new works of copper, steel and zinc

FULCRUM GALLERY SoHo

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DAN DEMPSTER: TIMEWRACK & TIDE, THE ALCHEMY OF ACTUAL ART

What you see in Dan Dempster's work is art happening, a sea change shaped as sculpture, time past evolving into time future. There is no now there, no now now, but rather work in process, cunning, thoughtful, beautiful: ocean wrack and airborne, art that moves from then to now, from there to here, art at work never at rest, rust for the ages.

The rust, the patina, the objects made arise not simply from the sea but quite literally out of the sea off Bermuda where Dempster works underwater shaping his art, making his work. His work has always contained well understood accident and intent, most recently the contingent powdered graphites allowed to settle over time to give texture and surface to minimalist canvasses. And that work was a beginning on work done in Virginia and Bermuda, work shaped by the sea, mahogany and steel, driftwood and stone, some left underwater for months, months and months, worked underwater, some left in the air to age, then at some time, at the right time, the object adjusted in the everyday world, stainless steel wire or magnets added discretely.

There are no hard rules, no dominating ego, rather the urgency of the moment after long involvement. Much depends on time and nature, much on choice, the final work on addition and display. There can be, have been all sorts of explanations, relevant, turgid, exacting and enlightening but in the end the work, all Dempster's work must rely on the integrity of the finished piece - and yet, these pieces will never be finished. This, above all else, is what you do not see when you see a Dempster.

The innocent eye anticipates singularity, a work, a painting, a fresco immutable and perfect, fresh from the artist's hand, never changing, the same - and this is impossible. The medium changes, oils shift under light, shift over time and faster still gouache and water color, wood shrinks and dries, the surface now is not the surface then.

No one can see Michelangelo as did his contemporaries nor are Monet's waterlilies the same as Monet set down. Time erodes, shifts, adds, subtracts and there is nothing to be done. Or for most artists there is nothing to be done: some set down their vision and hope for the best, others ignore time, their perception changing with the work, with the context of the day. Their eye is different and their age but somehow the work must be as always, immutable, and it is not. Then the change arises from the materials, from the medium, from the contingent and the unforeseen adds patina, produces cracks, changes the changeless at random, at will, at bequest of the iron laws of chemistry or the rules of atomic decay. One can not go back again, restore, repaint, repair but only shape an approximation not the original. What is done is done.

Not with Dempster. What is done, what is happening, change and decay, additions, increments, and transformations are integral to the piece, to the work, for all his work suffers first a sea change and then benefit from time: transformation, the name is Dempster. What is done is what is happening, what is in process, slow, incremental, oxidation beauty brought to view through the wonders of chemistry, the action of the sea, through planning and intent. The work moves with the times, is part of the time and so timeless, never the same and always the same. Even with the toll of rust, the loss of time, the inherent reality is increscent, accumulates past images to present reality and promises tomorrow, slowly, slowly but inevitably. Time is built into the work, hard wired into the concepts, change is natural and intended and inherent in the concept.

Dempster starts within the sea, the discard heap, the beach, seeks there the rubbish and jetsam of the made world of man, steel plates, iron discards, orts and bits, the stressed debris of a profligate civilization. From stone cannon ball to compressed steel cans nature offers the basics, the beginning. And there, at times under the sea, off Bermuda, Dempster transforms the dross into wrought works for another medium and another time. The components are not simply found, driftwood and spent tin, but chosen and adjusted, moved to a new context, and for new purpose. Those purposes are to make special objects, objects with magic - and the viewer may be enhanced or intrigued by the spells and rituals necessary but at the end of the day, in the gallery, it is the work that is magic.

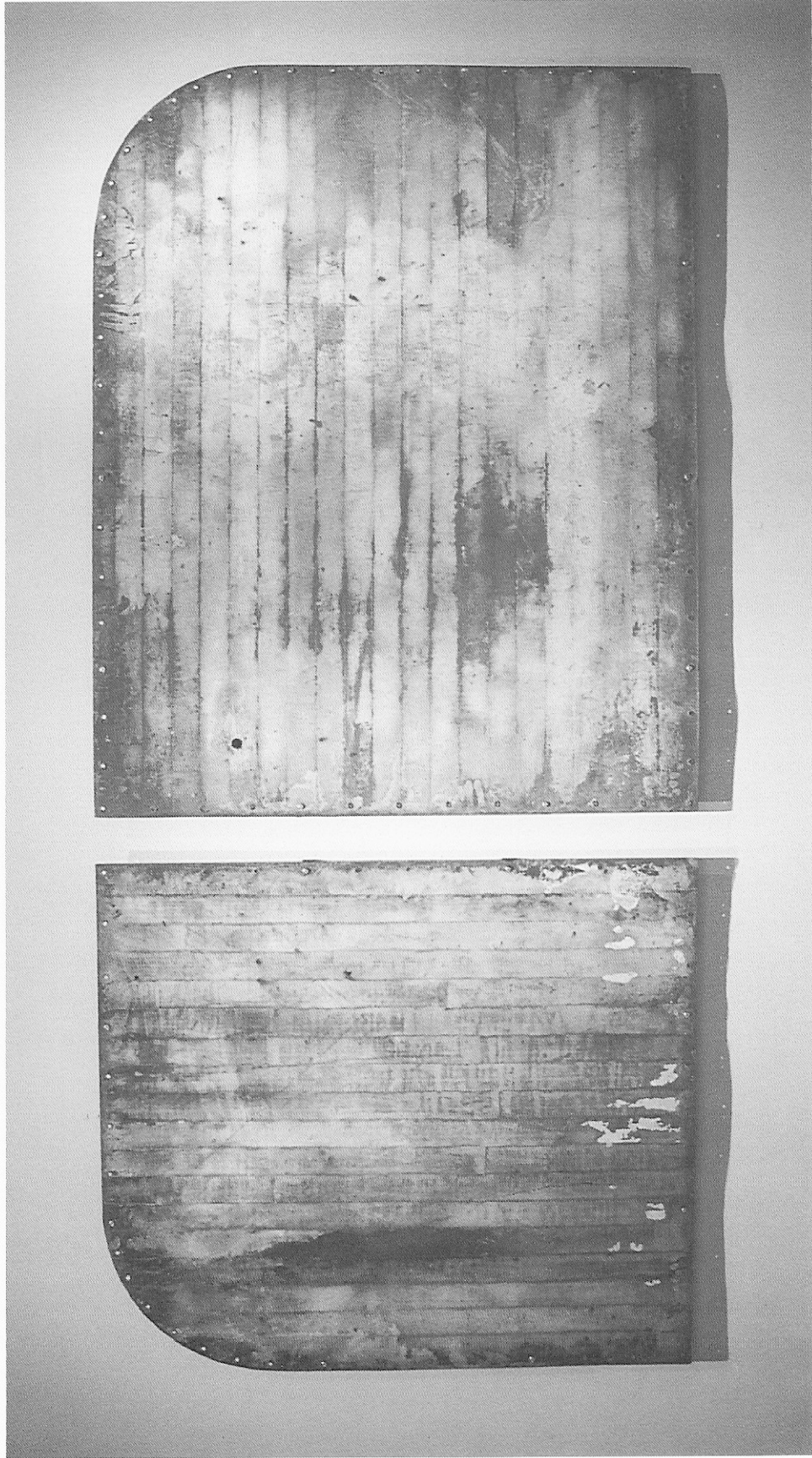
Art arises from ideas, ideas not amenable to any but visual, physical rendition: what you see is what is presented. What you talk about is a response, meaning implied, found, elaborated but always by other means: word, print, formal logic and philosophical implications. All this is at least one remove from the object's impact.

One may see all sorts of things, may tease out all sorts of implications and meanings - seek a subject in illusion, seek form for comfort, find a horizon line or an echo of fact. The object does not care - the observer may and the critic certainly. Most everyone, however, assumes that the object of desire, the artwork, is as seen, paint and canvas, steel and stone, more than this but never less. Few, few artists, few observers perceive art as it is, as process. If so, if art moves through time - and this is, indeed the case, for how could it be otherwise - then each singularity is in the process of change from the fresh new paint, the warm welded sculpture, to something else. Color changes, grows or glows, fades, shifts down the spectrum or up, always does so. It is the nature of color. Textures appear over time, shift, today's touch not yesterday. Time works on the object. And most artists do not care, are engaged in making other singular objects.

Dempster and Fulcrum Gallery care - for time is a component of the art. Time is incorporated as a means to transform, add or subtract, reveal or hide the original image. And with Dempster there is not an original image placed at ground zero but rather objects found, objects transformed, first by nature and then by hand, objects presented to view that each day must be viewed differently for time will steal away purity and physical integrity, make something else, better or different, make even the stone cannon ball different. The work is thus transformed by skill and intent, foresight and experience and most intriguingly by time. Instead of decaying with the years, these works are intended to change with the years, with the times, evolve, carry into the future not only the physicality of change but also the resonance of past states. Art past is to be foundation for tomorrow. And always, for they are the works of a single and singular artist, the more the work changes the more the work is Dempster, the same and different.

There is much to be said, much to be considered, weighted and discussed in matters of time and the art, Dempster today and Dempster tomorrow but in the end the object stands alone, visual, mutating, beautiful, sea wracked and sun scarred. Each work is solid and shifting, real and transient, always a Dempster and always a different Dempster. So the observers come and go talking of theory and time and ideas in action, in change and the changeless and Dempster's work abides, works to advantage, deploys time and tide and magic, the endless alchemy of art caught and displayed.

- J. BOWYER BELL



"Welland" zinc 48 x 132 inches © Daniel C. Dempster 1997

SOLO & MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS: **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ARTS CENTER**, 2438 18TH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, DC: 20 FEBRUARY - 29 MARCH 1998. / **NICHOLAS LUSHER FINE ART**, "BERMUDA SHALLOWS: RECENT DRAWINGS BY DANIEL C. DEMPSTER" 22 CHURCH STREET, WASHINGTON MALL, HAMILTON, BERMUDA: 28 NOVEMBER 1997 - 09 JANUARY 1998. / **FULCRUM GALLERY SOHO**, "TIMEWRACK & TIDE" 480 BROOME & WOOSTER, NEW YORK, NY: 23 OCTOBER - 07 DECEMBER 1997. / **PENINSULA FINE ARTS CENTER**, "WATERWORKS" NEWPORT NEWS, VA.. AFFILIATE OF THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS. / 1996: **MUSEO DE ARTE MODERNO**, SANTODOMINGO. **3RD BIENNALE OF PAINTING OF THE CARRIBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA**. / **BERMUDA SOCIETY OF ARTS**, "ITHURIEL" CITY HALL & ARTS CENTRE, HAMILTON, BERMUDA. / **THE BERMUDA NATIONAL GALLERY**, "BIENNIAL 96" CITY HALL & ARTS CENTRE, HAMILTON, BERMUDA. / **MASTERWORKS FOUNDATION**, "IRON MOSS," FRONT STREET, HAMILTON, BERMUDA. **FULCRUM GALLERY SOHO**, "THE WATER PLANET" 144 MERCER STREET, NEW YORK., NY. / 1994: **THE BERMUDA NATIONAL GALLERY**, **BIENNIAL 94. "A CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE: THE BEST OF BERMUDA"** CITY HALL & ARTS CENTRE, HAMILTON, BERMUDA. / **THE CLOCKTOWER BUILDING**, "OUT OF CONTEXT," ROYAL NAVAL DOCKYARD, IRELAND ISLAND, BERMUDA. / 1991: **BACARDI INTERNATIONAL**, "WATERWORKS," BACARDI BUILDING, BERMUDA.

CORPORATE COLLECTIONS: **THE BANK OF BERMUDA**, COMPASS POINT / **THE BERMUDA MONETARY AUTHORITY**, BURNABY HOUSE / **THE MASTERWORKS FOUNDATION**, BERMUDA / **HARRINGTON INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE LTD.**, BERMUDA / **G. J. MALONEY & Co.**, DUBLIN / **YEOMAN INTERNATIONAL LEASING**, DUBLIN.

RECENT REVIEWS & ARTICLES: MARK ST. JOHN ERICKSON, "WATER DAZZLES IN SEA SCENES OF AREA ARTIST" **DAILY PRESS**, NEWPORT NEWS. VA. SUNDAY, MAY 25, 1997. PP11, 3. PHOTOS / CATHERINE DORSEY, "MATTERS OF THE MIND" **PORT FOLIO**, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA. MAY 20-26. P36 / WILSON ENGEL, "MOVEMENT OF WATER AND LIGHT IN SHALLOWS" **MTIDES**, NORFOLK, VA. VOLUME 23, ISSUE 5, MAY 1997. P14 / PETER BARTON, "SENSATIONAL EVIDENCE AND SENSUAL REFLECTIONS." ESSAY IN "WATERWORKS." PFAC, VIRGINIA / DR. J. BOWYER BELL, "DAN DEMPSTER: TIMEWRACK AND TIDE, THE ALCHEMY OF ACTUAL ART." **FULCRUM**, NEW YORK. 14 FEB. 1997 / ANDREW TRIMINGHAM, "LESS IS MORE AT BSOA" **THE MID-OCEAN NEWS**. 06 DECEMBER 1996. P10 / ANDREW TRIMINGHAM, "MAXIMUM PLEASURE FROM MINIMALIST SHOW" **THE MID-OCEAN NEWS**. 29 NOV 1996. P13 / RAYMOND HAINEY, "DEMPSTER'S WORK WORTH A LOOK, OR MAYBE A DIP" **THE ROYAL GAZETTE**. 18 NOV 1996. P17 / ANDREW TRIMINGHAM, "BERMUDA NATIONAL GALLERY 2ND BIENNIAL" **THE MID-OCEAN NEWS**. 10 MAY 1996. PHOTO / DANNY SINOPOLI, "BEAUTY OF DEMPSTER'S DECAY" **THE ROYAL GAZETTE**. 24 APRIL 1996. P17 / ANDREW TRIMINGHAM "DEMPSTER'S STEEL SHOW PROVES 'RESTFUL, ENERGISING'" **THE MID-OCEAN NEWS**. 01 MAR 96 P14 / JEANNIE LANKES, EDITOR "DEMPSTER ONE-MAN SHOW" **MTIDES**, TIDEWATER MENSA. MARCH 1996. P21 / CATHERINE DRAYCOTT "SOLO IN SOHO" **THE BERMUDIAN MAGAZINE**. FEBRUARY 1996. P17-19. PHOTO

RECENT PUBLISHED WRITINGS: "HURRICANE SEASON: TACTICAL THINKING IN THE INFORMATION AGE" LEAD ARTICLE IN **MENSA BULLETIN, THE MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN MENSA**, HOUSTON, TEXAS. SEPTEMBER 1997, NO. 409. COVER / "ARTS HELP HEAL BERMUDA'S IDENTITY CRISIS" ARTICLE. **THE BERMUDIAN MAGAZINE**. MAY 1995.

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