



Titled "Reivers", this fresh body of work builds on the recent Scorched Earth series of drawings. These new drawings and sculpture speculate on a contemporary view of 16th Century British history in the light of contemporary global conflict. A "Reiver", or specifically the "Border Reivers", were great leaders of tribes, battling and contesting the borders of early Scotland and England. They were a unique breed: fighting men of great resource leading bands of outlaws and peasants, well versed in the skills of tracking, theft, and raiding.



Throughout history people have fashioned the implements of war by means of technology; machinery can become a metaphor for the figure by which we are able to judge our place in the world at pivotal points in civilisation (e.g. Jacob Epstein's "The Rock Drill"). Atkin has explored the idea of artworks as witness to this subject as a way of examining the influence of war on culture.



Responding to this theme Atkin draws and sculpts meditations on mans destructive tendencies. His drawings are composed on ceramic grog and paper and give allusions to ancient wall drawings, the remnants of time past. Other drawings use pattern templates (found in the textiles industry) as grounds for drawing of machinery that have analogies to human anatomy. The mechanomorphic figure and its literary contexts (notably Mary Shelley's Modern Prometheus) is of continuing interest to him, particularly in the light of such innovations of present day culture as DNA, cloning, genealogy, robotics. The drawings appear as singular portraits of fighting drones. His sculptures, small in scale, depict surreal machine-like people of a post-apocalyptic future.



These drawings and sculptures address fresh ideas to do with movement, physical and surreal, using imagery that suggests carriages, rafts, rolling stock. This body of work addresses his interest in and reactions to, cultures of technologised conflict. It explores ways in which these reactions might be mediated through imagery based on fragments of industrial decay and through ideas that focus on conflict.



thickly laminated mixed media drawings influenced the development of a series of large -scale sculptures entitled Watchman for the Morning. The Watchman series of sculptures, made from a collection of discarded materials, roofing felt, rope, card, paper stood over 12 feet tall and were first exhibited in a solo show of my work at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, in 1985.

This exhibition received critical acclaim in a Guardian article by William Varley and also in the BBC documentary on my work, Strange Meeting, first screened in 1985.



The relationship between these large-scale sculptures, drawings and The Room, generated an atmosphere for the viewer of a silent social stalemate, a reflection on the atmospheres generated in Edward Bond's plays and an inflection on my own Northern background. The formal relationships between the works was also important because it signaled the beginnings of a plural approach to researching appropriate methodologies for making work. The outcomes of this research was no longer bound to the language of sculpture, it was now about Fine Art practice.