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ART – LOVE IN SEARCH OF FORM

Music is love in search of a word;

Poetry is word in search of form;

Sculpture is love that has found its form.

An Interview with Mirtala

D. How did you find your calling as an artist?
What training have you had?

M. Life itself was my teacher and my training.
As a result of life questioning us, there is an opening up of deep insights and responses. What makes one an “artist” is simply a sense of need to share these insights and the capacity to do so.

EVOLUTION



When I began my school training in sculpture, unexpectedly, poetry entered my life. I discovered an inexhaustible source to supplement the expression of my ideas in tangible, material form by also expressing them in words. This was due, I think, to a curious relationship between the static quality of a 3-dimensional form, like a cross-section of movement frozen in time, and the fluid, intangible images created by words. The two complement each other, and what cannot be expressed by one, is possible through the other.

Wandering over rugged rocks
caressed by waves,
I found beneath my feet
the words I had sought so long.

They were washed by the sea,
stirred by the wind,
to the sound of thunder
they were beaten by sleet.

All the sharp and angry ones
the sea sand had ground down,
all the weak and empty ones
the tide had carried away.

There remain in disarray
and glow as a rainbow
only those which in riddles
speak to me of life.

Line upon line
they will fall into designs,
and I from idle eyes
will shield them with my hand.

For me, the word
must shine serenely,
without useless adornments
and empty digressions
unveiling a stairway
to far-off heights.

Its artless confession
unburdened at leisure,
its letters scattered,
the word will spread out
in starry dotted lines
across the violet sky.

EXODUS



My path was clear to me,
my path was simple:
I crossed the short bridge
from childhood.

A slope abrupt
replaces the valley,
dense nettles
cover its banks.

I walk on further,
I walk all day,
when suddenly at my feet
a shadow falls.

You, shade of doubt,
leave my path,
with you through life
one cannot walk!"

There is a basic difference in the process of creating in these two art forms. When working with words, they seem to form themselves into coherent, flowing units and there is a sequence in time, as one progresses through the poem. Sculpture, on the other hand, appears to arise in my mind's eye as a total, completed concept and no words play any part in it. It is there in almost complete detail, requiring no preliminary sketches, and all that needs to be done is to transmute it into a 3-dimensional material. It is,

truly, a process of creating forms out of thoughts, and hence the title of my book of sculptures and poems - "Thought-Forms".

THE EVER-PRESENT PAST



Days cast their shadows
across generations,
and my "now"
will resound in an echo
of tears or laughter.

I know, my descendent,
your destiny depends
on my victories,
joys and misfortunes,
on how I embroider
my days and years.

And for my shadow
on your path,
in advance I ask - forgive!

D. What has been the progression of your work, in themes, materials, and images?

M. My work does not fit into any clear-cut established categories, because to express my ideas I had to work out a form which would be adequate and appropriate, and I had to discover that form myself. It is the age-old question facing every artist: which medium, which technique and style are most suitable for a particular idea? – the crucial issue of balance between the "what" and the "how."

I found that bronze suited my particular mode of expression best. The sculpture is made of wax and cast into bronze by the "lost wax method", in which the wax is burnt out of the mold.

MAKING A MOLD FOR WAX



Traditionally, sculpture was confined to the human figure. The tremendous liberation that sculpture has experienced in the 20th century opened up an almost unlimited choice and variety of forms, materials and interpretations. So my choice also had to be made in terms of the degree of abstraction that I wanted to use in expressing my ideas.

Mine is "humanistic" sculpture and pure abstraction to express it would be inadequate, for it deals with the human condition and the various psychological situations arising from the fact of being human. Therefore, my compositions, with a few exceptions, contain a human figure or a number of them.

BRIDGING THE CHASM



Some sculptors use the human figure as their subject matter and look for new interpretations of its forms. Others explore the possibilities of various techniques and materials and work in the abstract vein.

I use the figure only as a symbol of the human being or, when used as a group, of humanity as a whole. Therefore, they are simplified, stylized forms, lacking in anatomical detail. They are usually surrounded by an environment - a flat background panel representing space or forms suggestive of nature or architecture. Sometimes it's an abstract design, expressive of the psychological situation in which these figures find themselves.

For example, in *SILENT HOUR* the line of figures moves through a tunnel-like shape, portraying our perpetual advance into the mystery of the unknown tomorrow. In *AUTUMN* the perforated tree panel speaks of nature as a whole.

SILENT HOUR



AUTUMN



The sculpture *VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS* is an example of a method I developed to create a greater sense of depth and perspective by combining 3-dimensional forms with bas-relief.

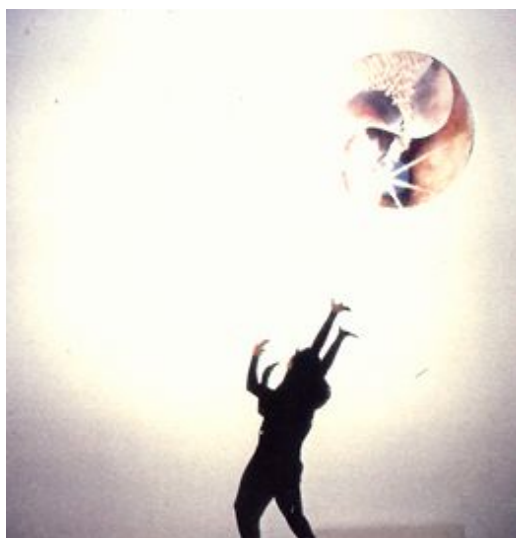
VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS



The figures are set against a panel representing space. This allows to create the illusion of great depth, as the figures disappear in the far distance of the 2-dimensional perspective of the bas-relief.

This has the effect of a stage set and I have been experimenting with using my sculptures both as themes and as sets for multi-media performances. Adding expressive movement to unfold the potential movement hidden within the sculpture, combined with poetry and music, creates an experience which involves all our senses

LIGHT AND SHADOW (Multi-media)



D. I feel that life is an embodiment of spirit. Your work marvelously captures this and evokes an awareness of this in me. Is this your intent?

M. Since the entire endeavor of doing my work as an artist comes from the urge to express and share my inner reality, there is really no deliberate intent. Rather, it is a spontaneous expression of my intrinsic being, like breathing in and breathing out, like the wind and the rain. I only see its result by the reactions of those who come in contact with it.

My sculpture is a tangible expression of every step on my inner journey and is, therefore, inseparable from my life.

By going within, as in the sculpture *PATH TO SELF*, I feel connected to the center of every other human being and art then becomes a direct dialogue and communication, a sharing of human spirit.

PATH TO SELF



As I stepped back to look at my creative process, I realized that making sculpture is bringing spirit into matter. My energy – spiritual, mental, emotional and even physical – is somehow transmitted and encoded within the sculpture. It is as if the inert matter acquires a life of its own and begins to radiate out this energy. If the viewer's thoughts, emotions and spiritual aspirations are in resonance with this energy, then there is a communication and a recognition of mutual truths.

To draw an analogy, science speaks of "sympathetic resonance" and "entrainment." Since all matter is vibratory in nature – an oscillating electromagnetic field in a void – then our reality is a hologram of interacting vibrations, expanding into infinite harmonics.

If art comes from the spiritual level, which is a part of the hologram and in which everything is interconnected, it will resonate with the same level within everyone else, since on the spiritual level we are all one. And this is how "entrainment" occurs, in which the artist can resonate with all humanity, evoke or awaken in others the frequency of the level from which the inspiration came.

INTERDEPENDENCE



SCULPTURE AS AN ENVIRONMENT

We are constantly influenced by objects and images which surround us: the presence and the shape of a tree; the height, shape and color of rooms we live in, even the shape of the entire city. Walking through the canyons of New York City streets affects our senses and perception of space-time in a way totally different from walking through a California redwood forest or an open field in Kansas.

How much closer
to us in childhood
is the earth!

Understood
are all
the blades of grass;
the wind
in friendship
laps us,
the rain
brings us gifts
of dewdrops.

Now –
the scorching
asphalt
buckles its back
beneath
our spiky heel
and under
the car's
tire.

I would like
to be lower
than the grass!

I languish
in asphalt's
grasp!

Could I only
be closer
to the earth –
to smell
the remembered
fragrance!

The light and sound reflected by surfaces surrounding our physical body affect it on a cellular level. If these surfaces are a part of a meaningful structure, such as the Stonehenge, a pyramid or a temple, the result can be felt on a deep emotional and spiritual level. This is the healing magic of sacred places

DYNAMIC EXPERIENCE OF SCULPTURE

I have envisioned an experience of my sculpture not as an object apart, sitting on a pedestal to be viewed from a distance, but rather as an environment to be experienced from within, to be walked through.

Arranged as a continuous structure, three sculptures: *THE NARROW GATE*, *GATE OF TIME*, and *PORTALS ON THE WAY* could serve as a setting for an inner journey – a transformational experience of going through psychological events and levels of consciousness, symbolized by gates and portals.

THE-NARROW GATE



Finding the “straight and narrow” requires effort – the wide and obvious eventually dead-ends.

GATE OF TIME



From the infinity of the past into the infinity of the future, through the eternal NOW moment – the Gate, our only reality, an illusion, forever shifting... By stepping through the Gate consciously, one transcends this space-time.

PORTALS ON THE WAY



Each gate – a turning point, approached and passed through consciously. Reaching the top gate is a personal experience for each pilgrim.

This structure could also serve as a setting for concerts, multi-media performances and sacred drama.

SCULPTURE AS ENVIRONMENT





Two other sculptures could also be used in a similar way:

THE SOURCE



WHENCE AND WHITHER



It is my hope to be able to participate in the creation of such structures, wherever the concept and the need to create it would find resonant hearts.

Sculptures

Most of these bronze sculptures are available in limited editions.

Height range from 7 to 48 inches

Contact mirtala@earthlink.net"

Books

Thought-Forms - Sculpture and Poetry

Mandalas - Sculptures and Meditations

Videos

The Human Journey - Sculpture and Poetry

Mandalas - Sculptures

Poetry in Bronze - Interview with Mirtala

Her work and the creative process

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