

## ***Defining Sculpture***

A PRESENTATION  
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I warmly thank the Department of Architecture of the University of Cyprus for offering this opportunity to present my views, my work and my aspect on art. Special thanks to Dr Panagiota Pyla, Professor at the Department of Architecture, History and Theory of Contemporary Architecture, who so kindly introduced me, I would also like to thank Dr Constantinos Avramides, Lecturer, Architecture and Landscape, Ersia Stylianou, PhD student at the University of Cyprus, Research Architect Engineer NTUA and all those who contributed to the realisation of this event.

I am doubly happy to be here, because architecture and sculpture are the two arts that have a common ground and deal with space. An architectural structure should house the spirit, and so should the art! Architecture and sculpture have an element of unconscious communication, they always seem to address each one of us individually, they are defined by the third dimension. The third dimension defined me as well, both as a person and as an artist.

### ***Heading towards art***

I was born in Famagusta, where *I grew up among the demolished temples and the mutilated sculptures*, Kostas Axelos cites (1.). These images, the aesthetics of ancient architecture and art in the natural and historical environment of Famagusta and Ancient Salamis shaped my perception of the world and my place in it, they were essential for my life. It was the starting point of my human and artistic course and I do not mean it specifically in the artistic sense then, but as the visual perception and emotional experience of everyday life. Space, the third dimension defined me. Sculpture came later. In those years I didn't even envision the modern in art!

My tack took rather a reversed progress. It happened early what most artists do later. A journey to the world, the arts, a wide information and the acquaintance with cities and other cultures, with European museums and great masters, all of which, at a young age, gave me the thrill towards art issues. And which, played an important role as a necessary formation that would help me in my final choice.

I was also defined by the political history of my country, which marked me as the trauma of a place that suffers the harsh trials of history and which, within this historical and personal continuity, acted as the force that drove me towards art.

I am interested in the difficulty of the work, the research, I explore a work as a subject to be developed, to be resolved, I like to use *discords* that assist harmony. When I am concerned in many directions, I allow some time to eliminate unnecessary elements. It is important to discover the field for which I will work, while taking advantage of everything that will come before me. I try to create works that bring new ideas to my personal quest.

My research is related to the complexity of reality where everything coexists and *intertwines*. The space of our lives is full of shapes, colours, sounds, it is constantly changing by the passage of light and shadow, our movement and action. We live in a world, in a universe that is constantly moving, and it is in this environment that I meet my inspiration. Art is a parallel universe related to the real world! All this preoccupies me, while I search for the shapes, the profiles, I immobilise the movement that interests me, and extract what serves my thought and work. I also treat the *aether space* that surrounds a sculpture as a material having a substance and shape, determining the scale of the work. It is an approach that inspires and directs me to what I aspire and at the same time is a formation of my artistic identity.

In one of his books, Pedro Olalla (2) mentions that Greek tragedy developed like an *animated* relief. This perception arises from the movement, the balance and harmony that characterise Greek culture in general. I totally agree. Immobilising an intellectual or natural happening, a dense and *true* sculptural composition emerges.

Martin Heidegger (3) states: "*Sculpture produces bodies. Their mass of various materials is formed in many ways. A sculptural work weighs in the bulkiness and heaviness of the stone, in the solidity and flexibility of wood, in the hardness and brightness of copper. Sculpture enhances the materials used to a durability and stillness, it stands above time decay and human neglect. And finally, space comes into play as an active component of sculpture, it is not only outside its boundaries but also within them*".

In space and sculpture, you never see all facets, all profiles at the same time, there is a visible and an unseen part. The essential, is both the visible and the invisible, not the virtual. The truth, not the description of the truth. This is what interests me. When you have a regular shape, you can guess the whole from whatever angle you look at it. But this is not the case if you have a free format.

According to Eduardo Chillida (4), "*when you observe a sculpture and someone else does the same, wandering around it, the time of observation interacts with the space of the sculpture and also, there is a rhythm*". So, space and time are closely related. "*If you slowly move around a sculpture, you'll see how it evolves over time,*" Gaston Bachelard. (5)

**Drawing**, as an intellectual language of the real, is to me of great importance. It helps me progress my thinking and research. In drawing one can easily overthrow the order of things, balance or gravity.

Drawing *three-dimensionally* I study the movement, drawing in the space-time is like a moving geometry as I perceive it and helps me approach my intention more substantially. In sculpture, light and shadow give birth to drawing. One shadow brings to another, a line is a recalling. I treat my sculpture as a progressing drawing, this is the driving force when I am in the process. Sculpture is drawing with material!

My recent work, emerged effortlessly through a personal contemplation after my last solo exhibition. I have implied a disengaging approach and I continue in this direction. I moved from drawing on paper to a three-dimensional drawing. This is an experimental adventure, which allows me to deepen into my search, into the volume, the space and time, within a density of thought and reflection. I try as much as possible to bridge the world of emotion and perception.

The process of creating a work of art is structural and poetic! And it is very interesting to capture, to track the transformations of the process. "*We would then see how a mind is heading towards the realisation of its dream!*", cites Honore de Balzac, in *The Unknown Masterpiece*. (6). It is revealing, it presents the unique and emotional course of creation.

These solitary moments of the artist, of the very personal relationship with his nascent work, remain undecoded and justly preserve the inaccessible mystery of creation. The work lives with you as long as you create it, and when it is completed, it begins to exist for the others. In this lonely path of creation, I sink each time into the greatest doubts and when suddenly what I did not know emerges, I gratefully accept the result, until I question it again. What I achieve is little and in the midst of many failures. I thwart, I start again, I move on, I reassess. Leaping into the unknown is something that is done beyond knowledge, it can bring something new or not. This is the adventure that sometimes produces art.

### ***Large Scale Sculpture***

Sculpture is a monumental art par excellence. "*The art par excellence of shadow and light*", points out Kostas Axelos (1).

I took part in several sculptural competitions and I accomplished five monumental sculptures. I have always been interested in the relationship between small and large volume, and through the process of creating large-scale sculptures, I satisfied this curiosity. I try to grow my experience and go one step further, always expressing my inner and personal aesthetic point of view and way. As a mental journey, it is like any journey. One step leads to the

next! I now know that what leads me to this demanding process is my personal and artistic viewpoint. These matters concern me during the long time a monumental work needs to come to light and I delve in this as a part of my personal research. I seek to preserve its sculptural nature, character, through the aesthetic balance of volume and void, of each part and the whole.

To enlarge from a small scale to the required volume is a complex, demanding process, extremely interesting, *generative* and constitutes, to some extent of course, another creation. As far as the artistic part is concerned, if the enlargement is adhered to the letter, it is certain that the result will not have the *plastic* values and all the necessary elements for the composition to be aesthetically complete and be a *living* work of art. During this process, lots of conflicting elements arise, each part determines the movement and position of the next and balance will be achieved through the artistic process. The harmonic result cannot be achieved by mathematics but by using additional and often arbitrary elements, that will give sculptural and aesthetic weight, a value to the original idea. To enlarge is to structure, to recreate in space, taking into account the elements that coexist and *intertwine* with the work and determine its scale. It is necessary to take into consideration the use of the location, its architectural environment and its vicinity.

I would like to refer to the last two competitions I won and accomplished two large-scale sculptures. In the competition for the monumental composition placed by the Presidential Park in Nicosia, I applied my new views on drawing, by immobilising, freezing the movement and using what interested me visually. A direct three-dimensional drawing with material in space. This work was first enlarged in plaster at its predicted size and then completed in an artistic foundry in bronze, with mixed technique. For the second sculptural composition placed at the entrance of the Kostas Leventis Building at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia, I composed directly in the third dimension with the actual material –bronze with mixed technique- respecting the proportions of the model in order to maintain the rhythm, the movement and its aesthetic perception.

A monumental sculpture is characterised by the fact that it is placed in public space and its final realisation remains an object of judgment for the artist and the jury. It is a difficult process and a great responsibility. Also, more than any other project, a monument needs time to come to life for others and to be established, accepted by society. In my opinion, a monumental sculpture can and should express a condensed thematic and artistic concept. Art undertakes condensed aesthetic and intellectual issues and through this process a monument must be treated in order to have intertemporal values, to be transcendent.

For a sculptor, monumental compositions are in all respects very important, a possibility to see her/his work into a large scale, which the high cost of sculpture does not allow to realise under other conditions. All in all, it is a precious and irreplaceable experience!

## ***Digital Imageries***

During the last period, using novel ways and digital material from my own works, a generative process emerged, first for my own creative point of view and then seeking other applications in different visual environments.

This process enables me to face the result as a three-dimensional and constantly modified drawing, which through digital ways offers the possibility of a *live processing* and recomposing. Digitally I can *penetrate* the work by exploring its structure and form, a truer in my opinion image of it. The transparency offered by digital imaging approximates what interests me. I keep my pure idea in a *cloudy* universe, a *fluidity* that does not weaken the result, but contributes to a *truer* atmosphere. Also, I can realise this process in large size, project it in space or on a surface.

This complex drawing process in which I do not need to invent elements such as tone, shadow or depth to convey the *real*, is very essential to me. I name it a design quest in space and time, in a digital way. With three-dimensional drawing, continuous motion creates *transformations* as in music. Without conventions it is more closed to reality. Tonal surfaces emerge, resulting from the successive profiles and transparence brings into site the relationship between the external and internal form, while my objective remains purely the adventure of drawing and sculpture.

In an attempt to familiarise myself with digital potentialities I collaborated with a young architect, (7) and the project "*Digital Sculpture*" was created, which very briefly captured my new view. The transformations that as I observed happen within the digital way, are similar to the ones brought about by the passage of light and shadow with the same visual and plastic pursue to the analogue artistic process. The movement and rotation of the work offer a view of all profiles in a polyphonic way. Successive facets emerge, new elements enrich my task. It is a *play-process*, an unlimited experimentation!

I remain at a focal point on all these issues and on the pursue to lead my work to different, more original results through these experimental paths.

## ***On Art***

*"Today our problem is first and foremost the adaptation of our spirit to the new realities provided for us by the world"*, cited Albert Camus (8) in 1955, during a very important lecture held at the French Institute in Athens with the participation of notable personalities of letters and arts and followed by an equally important discussion. With today's data and the multiplicity of information, the problem is even more complex. *"In today's accelerated life we are threatened by a general cultural amnesia. But it is necessary to follow the new realities for the realisation of our pursues. And perhaps through these new processes we will be led to very creative paths, which have been lost. Today, we can only perceive, not remember. Speed weakens memory."* notes down the Finnish architect and thinker Juhani Pallasmaa (9).

The new media offer infinite possibilities and solutions, but this does not mean that a project should be easy, *light work*. Serving *fast food* in a restaurant with linen tablecloths creates the illusion that it is *haute cuisine*! And I recall the amazing words of the important painter and engraver George Milius (10): "*I believe that works of art which have no plasticity, and there are thousands today, are to me like the plastic cups or plastic jars that flooded the world.*"

The important contemporary American architect Kurt Ofer (11) writes: "*We live in an age where knowledge is loaded digitally. In this way knowledge will not remain with us in the human society. The instantaneous acquisition of knowledge changed its important relationship with society. Knowledge must restore mediocrity and justify human work.*"

"*A work of art should be convincing. Just as in order to save theatre everything theatrical must be thrown away*", observes Peter Brook (12), "*so in art the decorative and the cheap must be thrown away. Imitating external elements does not correspond to anything.*" "*Art doesn't take us out of the world, it puts us deeper into the world,*" says John Banville (13). And Camus again (7): "*We must turn to simplicity and sincerity for the exceptional reason that it is the common ground where the artist and the audience meet*".

The meanings of the artistic work are born out of the whole, from the poetic image that unifies its parts, it is not a simple sum of the elements which constitute it. The meaning of the artwork lies in the emotional power it carries. The moral power of authentic works of art lies in internalising them and integrating them into our sense of self. The great gift of art is that we can momentarily have the experience and sense of self and the world as organised through the artist's sensitivity. The structure and potential essence of the artistic work is gradually revealed as questions and answers are formulated simultaneously and subject to the unpredictability of the creative process.

"*The coexistence of art and science is essential and vital in our time. It gives art a logical basis and fosters deeper research. One of the concepts of contemporary art is to bring to our work the dynamics of life, not its image. On the other hand, I do not believe in the unconditional use of technology and through my experience I am convinced that its use makes sense when combined with the analogue work of the artist*" cites Josef Svoboda (14).

I quote views that were expressed by very important people of letters and arts not only because in them I meet my thought, but because it is impossible to say them better! They are things that for all these reasons you internalise and they become part of your memory!

As an artist I don't support the tendency *create it here and now*! Or within the actual tactics of participation in international exhibitions and other institutions by submitting proposals and projects in a short period of time. Works of art do not narrate their time. It takes a distance from things. Art is a philosophical treatise, a philosophy with shapes and images. The artist, too, is a thinker in a timeless space. Its role is a constant effort and search. And this is not done

easily and quickly. For all these reasons, education should not be bypassed, only in this way the most innovative will have the necessary quality and aesthetic *weight*. We must give content to values even if it is not something that will give an immediate result.

*PRESENTATION WITH A 175 IMAGE- SLIDESHOW SUPPORT*

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