

Sculpture: "an architecture of the passions of the heart"

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During the first nine years of the 20th century, Antoine Bourdelle worked in secret, behind his master's back, on the sculpture that would represent his freedom for him; for Rodin, however, that work was the symbol of betrayal, abandonment and the end of a long friendship. In spite of everything, Rodin was able to recognize in that enigmatic *Head of Apollo* "the art of tomorrow".

Bourdelle developed for us a different way of making sculpture that has continued to this day: what he called architecture. However, although the method of work was so different from that used by his master, the objective was the same: to search in the particular, without conceptualizing, what could be universal in the human being. Rodin immersed himself in the model, dipped his hands into the soft clay, squeezed it, dragged it passionately, moved it from inside to outside and from outside to inside, creating fabulous contrasts of light that made the work vibrate with an intensity that no one else was able to achieve. His search for and expression of truth was for him a violent and visionary struggle, an act of prophetic parrhesia. Bourdelle understood this earlier and better than anyone else after having been his chief assistant for years: only Rodin himself could be truly "*Rodinian*", and to follow his example condemns us hopelessly to falsehood and theatricality.

From that moment on, he focused on the search for a new path for sculpture, influenced by the great events of the time that he would bring together: montage as the main symbol of modernity and the recovery of the method of direct carving so typical of ancient sculpture and other cultures. The result was a different way of not only making, but also seeing and conceiving sculpture. In 1909, after leaving the master's workshop, he said in a lecture:

"I must speak to you of sculpture, of this precise and admirable art which is an architecture of human forms, an architecture of the forms of fauna, of the forms of flora, an architecture also of the clouds of the sky and also an architecture, through human features, of all the passions of the heart and all the impulses of the soul."

Why architecture? Montage, the idea of cutting and pasting, had become the symbol of the time, the emblem of modernity. The construction of the new cities like great *Meccanos* thanks to the stations, bridges, factories and markets, the great emblematic towers and the industrial objects of everyday life: everything was a constant assembly of parts and everything was a function of the order that was applied. Of course, so does art. The discovery of cinema had shown it: the possibility of cutting and gluing the pieces that make up the most faithful representation of reality made it possible to build new worlds. By rearranging the pieces, it was possible to construct a new space-time and, with it, a new reality.

Through teaching, to which Bourdelle devoted himself for the rest of his life, this way of understanding sculpture spread throughout the world. His classes at the '*Grande Chaumière*' soon gained international fame. Forty-two different nationalities are documented among its student body; most of whom, when they returned to their places of origin, opened educational centers with the same methods and principles learned in Paris. But what did he mean by the word *architecture*?

The method that Bourdelle taught could be summed up in one fundamental idea: distance. The universal essence was no longer to be found inside, at the bottom of the particular model, as was the case in Rodinian expressionism, but in the relationship between the parts that make up a whole, and in order to appreciate it, the young apprentice had to learn to observe the model with the necessary distance, a distance that would allow him or her to see and understand the general lines, the contours, and work the volume as if it could directly carve the shadow cast by the work. Germaine Richier, perhaps the dearest of his disciples, would say that her teacher's teaching consisted fundamentally in "learning to see."

This is the architectural vision of sculpture that Bourdelle learned, mostly, though not exclusively, from archaic Greece: the search for the proper relationship between the parts of a built whole. Certainly, as Rodin had bitterly said, this "*Bourdellean*" vision was soon to become the way of working of the great masters of the twentieth century: Gargallo, Brancusi, Zadkine, Mujina, Richier, Giacometti, Moore, Chillida... Although at first the more literal interpretation of this learning led to the geometrization of the volumes and the explicit juxtaposition of the "pieces" that made up the work, more personal ways of carrying out the architectural idea soon emerged.

Many of them learned directly or indirectly from Bourdelle, and others simply knew how to catch on to a general trend that had spread throughout the world, as is the case of some Spanish sculptors. Despite the great diversity of languages and cultural traditions that came together in Bourdelle's workshop, with the enrichment that this entailed, we have no reliable reference that any Spanish artist was his student. However, his influence is beyond doubt on great sculptors such as Mateo Inurria or Victorio Macho, who in turn exercised an important mastery especially in the Castilian – and Aragonese – sphere throughout the twenties.

However, it would be a mistake to think that these two methods, "*Bourdellean*" and "*Rodinian*", represent two paths for sculpture. In reality, it is a question of the two margins that constitute the same path: the search for the universal through the particular – as particular as possible, as Giacometti would say – without conceptualizing. The other, the one that we could truly consider "another way", will try to access directly the universal as a concept, dispensing with the particular. This path, which started from the old Platonic idealism and its "*Hegelian*" reformulation, proposed the differentiation between idea and form, focusing its attention on the universal idea over the particular form, even going so far as to dispense with it.

Building materials for sculptures exposed to outdoor environments

BARTOLOMÉ PALAZÓN CASCALES

ABSTRACT

The installation of sculptures in the public domain evolves in parallel with industrial and technological development. This allows for the contemplation of sculptural proposals made from various materials. While we are familiar with the malleability of some of them (such as bronze or stone), the limitations of others are unknown due to their recent use as sculptural material. Among the materials employed in public works, we highlight glass, polyester resin, plastic, or metallic alloys other than bronze; new materials that facilitate the construction and cost reduction of monumental or colossal sculptures. The conservation and maintenance of all these materials also present significant challenges and inconveniences regarding their use. We aim to emphasize the emergence of these materials, as well as the importance of selecting materials used in their construction, through a case study on public sculpture.

Building materials for sculptures exposed to outdoor environments

BARTOLOMÉ PALAZÓN CASCALES

Within the realm of sculpture, various construction processes are associated with different sculptural materials. Historically, diverse materials such as clay, wood, stone and metals have been employed for sculptural works. Each material possesses distinct characteristics, imparting a unique identity to the sculptural creations.

The choice of material is crucial in sculptural endeavors. On one hand, consideration must be given to works intended for exhibition in enclosed and sheltered spaces, while on the other hand, those destined for outdoor display in open spaces. It is noteworthy that public sculpture experienced a moment of expansion in representational forms during the 1970s when it transcended the institutional confines of museums or galleries to infiltrate the public spaces of the city. In her article titled "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," Rosalind E. Krauss offers a new interpretation of the sculpture concept based on the analysis of what she defines as the "expanded field of postmodernity." Consequently, sculpture moves beyond architectural walls and freely presents itself in open spaces (Krauss, 1996, pp. 289-303).

While any material may be suitable for sculptures intended for museums or indoor spaces, not all materials are suitable for constructing sculptures to be exposed to outdoor elements, primarily due to conservation challenges. Traditionally, materials such as fired clay or ceramics, wood, natural stone (sandstone, marble, or granite), and metals like iron or bronze have been employed for public sculptures. Consuelo de la Cuadra, in the chapter "Form and Matter" of "Fundamental Concepts of Sculptural Language" (2006), emphasizes that:

In our conceptualization of traditional materials, encompassing a whole series of sensory attributes including tactile warmth, weight, temperature, etc., we intricately interconnect the cultural narrative with the myriad monuments and sculptures accumulated within our collective memory. This reservoir of "cultural load," constituting an experimental sedimentation of the material's temporal behavior, shapes our perception of "material reality." (p. 57)

In contrast to these traditional materials, recent trends have introduced new ones. Polymers, plastics, resins, glass, and concrete have gained prominence, along with different steel alloys, including stainless steel and weathered steel (Corten). Additionally, less commonly used materials such as ice or sand are employed for sculptures destined for outdoor settings, despite their ephemeral durability (V.A. 2009, pp. 15-16).

Presently, materials categorized as traditional persist in their application for the resolution of public sculptures, occasionally in conjunction with emergent or contemporary materials. Nonetheless, each material manifests distinct physical and mechanical properties, thereby offering a unique contribution to the plasticity inherent in the final materialization of the resultant artwork.

Next, we delve into the primary characteristics of materials used in public sculpture.

Clay offers a wide range of variants, providing significant plasticity for sculptures with intricate details. Industrially, clay has evolved due to numerous available combinations (refractory or ceramic clays, porcelain, etc.). However, its structural limitations make it more suitable for small-scale sculptural works than for large-scale pieces. While occasional public works in clay can be found, it is not the most common material for this type of sculpture.

Wood, being one of the noblest materials, does not allow structural modifications during sculptural construction. Despite its apparent hardness and durability, it is particularly susceptible to environmental agents, resulting in fewer known public sculptures made from wood (Sauras, 2003, pp. 78-79).

In the realm of public sculpture, natural stone has historically been one of the most employed materials. Notable classifications include sandstone, marble, granite, or alabaster. Its compact structure allows for intricate details during artistic materialization. It is, however, an expensive raw material to extract and can only be worked through direct carving yet being suitable for large-scale works. Industrial advancements have led to the creation of artificial stone (concrete), which has economized the creation processes by eliminating the need for natural stone extraction. A colossal concrete work worth mentioning is Eduardo Chillida's "*Elogio del horizonte*" (Image 1).



Image 1. *Elogio del horizonte* (Eduardo Chillida). Gijón (Spain). Source: Personal photo archive.

Regarding metals, whose utilization has increased in the construction of monumental public sculpture, bronze stands out, its plasticity enabling exceptional realism in the sculpture. Bronze has been used both traditionally and contemporaneously. The field of metals has witnessed significant contributions from industry, with a variety of metal alloys like aluminium, Corten steel and stainless steel, among other. All these materials used in recent decades have been evolving in parallel with industrial and technological advancements. The evolution of some of them has contributed with great construction qualities to contemporary sculpture and has facilitated cost savings in the creation of colossal sculptures.

Now, turning to resins, polymers, and plastics, these industrial materials primarily utilized in everyday objects, vehicles, and household items are gaining prominence in sculpture. Many artists materialize works using polyester resins or plastics, such as sculptor Cristóbal Gabarrón, who has created numerous pieces with resin and fiberglass. The considerable savings in

production costs compared to other materials, combined with their excellent plastic qualities, allows for large-scale projects (Image 2).



Image 2. Frouida (Cristóbal Gabarrón). Murcia (Spain). Source: Personal photo archive.

In recent times, glass has found application in the construction of public infrastructure. Characterized as a wholly inorganic substance, it is mostly employed in conjunction with other materials, such as Corten steel, facilitating the elevation of structures and attaining large dimensions (V.A. 1980, pp. 133-134). Analogous to resins or plastics, our understanding of the material's response to diverse atmospheric influences remains limited. The consolidation of the utilization of these materials in public sculpture is required to derive dependable conclusions regarding their aptitude for the materialization of any work of art intended for outdoor exhibition.

Our exploration concludes by considering alternative materials such as ice and sand. These pliable and relatively economical substances enable the creation of large-scale sculptures. However, a notable drawback associated with these materials in sculpture lies in their ephemeral nature. Ice undergoes liquefaction when exposed to suboptimal temperatures, and sand is susceptible to erosion from wind or rain, thereby rendering these sculptures transient in nature (Image 3).



Image 3. Ice sculptures. Snow sculpture symposium. Val Gardena (Italy). Source: Anna Multone.

Additionally, sculptures crafted from papier-mâché, exemplified by the *fallas*, merit inclusion in this category. Constructed from cost-effective materials like wood or papier-mâché, these sculptures facilitate the creation of large pieces that, once exhibited in public spaces, undergo consumption by fire.

We are already acquainted with the established behaviours of traditional materials such as clay, stone, wood, or bronze when subjected to environmental degradation. There exist explicit references elucidating their preservation and maintenance practices. Consuelo de la Cuadra (2006) posits in this regard that:

Traditionally, wood has been chosen for its warm connotations, stone for its connotation of permanence and nobility in behaviour, clay for its malleability, and molten metal (bronze) for its adaptability to pre-existing moulds and capacity to record forms. These materials have been employed throughout the entirety of human history, up until the industrial revolution. (p. 57)

From that juncture onwards, new materials employed in recent decades for the creation of monuments and public sculptures—namely glass, polyester resin, reinforced concrete, and Corten steel—have seen a surge in production. It is crucial to note that, for many of these materials, their behavior in the face of atmospheric agents (adverse weather conditions, cold, heat, rain, or ambient humidity) remains unknown due to their recent incorporation. Consequently, we persist in their analysis and examination to generate a foundational theoretical documentation, bringing us closer to an enhanced understanding of public sculpture that graces our streets.

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The power of social transformation of sculpture

ELENA BLANCH

ABSTRACT

Sculpture has always held a prominent place in public spaces. Its role in them allows for their individualization, facilitating the visitor's sense of belonging to a collective and enabling social transformation. Whether located in squares, large parks, small spaces in nature, or the city, it humanizes them and makes those who see it feel better in that place. Additionally, it can play a central role in revitalizing these spaces, giving them their own identity and positively impacting society. Drawing from various examples, we will analyze how public sculpture transforms the lives of citizens by being situated in public spaces, reshaping the individual's relationship with their environment and with others.

The power of social transformation of sculpture

ELENA BLANCH

Sculpture has always held a prominent place in public spaces, especially those depicting the human figure. Throughout history, the combination of statue and public space has become a tandem, significantly influencing the singularization of many spaces with high human traffic. These spaces foster a sense of belonging to a group and social integration.

It can be agreed that, whether located in city squares, natural settings, or elsewhere, sculpture achieves a humanizing effect on these spaces, providing observers with a sense of improvement in that particular location. Despite being an obvious statement, it is worth noting its central role in the recovery, revitalization, and individualization of previously undefined places or spaces.

But let's step back: what do we mean by public space? It refers to a publicly accessible area where people can freely gather and move, where passage cannot be restricted for reasons of property or otherwise. It serves as the stage for everyday social interaction, the physical support for activities aimed at satisfying collective urban needs that transcend individual interests.

This space delineates an area of contact between people, a space for relationships with others, identification with the place, and a sense of community. In the tradition of our cities, public space was conceived as the ultimate venue for social expression and appropriation. Undoubtedly, the individualized public space hosts the daily flow of collective life.

Public Art, situated in this space, imparts identity and character to a city, preserving the memory of its inhabitants. It encompasses the artistic pieces adorning the city, becoming the artistic heritage of its citizens. Public art is found in avenues, gardens, squares, intersections, and the entrances of private or public buildings. Its history becomes part of the city's trajectory, constructing the identity of the place.

Certainly, public art includes not only sculptures or three-dimensional pieces but also other creations like paintings, installations, mosaics, stained glass, etc. All these creations invite passersby to observe, turning public thoroughfares into limitless cultural points of interest. The city ultimately becomes an open-air gallery, a museum, a welcoming place.

This type of art does not discriminate; it is designed for both the rich and the poor, without distinguishing gender, race, or origin. It transforms the street into a common space between the author and their art, bridging the gap between creation and citizens, bringing art—and the artist—closer to the people for collective appreciation.

Focusing on sculpture now, while recognizing its significant instrumental role in public space, some sculptures, despite being located in highly significant places, go unnoticed by the majority of passersby. Certain public sculptures seem to be 'invisible' for the strollers or are perceived as little more than purely ornamental urban artifacts. As Michel North argues, sculpture can no longer be merely an object placed at the centre of public space.

This situation has not left many sculptors indifferent and is likely one of the triggers for the current trend where many city-integrated and city-loving sculptors are interacting with citizens to collectively grasp the intimate sense of squares, forums, improvised fields, or mazes that make up the city. With this knowledge, the final work can reflect the real identity, the popular hustle and bustle, and the collective character of the space to be occupied by the artistic intervention. This

fulfils the indispensable role of place individualization to facilitate the sense of belonging to a collective and enable social transformation.

As sculptors, we must showcase the potential of sculptures as significant objects and design strategies to address their possible invisibility in some cases:

- Creating stimuli with the community
- Incorporating creative interaction with the public
- Making them dialogue with the context in which they are located.

The goal is to make the artwork an integral part of the city and build the identity of the place. It should have the ability to alter the urban landscape, establishing a dynamic and reciprocal dialogue with the context. Public art pieces should become a new physical experience by creating volumes that interact with the landscape and its immediate surroundings, facilitating a reinterpretation of places and the search for personal and social connections.

Now, turning to an emblematic example of a project shared with the community, we can look at a work by internationally renowned Spanish artist Jaume Plensa. The specific piece I want to highlight is *'Dream'*. In my view, this sculpture exemplifies the social transformation power of sculpture and its social impact on the space where it is located. It serves as a paradigm of the artist's social and plastic commitment, a highly significant sculpture in his body of work that has successfully transformed the public space where it is situated, improving the lives of the local residents.

For Plensa, a project in public space carries significant responsibility. He understands that it can provide an opportunity to promote the regeneration of the chosen location for the people who will use and enjoy it, even if they haven't explicitly requested it.

'Dream' is a 20-meter-high sculpture representing a young woman with closed eyes in meditation. It is located alongside the road connecting Liverpool and Manchester, in the town of Saint Helens, an area historically linked to coal mining until 1992.

In that year, then-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (the Iron Lady), as part of the closure of British mining, facilitated the shutdown of the last mine. According to Plensa, this event led to complete unemployment and an economic crisis for the entire system and the community itself.

Twenty years later, they decided to transform the site of the former coal mine into a public park. Jaume Plensa was commissioned to create a sculpture representing that transition resulting from such a historical moment. The piece was funded through *The Big Art Project* in coordination with the *Arts Council England*, *The Art Fund*, and *Channel 4*. It is made of concrete covered with Spanish dolomite in a bright white colour, contrasting with the coal that used to be extracted there.

'Dream' was inaugurated in 2009 and was designed based on conversations the sculptor had with former miners and local residents. They played a prominent role, becoming participants in the sculpture he was envisioning. Plensa aimed to create a dream in the forest where the old mine had been. He wanted the artwork to stand out, representing survival. Thus, he sculpted a white head of a nine-year-old girl with closed eyes emerging from the earth as if coming out of the darkness of the mine. The girl, based on a real model named Ana, has closed eyes, and, like many of his works depicting women's faces, aims to reflect introspection. His idea was that by looking at the sculpture, you would see yourself and look inward, discovering the beauty that you hold within and keep to yourself.

A former miner, Gary Conley, mentioned that he never imagined something so beautiful atop the old pile of rubble after witnessing years of dirt, smoke, steam, and coal in the same place.

At present, the work is fully integrated into the daily life of this community, which, for Plensa, is the culmination of the sculptural work. He argues that public sculpture has a crucial role in community revitalization. His intention was to completely rejuvenate the area.

Jaume Plensa's creative participation aligns with a growing and conscious trend of artists concerned with the loneliness of citizens, the deterioration of the planet, and the resulting increasing inequality.

Artists, including myself, are convinced that sculpture in public spaces plays a central role in their revitalization, endowing them with a distinct identity and positively impacting society. This is achieved by humanizing these spaces, with the intention that those who encounter these artworks feel better within them. Such works not only have the ability to seamlessly integrate into their surroundings but also possess the capacity to alter the urban landscape in which they are situated, establishing a dynamic and reciprocal dialogue with the context.

These sculptures serve as allies to urban planning initiatives through interventions aimed at enhancing degraded neighborhoods with high population density, introducing an element of artistic distinctiveness. These works contribute to humanizing these spaces, showcasing their contribution and commitment to societal improvement.

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Monumental sculpture from an institutional perspective

FELIX BENTZ

ABSTRACT

Cultural institutions, whether public or private, play a crucial role in creating, promoting, and preserving monumental art. Monumental sculpture is an artistic manifestation already present since the beginning of civilization, and throughout history it has offered and documented personalities, historical landmarks, symbols, through different shapes and sculpted structures, giving personality and uniqueness to a given territory with its imposing presence.

In this presentation, we will immerse ourselves in the fascinating world of monumental sculpture from the perspective of institutions, such as the *Real Círculo Artístico* founded in 1881 in the city of Barcelona, at a time of splendour and magnificence, where we will examine its cultural, social and aesthetic impact.

Monumental sculpture stands as a visual expression of the cultural heritage of a territory, a city, a country, serving as a landmark that enriches the urban environment and provokes a deeper connection between art and community.

Monumental sculpture from an institutional perspective

FELIX BENTZ

Monumental sculpture has been an artistic manifestation that has persisted throughout history, endowing a personality wherever it is erected, narrating stories or memorializing characters through sculpted forms. In this article, we will delve into the fascinating world of monumental sculpture from the perspective of institutions, both public and private, examining its cultural, social, and aesthetic impact.

If we consult Wikipedia regarding the etymology of the term "monumental sculpture," it refers to the word "monument" (from the Latin "monumentum" meaning "memory," "commemorative erection," "votive offering"), thus, it is any work with sufficient value for the human group that erected it. It must be "public and patent." Although initially the term applied to statues, inscriptions, or tombs erected in memory of a person or a relevant event (commemorative monument), its use has expanded and now encompasses any construction that possesses "artistic, archaeological, historical" or similar value, notably architectural ones, which, located in an urban nucleus or isolated in rural areas, serve as landmarks due to their visibility and become symbols of that place.

One of the main characteristics that endows monumental sculpture with personality and singularity is "public interaction." Unlike works of art installed and exhibited in conventional art galleries, monumental sculptures are accessible to everyone. Their placement in public spaces encourages active participation from the audience, allowing the community to interact directly with the art. This creates a bridge between the viewer and the artwork, generating dialogue and reflection in an accessible context for all.

In this context, we can highlight the crucial role played by cultural institutions in the creation, promotion, and preservation of monumental art. Monumental sculpture is an artistic manifestation already present since the beginning of civilization, and throughout history, it has offered and documented personalities, historical events, symbolism, through different sculpted forms and structures, endowing different spaces where they are erected with character and imposing presence.

From the perspective of institutions, monumental sculpture stands as a visual expression of the cultural heritage of a city, a country, serving as a landmark that enriches the urban environment of the location, provoking a profound connection between art and the community, thus offering a cultural, social, and aesthetic impact. For this reason, monumental sculpture plays a fundamental role in shaping the urban landscape of different cities around the world.

In this context, the Real Círculo Artístico de Barcelona is not unaware of the aforementioned, and emerges as a crucial institution that has significantly contributed to the promotion, exhibition, and preservation of monumental works, endowing the city of Barcelona with a diverse and enriching artistic heritage, aware of its role in preserving collective memory, carefully selecting sculptures that encapsulate the essence of its history and traditions.

Founded in 1881, the Real Círculo Artístico de Barcelona presents itself as a cultural actor of reference in the city, promoting various artistic disciplines such as painting, drawing, music, cinema, poetry, and sculpture, among many others. Its commitment to the preservation and

promotion of the arts has resulted in a series of initiatives that have left an indelible mark on the cultural history of Barcelona.

In this sense, throughout its history, it has organized events and emblematic exhibitions where monumental sculpture has stood out. The biennial "Monumentality in Public Space" has been a showcase for local and international artists, offering a space for experimentation and innovation in the field of monumental sculpture. International and local awards, such as the "Premi Ciutat de Barcelona" or the "Premi Sant Jordi," serve as platforms for expression and dissemination of artistic expression, where monumental sculpture, in particular, stands out as a form of expression that goes beyond the walls of a gallery or museum. Monumental works challenge public space, interacting with the environment and the viewer in a unique way.

Another way to promote and give value to artists who have proliferated in monumental sculpture has been through organizing exhibitions, conferences, colloquiums, congresses, such as the recent exhibition dedicated to Emili Armengol, where visitors could take a journey through his creative process, from his earliest, more monumental and grandiloquent works, adopting geometric and organic forms (highlighted by the well-known work *Porta dels Països Catalans* in the border area of Salses), to the more spontaneous and poetic forms, more typical of the daily reality of life, with iconographies of fish and human figures.

Similarly, multiple exhibitions have taken place, such as the one dedicated to Salvador Dalí in 2004 (the year of the celebration of the centenary of his birth), with the series of sculptures from the so-called "Colección Clot" in monumental size, as well as conferences and other activities, such as the recent screening of the film "You Can Hear Me," by Pedro Ballesteros and produced by Mallerich Films Paco Poch, a documentary that offers a deep immersion into the work and personality of the celebrated artist Jaume Plensa, reviewing his most emblematic pieces installed in public spaces in Spain, France, Sweden, the United States, Canada, and Japan, discovering his way of understanding art as a generator of beauty and his way of reading public space as a meeting place with the community.

Artists with a long tradition in the institution such as Lluís Montané i Mollfulleda, Lluïsa Granero, Enric Galcerà, Josep Clarà, Jordi Puiggalí, Antoni Ballester, Josep María Subirachs, among many others, have not only worked and interacted in exhibitions and activities throughout the more than 140 years of history but also permanently exhibit monumental works at the current headquarters of the *Palacio Pignatelli*, in the city of Barcelona.

But as the *Real Círculo Artístico de Barcelona* looks to the future, its commitment to monumental sculpture remains solid and determined. The institution presents itself as a bridge between the past and the future of monumental art, serving as a dynamic space that accommodates new ideas and approaches in sculptural creation. Thus, in addition to the aforementioned recent exhibition of Emili Armengol, there have been exhibitions with master sculptors dedicated to monumental sculpture such as Jorge Egea, Matteo Pugliesse, Vezdhi Rashidov, Dr. Gindi, Richard MacDonald, and many more, offering citizens an opportunity to directly know the trajectories and works of these artists.

To conclude, it should be noted that the *Real Círculo Artístico* has not limited itself to the exhibition of monumental works but has also committed to promoting citizen participation and artistic education. Organization of workshops, conferences, and educational programs

allow the local community to actively engage in the creative process and in the appreciation of monumental sculpture directly.

In conclusion, the confirmation that monumental sculpture, driven by the work of cultural institutions, whether public or private, or as has been the most singular case in this article, in the personalization of the Real Círculo Artístico de Barcelona, stands as a transformative force in the artistic and urban panorama of the city. Through the promotion of creativity, citizen participation, and heritage preservation, this institution has consolidated its role as a cultural bastion that continues to shape the identity of Barcelona through the majesty of monumental sculptures. The presence of these sculptures in the city not only enriches the visual landscape but also contributes to the formation of the urban identity of the city, and by extension, of the country.

Reflections on sculpture in the exhibition space

BARTOLOMÉ PALAZÓN – AINOA M. GAMBÍN

ABSTRACT

A sculpture must be contemplated in all its dimensions. In most cases, the exhibition space of museums is conditioned by architectural requirements, which limit the freedom to display a part of the sculptural work and prevent it from being examined stereometrically. Sculpture can be exhibited in a multitude of spaces, both public and private, indoors or outdoors, where there is a great difference in exhibition. When it comes to displaying a three-dimensional work, a series of conditions different from painting, drawing, and even relief and other wall installations must be met, as they present similarities in the plane in which they are inscribed. Here we address, in museographic terms, different technical aspects so that a sculpture can be exhibited in the exhibition space with the clear intention that the visual and aesthetic experience of all its volumes enriches the visitor's viewing.

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A sculpture ought to be contemplated in all its dimensions. In most cases, the exhibition space of museums is conditioned by architectural requirements, which limit the freedom to display a part of the sculptural work and prevent it from being examined stereometrically. Although buildings and institutions housing art collections primarily focus on exhibiting two-dimensional works, there has been a significant expansion of joint exhibitions, encompassing painting, sculpture, installation, and even exclusively sculptural materials, due to the growing sculptural trend. This necessitates the study of these architectural structures to facilitate the understanding and contemplation of the exhibited pieces. In this regard, the type of work to be exhibited in a specific space must be primarily considered. The piece can be presented in various forms, ranging from the most classical to the most contemporary sculptures. It is important to highlight that since antiquity, sculptural work has been closely linked to architecture. According to architect Juan Pablo Rodríguez Frade, "it is probably the art with which it shares the most elements and common variables in the gestation process, and in many cases in the materialization itself" (Rodríguez, 2006, pp. 116-117).

This study will address concepts such as the piece (artistic work) and its arrangement, the use of pedestals, the relationship of the piece with the building, the relationship established with the background, or the bond created with the visitor. These elements must be very present when carrying out the museographic discourse since a good study of them, always considering the architectural circumstances of each case, enables an adequate arrangement of the works within the rooms.

Architect, art historian, and museum curator Juan Carlos Rico argues in his *'Manual práctico de museología, museografía y técnicas expositivas'* (2006) that there are four fundamental pillars on which any exhibition conception must be based. Among them, we emphasize two of these pillars for our analysis: *The public and the space*, since "not only the object, as it is inscribed within another sphere, which can be a closed space (museum, gallery) or open (landscape), conditions the possible dialogue between them" (p. 20); and *The public and the work*, where the visitor stands alone in front of the work. He continues arguing that this attitude would be the correct one for the visitor facing a painting or a sculpture, limiting any barriers between them. That is, a key point when exhibiting a sculptural piece is the experience that can be established with the visitor (public), as well as the space and the environment in which said piece is positioned to be shown. Therefore, it is advisable to be able to contemplate the work closely, in silence, and, in many cases, for long periods, which allows us to discover folds or details that are barely perceptible.

When it comes to exhibiting a sculptural work, therefore, a series of conditions different from painting, drawing, and even relief and other installations on the wall must be met since they present similarities in the plane in which they are inscribed. But also, sculpture, thanks to its volume - the main characteristic that sets it apart from other artistic works

- can be perceived and understood from a great distance. This fact motivates the visitor to approach and surround it since it presents infinite positions to be contemplated. Sculpture fills space and, in turn, requires a "proper space" that is not invaded by either the visitor or other pieces displayed in the room (Rodríguez, 2006, p. 118). The Glyptothek in Munich, a small museum eternally dedicated to Greek and Roman sculptures, is an excellent example of the exhibition model regarding the presentation of sculptural works. Here, classical pieces are presented as they are, naked, without any addition to frame them (Image 1). The visitor, in this sense, has the privilege of feeling the proximity of classical sculptural work (Calvo, 1982, p. 52).



Image 1. Glyptothek of Munich. Source: Blog 'La brújula del azar'

In order to approach the concept of museum space applied to sculpture, we will proceed to analyze the various concepts mentioned above through examples of some museums selected in this study, whose permanent collections feature numerous sculptural works; as well as galleries or art centers whose programming of temporary exhibitions focuses on displaying exclusively sculptural works, or exhibitions that combine painting and sculpture. Therefore, here we can observe differences regarding the perception of sculpture exhibited in a multitude of spaces, both public or private, enclosed or open spaces, where there is a significant difference in exhibition and final visitor experience.

In museums, many sculpture pieces are displayed freestanding, while others are presented attached to walls and niches, with a close relationship between the piece and the background. Regarding the pedestals and supports of the pieces, two options can be considered: firstly, that the pedestal merges with the piece, and secondly, that the pedestal integrates with the architecture. In this sense, the Pedro Cano Foundation exhibited in February and March 2023 a collective exhibition of sculpture, painting, drawing, installation, and video creation, in which these two types of support for the pieces can be distinguished (Image 2).



Image 2. Collective exhibition 'Barro y agua'. Temporary exhibition hall of the Pedro Cano Foundation (Blanca, Murcia). Source: Personal photo archive.

With few exceptions, museum pieces are rarely contemplated in isolation; their distribution is clearly preconceived. In this way, dialogues and tensions emerge among the pieces, which the museum discourse leverages in a very positive manner for the visitor's experience. Depending on the type or quality of the piece, the decision is made to isolate it or group it. Often, it is difficult to discern why the best works in many museums are exhibited solo in unique locations; this fact may be motivated by certain works requiring vital space or being granted such space to showcase the importance of the piece in question (Image 3 and 4).



Imagen 3. Logia. Esculturas de Antonio Campillo. MUBAM (Murcia). Fuente: Museo de Bellas Artes de Murcia

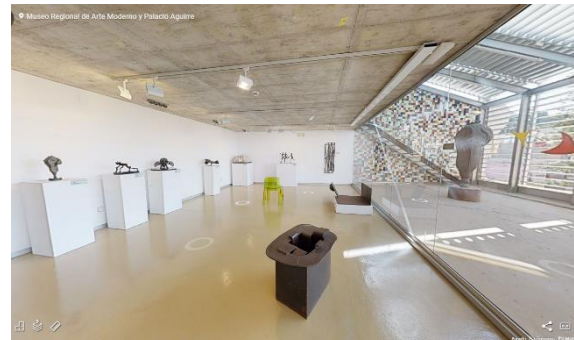


Imagen 4. Ático. Esculturas de Salvador Dalí, José Hernández Cano, Susana Solano y Sergi Aguilar entre otros. MURAM (Cartagena, Murcia). Fuente: Museo Regional de Arte Moderno de la Región de Murcia.

In museums, there are unique areas where it is necessary to exhibit a piece of interest. It is also necessary for the museum discourse to be flexible, without losing rigor, for an optimal result that enhances the values of the building and its collections (Rodríguez, 2012, p. 185). What is true is that, whether isolated or in groups, in a museum that houses numerous sculpture pieces, the works greatly influence the itineraries and visit sequences.

In the words of Arturo Ruiz Salvatierra (2013), "if we analyze the main space of museum exhibition in antiquity, the one that has shown works of art over time, we discover that it has little or nothing to do with current exhibition spaces" (p. 11). Galleries and new

contemporary art centers are beginning to be conceived as abstract boxes, and the artwork takes on great prominence. Evidence of this is that these spaces increasingly make themselves available for artistic projects. Space-appropriate sculptural artistic creation is being encouraged. Art centers, such as the Verónicas Hall in Murcia, make their rooms available to artists to generate works specifically for that space (Image 5). Currently, sculpture is presented to us with minimalist styles, a fact that increasingly strengthens the building in which the work is located. However, there is also a growing trend of figurative and hyperrealistic sculpture. In this sense, architecture has gradually stripped itself of ornaments to offer itself to the viewer in a clear and crisp language (Image 6).



Image 4. Verónicas' Hall (Murcia). Exhibition of Ludovica Carbotta. Source: Personal photo archive.



Image 3. Two Art Gallery (Murcia). Exhibition of John de Andrea. Source: Personal photo archive.

The concepts discussed here regarding the exhibition singularities presented by a sculpture in the museum space are presented as a brief reflection that brings us closer to the visual and aesthetic experience of all its volumes and enriches the visit of the public. Through the exhibition spaces of the museum institutions analyzed here, and the collections they house, it is observed that there is still much to analyze about the architectural paradigm of Contemporary Art museums, in a firm commitment to faithfully showcasing sculptural works according to their conception.

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'El Despertar de la Aurora'. 3D Technology for Memory Recovery in Monumental Sculpture
JORGE EGEA



ABSTRACT

In 1927, sculptor Joan Borrell Nicolau (Barcelona 1888-1951) and architect Nicolau Maria Rubió i Tudurí (1891-1981) were commissioned by the Barcelona City Council to create a monumental ensemble for the celebration of the 1929 Barcelona International Exposition. Infused with the spirit of the classicist movement prevalent in 1920s Europe, Borrell and Nicolau conceived a vision of early 20th-century splendor wherein Minerva, Apollo, and Selene, accompanied by a group of nymphs and deer - in a fountain and garden ensemble intended to accommodate up to 18 figures - invaded the so-called *'Jardinets de Gràcia'*, transforming these gardens into a small parcel of Olympus in the city of Barcelona.

The magnificent monument, inaugurated in 1929 by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, was dismantled in 1931. Why did such an imposing work have such a brief real-life existence? Aesthetic, political, and social reasons were responsible for its demise. Regarding the various sculptures comprising the ensemble, while some were stored and subsequently scattered across various public locations in Barcelona, others ended up in private hands and/or remain whereabouts unknown.

Nevertheless, the monument continues to generate interest due to its unusual and paradoxical history. The fragmented view does not allow us to fully grasp the magnitude of Borrell and Nicolau's work. Currently, 3D technology facilitates the reconstruction of the monument, offering insight into the complexity of the work within the virtual space, thus reviving the memory of the transformation of public space. The 3D reconstruction process enables us to perceive the monument from a new perspective and introduce it to new generations. We present this documentation and computer reconstruction process aiming to restore the initial splendor of the *'Despertar de la Aurora'*.

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1- Joan Borrell i Nicolau and the '*Noucentista*' movement

Joan Borrell i Nicolau (Barcelona, August 13, 1888 - April 26, 1951) was the son of a notary from La Puebla de Segur, where he spent his childhood. At the age of thirteen, he moved permanently to Barcelona. He studied at the Llotja school and apprenticed in the workshops of Agapito Vallmitjana and Enric Clarasó.

He set up his first workshop in Barcelona, where he had assistants who would also become prestigious sculptors, such as Josep Viladomat and Martí Llauredó i Mariscot. He lived in Paris for a time, where he befriended Maillol, Picasso, Rodin, etc., until he returned definitively to Barcelona in 1916, thereafter residing between Barcelona, Madrid, and Palma, with workshops in all three cities. He was appointed a member of the Academy of Fine Arts of San Jorge in 1950.

He was part of, among others, the association '*Les Arts i els Artistes*' (1910-1936). His ideology, opposed to the vagueness and modernist symbolism, was essentially '*noucentista*': exaltation of the Mediterranean spirit and appreciation of measure, effort, and continuity.



As noted by historian Bernat Puigdollers, "Borrell i Nicolau stood out at a very young age as a portraitist. His ability to capture the psychology of the character and endow it with severity and presence, pursuing the '*terribilità*' of Michelangelo, quickly earned him a great reputation in Barcelona society and, later, in the Spanish capital.

His portraits are thoughtful and delicate, yet severe and somewhat harsh. His references stem from Roman Republican sculpture - depth and realism - and link with the sculpture of Rodin, from whom he takes methods such as the use of the chisel and the non finito.

Many sculptors have found an important economic avenue in portraiture and have understood it as a way of life. However, few have been able to transcend mere portraiture, mere emulation of reality. Borrell i Nicolau is one of them. He managed to convey the character and strength of the model to inert matter but also the vigor of his own personality. He managed to give the fleeting and temporary features of his models the gift of eternity." (<http://borrellnicolau.cat/borrell>)

2- The proposal of the '*Despertar de la Aurora*'

Nicolau Maria Rubió Tudurí (Mahón, 1891 - Barcelona, 1981) studied and collaborated with the French landscape architect Forestier, mainly in landscaping various spaces in Montjuïc, a set of distinctly Mediterranean classicist character (see the Laribal Gardens or Miramar Gardens) during the years 1917-24.



His style advocated a return to the Mediterranean world, to Greco-Latin classical culture. In his role as director of Parks and Gardens, he was the main promoter of the "Mediterranean garden", as evidenced by his interventions in Barcelona (Plaza Francesc Macià 1925; the gardens of the Pedralbes Palace, 1927; or the Turó Park, 1933).

In 1928, on the occasion of the 1929 Universal Exposition, he was commissioned to design the '*Jardinets de Gràcia*' (now Salvador Espriu Gardens), to serve as a connection between Passeig de Gràcia and the Gràcia district, which was annexed to the city of Barcelona in 1897.

The collaboration with sculptor Borrell i Nicolau entailed the transformation of this still undeveloped land into a 20th-century dream in which, presided over by the goddess Minerva, the chariot fountain of Helios and Selene transported the visitor to a section of Olympus where not only the gods but also nymphs, deer, etc., populated this garden.

The proposal, at least in Borrell i Nicolau's projection, included a total of 18 sculptures, of which, with certainty, we only know that those corresponding to the fountains were installed: Minerva, Selene, and Helios, 4 horses, and 4 eagles. We do not even have certainty that the nymphs were installed - although in any case, they became part of the heritage of the Barcelona City Council. Other figures, which ended up in private hands, probably were not even acquired by the municipal council.

Despite the large expanse of land of the ensemble that was to accommodate all the pieces, Rubió i Tudurí's classicist taste led to the fountain of the '*Despertar de la Aurora*'. Awakening of Aurora being completely surrounded by hedges, with small entrances resembling bullfighting rings, so that for '*noucentista*' thought, the aesthetic experience of contemplating the ensemble in a sort of enclosed garden was supposed to further enhance the idea of transportation/identification of Greece with Catalonia, Barcelona with Athens, and '*Els Jardinets*' with a portion of Olympus.

However, this same principle was one of the main causes of its short survival and hasty dismantling in 1931. Obviously, we cannot forget the political influences of the time, but it is

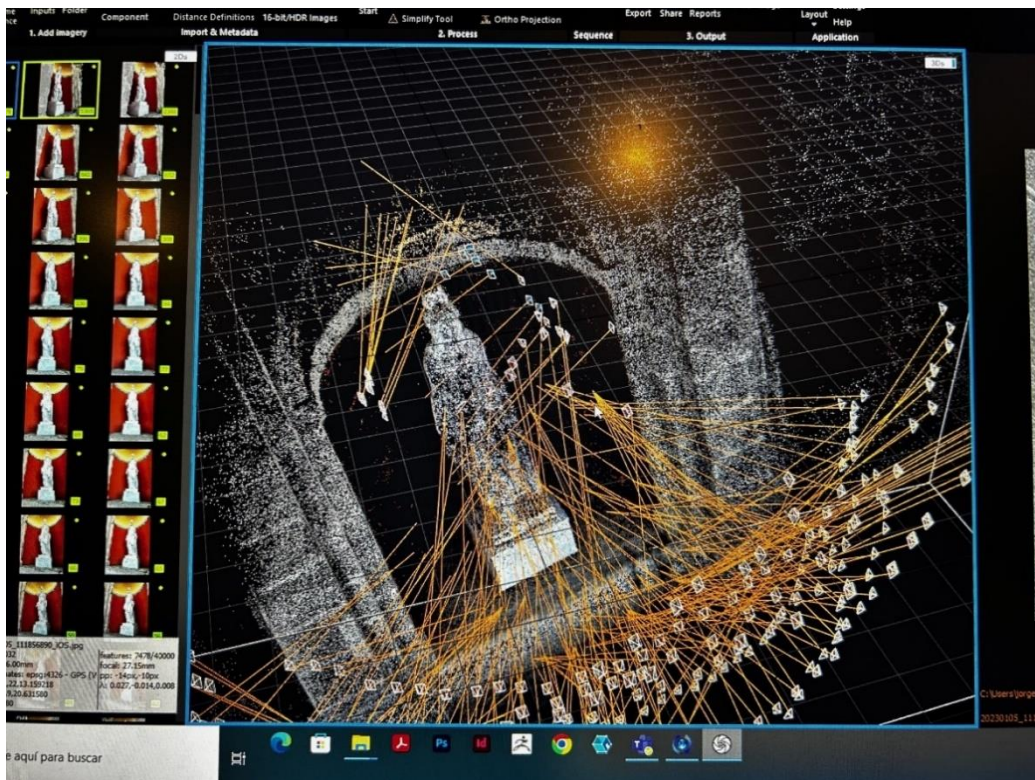
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The ensemble quickly acquired aristocratic (or upper bourgeois) connotations and became unpopular, especially through newspaper articles that mainly highlighted how the ensemble caused Barcelona as a city to turn its back on the annexed district of Gràcia since it is true that the only possible panoramic view was from the Diagonal de Barcelona towards Gràcia, while from Gràcia to Barcelona, it was only possible to contemplate a visual barrier of firs, hedges, and cypresses.

In a complex dismantling operation, in 1931 the fountain and its ensemble were dismantled, and the pieces that composed it were stored in the municipal warehouses of the Barcelona City Council. Already in 1934, the architect Rubió i Tudorí relocated the chariot of Helios in the Turó Park, and subsequently some of these pieces were distributed in different places in the city of Barcelona.

3- The proposal for the reconstruction of the *'Despertar de la Aurora'*

Current technology allows us to approach a new concept of reconstruction for which 3D modeling is essential. For the 3D reconstruction of existing sculptures, we use the technique of photogrammetry. By using around 300 images of the sculpture at 360 degrees, photogrammetry allows for a very precise reintegration of the three-dimensional volume, transforming the actual sculpture into a 3D mesh. Through trigonometric computation, photogrammetry manages to rearrange in 3D space the millions of points common to these images, achieving the final volume of the piece.



To achieve this, we conducted small "photogrammetric campaigns" throughout the city of Barcelona. This way, we obtain the 3D version of Minerva, Selene, and Helios.

From the photographs, we can model other elements, such as columns or capitals.

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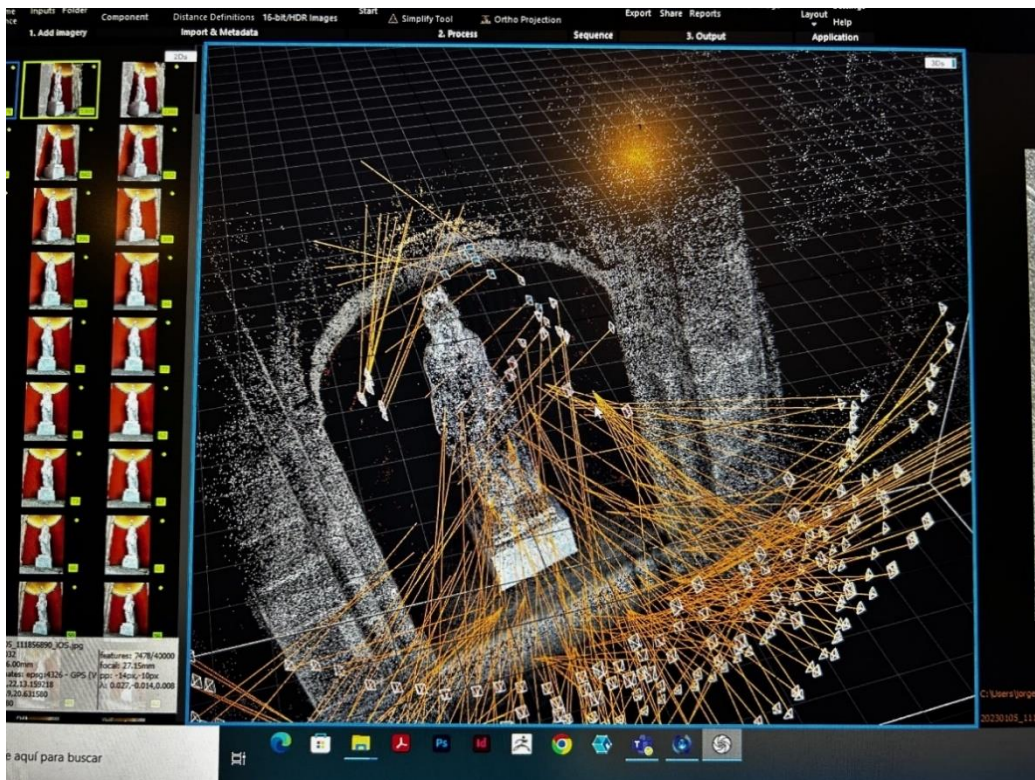
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Dismissing the pedestal to exalt the symbol

JUDIT SUBIRACHS-BURGAYA

ABSTRACT

More than three decades before the publication of the intriguing book "La pérdida del pedestal" (1994), in which Javier Maderuelo addressed the overflowing boundaries of sculpture and the crisis of the monument concept, two works had already been installed in the public space of Barcelona, sparking loud controversies. These works, "Forma 212" (1957) and "Evocación marinera" (1960), were fully abstract in conception and were placed at street level, without a pedestal. We refer to the sculptures by the artist Josep M. Subirachs (1927-2014), who, at thirty years old, introduced abstraction into the street for the first time. Shortly after, with the monument dedicated to the inventor of the submarine Ictíneo, the artist himself avoided creating a conventional monument. Instead of placing Narcís Monturiol atop a pedestal, he monumentalized the invention of the honored figure with a monument/collage that linked to an artistic language close to pop art.

Dismissing the pedestal to exalt the symbol

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Thirty years ago, the *Círculo de Bellas Artes of Madrid* published '*La pérdida del pedestal*' (1994), a thought-provoking book in which Javier Maderuelo, architect, art critic, and historian, discussed the overflowing boundaries of sculpture and the crisis of the monument concept. As the author stated in the introduction, this concise essay stemmed from a seminar he conducted in 1992 at the same *Círculo de Bellas Artes*.

In addition to contemplating art placed in public spaces, Dr. Maderuelo questioned the definition of sculpture and, above all, the idea of commemoration that had traditionally defined all monuments since classical sculpture. He argued that, with modernity, commemorative monuments had lost their appeal, while sculptors had gradually rejected the rules, materials, procedures, and themes of classicism. Consequently, sculpture found itself on the brink of disappearing as an artistic genre.

Such a statement was overly categorical, as it was not the concept of sculpture that had changed, but rather its typologies and materials. Moreover, the absence of a pedestal in modern sculpture did not always imply a lack of commemorative intent.

Artworks placed in public spaces, typically commissioned, are always subject to the constraints of a client. Indeed, some argue that the evocative function of collective memory, once embodied by monuments, has diminished, particularly because the presence of sculptural works in public spaces is part of a debate heavily influenced by administrative proposals—that is, political decisions—which cannot overlook the acceptance or critical response of citizens.

More than three decades before Professor Maderuelo's aforementioned publication, two sculptures installed in the public space of Barcelona sparked noisy controversies. They were controversial both due to their fully abstract conception and their placement at street level, devoid of a pedestal—a structure that isolates the fact, symbol, or character.

We refer to '*Forma 212*' (1957) and '*Evocación marina*' (1960), two works through which the sculptor Josep Maria Subirachs (1927-2014), at the age of thirty, introduced abstraction to the streets for the first time. Undoubtedly, these works signified a push towards a profound collective aesthetic evolution.

For '*Forma 212*', located on Paseo del Valle de Hebrón, Subirachs opted for a material emblematic of the 20th century: concrete, rejecting materials considered more noble, such as marble, travertine stone, or granite. Thus, concrete entered the history of

sculpture as a material capable of providing a striking plastic impact, refuting the false prejudice that reinforced concrete was a poor material. The work emerged as the first example of a sculpture capable of being a genuine contemporary aesthetic contribution in a public space.

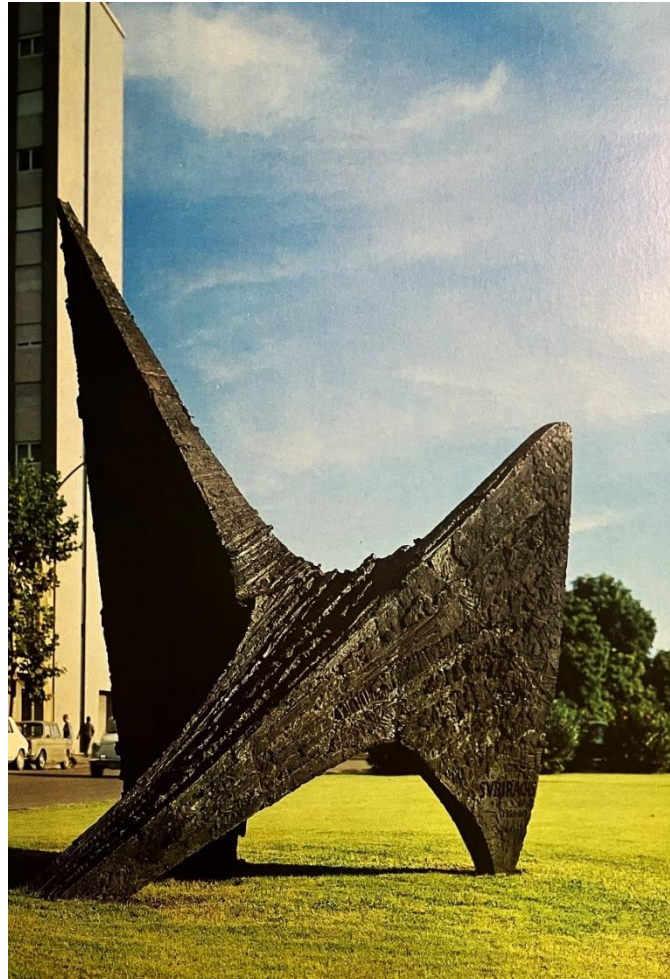
Within the artist's trajectory, this work already belonged to his abstract stage, though it still echoed highly stylized natural forms, derived from his reclining figures of the expressionist period. Apart from the material used, the singularity of the work lay in the absence of a pedestal because '*Forma 212*' did not seek to glorify or exalt any individual, nor did it commemorate or recall any historical event. Without a base or pedestal, the sculpture appeared accessible, without barriers, to both sight and touch.



Josep M. Subirachs | *Forma 212* | 1957 | Concrete |
Paseo del Valle de Hebrón (Barcelona) | 180 x 270 x 98 cm

While '*Forma 212*' was indeed the first non-figurative sculpture placed in a public space in Barcelona, it's worth noting that, by the late fifties, Paseo del Valle de Hebrón was still a secluded area. Hence, it did not generate the historical impact that another abstract work by the same author, '*Evocación marina*' would three years later. This bronze piece, located in the heart of the Barceloneta district, featured a radically different conception from conventional statuary. It possessed a strong formal presence with clear nautical suggestions.

As Francesc Fontbona asserted, this marvel of formal synthesis openly challenged the validity of abstraction in sculpture for the first time. Distancing itself decisively from figurative statuary, it clearly evoked elements related to the sea. Through an essentialist plastic discovery, '*Evocación marina*' could suggest the bow of a ship, the rusty helm of a vessel, a propeller, the tail of a cetacean, an anchor embedded in the seabed, or even the profile of a Latin sail.¹



Josep M. Subirachs | *Evocación marina* | 1960 | Bronze |
Paseo Juan de Borbón (Barcelona) | 370 x 250 cm

In 1963, with the monument dedicated to the inventor of the submarine "*Ictíneo*," located on Avenida Diagonal in Barcelona, the artist avoided creating a conventional monument. Instead of placing Narcís Monturiol atop a pedestal, he monumentalized the inventor's creation with a monument/collage that resonated with an artistic language close to pop art, an avant-garde trend emerging in North America at the time. A meticulously textured concrete structure formed a concavity housing a 1:7 scale copper reproduction of the submarine, akin to a facsimile. Thus, by placing a specific element literally reproduced on a non-figurative support, the artist created a strong contrast, an original symbolic proposal. As Teresa Camps described it, in Subirachs' public works, there was always form,

¹ FONTBONA, Francesc (2015). Subirachs. Barcelona: Enciclopedia Catalana, p. 74.

content, material, ornamentation, reliance on personal calligraphies, and symbology with collective and historical interpretations, alongside a monumental purpose.²

Without resorting to the forms or allegories of past sculpture and maintaining his artistic identity, the artist used symbols to establish a historical and cultural relationship with the place from which the initiative originated.



Josep M. Subirachs | *Monumento a Narcís Monturiol* | 1963 | Concrete and copper |
Avenida Diagonal / C. Provenza (Barcelona) | 420 x 260 x 214 cm

Distorting the artist's original idea

As Josep M. Subirachs himself wrote, once inaugurated, "fluctuating between indifference and admiration, the life of the work begins with the hope of merging into the cityscape, at the mercy of time and barbarians."³ Indeed, any work placed in public domains is subjected to numerous aggressions. On one hand, natural aggressions act upon the materials: the sun, rain, wind, dust, pollution, humidity, bird excrement, etc. On the other

² CAMPS, Teresa (2003). «Notes entorn de l'obra de Subirachs en l'espai públic». Subirachs. Volums, textures, símbols. Barcelona: Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat de Catalunya, p. 30.

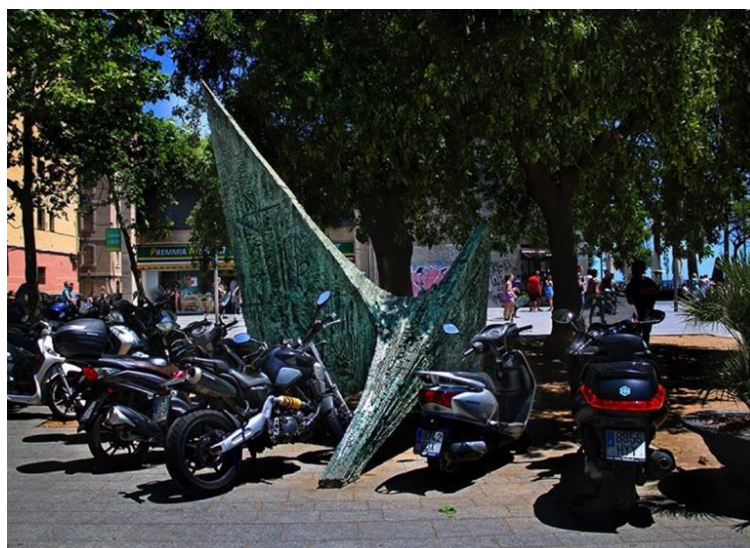
³ SUBIRACHS, Josep Maria (1987). Quadern de taller (1954-1987). Barcelona: Els Llibres de les Quatre Estacions, p. 12.

hand, acts of incivility, such as graffiti, urination, mutilation, or theft, also occur. Surprisingly, beyond "popular vandalism," there is an "official vandalism," another form of aggression perpetrated by administrations themselves. Guided by misguided advice or sheer ignorance, they distort the artwork without considering the original project conceived by the artist.

Due to the urbanization works on Paseo del Valle de Hebrón, parallel to the construction of Ronda de Dalt, a pedestal was added to the sculpture '*Forma 212*', which, as previously discussed, was originally conceived to be directly supported by the ground. This addition completely altered the original conception of the work, transforming it into a sort of trinket. To exacerbate matters, two signs were placed directly in front of it, displaying a complete lack of respect for the work and its author. It took almost thirty years, until 2017, for the sculpture '*Forma 212*' to be "removed" from that pedestal imposed without the consent of its author, following repeated requests from the Espai Subirachs.



As for '*Evocación marina*', initially situated in a roundabout, it was relocated to a flowerbed, hidden beneath a towering tree and converted into a motorcycle parking area.



More recently, in December 2022, an attempt to steal the submarine from the monument to Narcís Monturiol occurred. Vandals tried to wrench the Ictíneo reproduction not because it was the work of a renowned artist, but supposedly to sell the material—copper, whose price had recently surged. Thanks to the sturdy anchorage of the piece, they failed to steal the submarine but left it severely damaged, having stolen its propeller.



We could continue listing other examples of distorted works, whether due to popular vandalism or official vandalism, but we have focused on three emblematic works that confirm the sculptor's inclination towards creating works destined for public spaces. Here, they fulfilled a function integrated into urban planning, facing even more challenging circumstances. Subirachs affirmed, "The placement must be right because then the work creates a reference point and generates an environment. Well-placed sculpture provides the proportion of things, enlarges the space. For instance, it makes a square fully an urban place." He repeatedly emphasized the importance of choosing suitable materials. "I believe that a work of art should age like a ruin, not like scrap. That's why I work with materials that withstand the passage of time well." He was aware of the vulnerability of any work placed in a public domain, subject to all kinds of aggression. And he also knew that the effect of time was relentless. Ultimately, time chooses what must endure. As Marguerite Yourcenar splendidly described it in a text published in 1983, which Subirachs liked to quote: "Time, this great sculptor".

Monumental Sculpture: Limitations for the Artist

MARIBEL VERA-MUÑOZ

ABSTRACT

Sculpture faces significant obstacles to its development in the modern world, challenges that increase when it comes to monumental sculpture. The current reality may lead us to optimism, but upon analyzing the factors working against it, we arrive at less favorable conclusions. Firstly, sculpture is fading from the social sphere; it has ceased to be recognized as one of the great Fine Arts, among other reasons because art in general, and sculpture in particular, have disappeared from school curricula, and where they are included, other artistic expressions are often prioritized. Additionally, it is absent from mass media, which reach the general public, and what is not mentioned does not exist. Moreover, materials, techniques, and economic factors severely limit sculptors' possibilities to create monumental sculpture. All this without taking into account the discrimination prevalent across the art world, concerning the artist's gender and age. These obstacles constitute the main focus of our study, and understanding them will pave the way for finding solutions.

Monumental Sculpture: Limitations for the Artist

MARIBEL VERA-MUÑOZ

Sculpture in general, and monumental sculpture in particular, is disappearing from the socio-cultural and artistic world. The primary reason is that public institutions, such as ministries, councils, municipalities, and other entities, have reduced their participation in calls for awards, grants, residencies, etc., that foster the creation of large sculptural works. The same is true for religious institutions, although they were known to have promoted the execution of large sculptural works for churches and monasteries in the past. Currently, substantial institutional support is scarce, and the promotion of large sculptural works by both public and private entities is subject to serious limitations. However, modern urbanism, with the proliferation of roundabouts in urban or peri-urban areas and the creation of new parks, represents a potential source of monumental sculpture that can be used by municipalities and local administrations to enhance the cultural heritage of the areas they represent.

It is common for monumental sculptural works erected in public spaces to generate controversy in their surroundings, either due to the selection commission or the selected work itself, its meaning, or its suitability to the urban space. The recent controversy stirred up in Paris over Jeff Koons' attempt to place a gigantic bouquet of tulips in front of the Eiffel Tower serves as an example. Controversies surrounding monumental artworks are nothing new and have occurred throughout the history of art for religious, political, or cultural reasons. Although these controversies often attract public attention, they ultimately tend to be detrimental to the objective appreciation of the work in question.

The aforementioned crisis of monumental sculpture also reflects in the field of education. In fact, in both Art and Humanities and Social Sciences high school courses, art education has been reduced to an optional subject, with sculpture receiving significantly less attention than architecture or painting. Consequently, teaching monumental sculpture as such is limited to brief references to the works of historically renowned sculptors such as Michelangelo or Bernini, or contemporary figures like the Spanish sculptor Juan de Ávalos. What remains unknown is often undervalued.

In mass media, attention given to monumental sculpture, whether in the form of documentaries, specific programs, TV news, or the press, is minimal. This lack of interest is even evident in art-focused magazines. It is significant that there is no Spanish publication specifically dedicated to sculpture. A similar situation exists in the presence of monumental sculpture on major social media platforms, where it occupies minimal

space compared to other arts, especially painting, and what is not mentioned essentially does not exist.

The practice of monumental sculpture also presents specific limitations arising from the requirements of the materials to be used, techniques, execution, storage, and transportation. Materials must possess mechanical strength to withstand considerable weights and tensions, as well as chemical resistance to corrosion and environmental degradation, which may necessitate specific protective treatments, especially if the finished work is to be installed outdoors. The sculptural techniques for creating a monumental work pose an additional challenge. The limited capacity of the sculptor's workshop generally prevents the completion of monumental works indoors. Typically, the artist creates a small-scale work or a model, later producing the final model in a foundry, a large metalworking workshop, or using complex industrial machines for model reproduction, which employ multifunctional cutting methods for materials such as acrylic, wood, metal, or stone, using heat, laser, or high-pressure water jets. It is also not easy for an artist, especially a novice, to find a space of the necessary dimensions to house a monumental work or suitable means for its transportation and installation.

All these requirements regarding the quality and quantity of materials, sculptural techniques, machinery, workspace, transportation, etc., result in an increase in the cost of the finished work, which often proves to be unattainable for the artist. However, very few entities are willing to finance a work based solely on a model, which drastically limits the possibilities of carrying out a project of significant scale. The great monumental works of history, now reproduced everywhere, such as Rodin's "The Thinker," have always been the result of commissions. But this is a "luxury" afforded only to a few, the elite artists of monumental sculpture, such as Plensa, Bourgeois, Botero, Iglesias, or Charbonnel, among others.

However, not all artists face the aforementioned limitations equally. While women represent over 80% of students in Spanish faculties and schools of art, the majority of those awarded prizes, competitions, mentions, etc., in the artistic world are men. This gender discrimination represents another limitation for the promotion and future of women artists in general, and sculptors in particular. Taking ARCO 2023 as an example, based on data provided by the Women in Visual Arts association (MAV), works exhibited and created by women accounted for 37% of the total.

Differences in the limitations faced by artists also exist based on their age. A cursory review of selected, awarded, or exhibited artworks in galleries reveals that virtually all are by authors under 50 years old. Adding to this, many calls are specifically for emerging artists, with an age limit of 40, leading to another form of discrimination in the art world:

age discrimination. The data presented below about ARCO 2023 refers to women but can be extrapolated to men. The highest proportion of female artists by age falls within the 40-50 age group, at 26.3%, while the 70-80 age group represents 10.9%, and those aged 80 or older account for 5.3%, with deceased established artists making up 9.5%. In summary, there seems to be no place for artists in such events if they are over 40 and not already recognized.

Professionals whose performance depends on their physical condition, such as athletes, are often undervalued by society as they age. Surprisingly, this undervaluation has extended to other activities where physical conditions are not critical but rather where intellectual and professional faculties improve progressively with age, such as politics, academia, healthcare, art, and others. Ignoring this means ignoring the value of experience and the development of creative thinking. The creativity of older individuals is disregarded, with the argument that their life expectancy is shorter, so they will have less time to produce, prioritizing quantity over quality. As evidence against this, one could cite the example of Picasso and many other artists who were prolific in the later stages of their lives. It could also be added that artistic precocity is never a guarantee of life expectancy, as there are many examples to the contrary.

Finally, the influence of ideologies, which are both great promoters and destroyers of monumental sculpture, should be mentioned. Ideologies that strongly promote monumental sculpture can also be its greatest destroyers. One need only recall the rise and fall of the communist world, with the mass destruction of colossal sculptures of its former leaders by the people, or the blowing up of the giant Buddhas in Afghanistan, not to mention more recent examples.

This analysis has not been exhaustive, as studying only some of these aspects in depth could require a doctoral thesis. However, having a basic understanding of these obstacles has been the main objective of our study, in order to highlight their importance for the future of monumental sculpture. All of this will pave the way for finding solutions that promote its growth within the visual arts and ensure that it is valued as it deserves, increasing its presence in the current moment.

What is known as figure and ground, or positive and negative: the perceptual relationship between “visual image and background” in sculpture.

MELQUIADES ROSARIO-SASTRE

ABSTRACT

In my view, what is commonly referred to as "figure and ground" or its parallel "positive and negative", should be conceived as "visual image and background" in the case of two-dimensional media, whereas in the case of sculpture, it should be "visual image and surrounding space". All writings on the subject are based on two-dimensional media and treat sculpture in the same way. The particularity of sculpture lies in its three-dimensional character, and the surrounding space functions as its setting. It is not a surface or a plane; rather, it is a space that affects, impacts, and necessitates the creation of a design that interacts with it. Sculpture in space and spaces in sculpture are the means to maintain a harmonious relationship with its environment.

What is known as figure and ground, or positive and negative: the perceptual relationship between "visual image and background" in sculpture.

MELQUIADES ROSARIO-SASTRE

Edgar John Rubin, a Danish psychologist, born in Copenhagen on September 6, 1886, and died in Rudersdal on May 3, 1951. Among his most notable works are his theories on optical illusions under the conception of figures and forms, presented in his doctoral thesis '*Synsoplevede figurer*' ("visual figures").

"What is background for painting is vastness for sculpture."

Melquiades Rosario-Sastre, 2005.

In his thesis, Rubin talks about a surface where the figure and ground are generated, obviously referring to two-dimensional media. This surface he refers to is an intangible space. However, it exists as a support, where a spot, a stroke, or a line constitutes a visual image; from it, the relationship between visual image and its setting is delineated, shaped, or designed to establish the perceptual relationship between visual image and its scenario. It is necessary to visualize this relationship as a "dual" one; both are equally important, as without a surface, there is no visual image, and when Rubin talks about the surface where perception is generated, he is right in affirming that the background takes shape from the design of the figure.

What has been known as figure and ground, or its parallel, positive and negative, has been a way of distinguishing, of showing the relevance of a figure over a background, which could be a two-dimensional format, and how these interact so that one or the other plays the dominant, attractive, eye-catching role over the format. I have always been concerned about the term "figure" because by itself, it assumes the predominant role and alludes to corporeality (and can exclude, for example, a spot as a figure). And its parallel, positive and negative, already has a preconceived evaluative character of importance and excludes the background from an active role. I also have some disagreement with the term background because of our way of seeing by absence; we call the background what is immediately behind, when it is more appropriate to refer to the background of a container, a box, or a cube. And this term immediately leads us to think of an empty space. Rather, it is a "scenario" where things happen; it provides the dual existence of these terms.

This perception has focused primarily on painting or two-dimensional media but does not have the same reading for sculpture. Primarily because for painting, engraving, and drawing, the background is the space of the paper, canvas, or two-dimensional support, while for sculpture, the intangible space corresponds as the place where they interact and reveal themselves. It could also be argued that three-dimensional objects are not perceived in the same way as two-dimensional artistic media. Two-dimensional media have a single focal point on a plane, while sculpture has several, and the way we perceive them changes as we observe them. On the other hand, flat media are designed or managed on a support, while sculpture must be designed for space, regardless of whether it is placed on a pedestal, inside a museum, or in a public space. In the case of sculpture, the surrounding space can act as a background but also as a visual image. Following this line of thought, in 2000 I said, "form comes to sculpture through negative space." This reflection arose from observing the spaces in sculpture and sculpture in spaces, and both have different perceptions, qualities. Sometimes, bulk sculptures (enclosed in themselves) tend to appear flat in space. Their treatments are completely different, although they start from similar perceptual qualities.

For me, it was enriching to read Rudolf Arnheim's book "*Art and Visual Perception*"; to my understanding, it is the best book on this subject.

Previously, I had better adopted the terms "visual image and background" for two-dimensional media and, in sculpture, "visual image and surrounding space." I make this distinction because for two-dimensional media, there is a background that is directly behind a visual image, but for sculpture, it is a surrounding space that borders a visual image, due to the three-dimensional nature of sculpture.

Today I think that calling both media differently could lead to confusion, so I propose finally "Visual Image and its Setting" because it can be used interchangeably for any of the artistic media, although there are differences in terms of the dimensions inherent to each.

"The Principles of Perceptual Relationship between Background and Figure" according to Edgar Rubin.

What many call the principles of figure and ground segregation, in my opinion, should be called characteristics of these, because principles and rules are immutable, but in figure and ground relationships, they do not necessarily work in the same way. Precisely because of the anisotropy of space.

Among these characteristics that Rubin exposes are:

1. In a way, the background has no shape. (this does not work in the same way for the surrounding space)
2. The contour is what allows establishing the difference between figure and background. It is the common boundary of the two fields.
3. When two fields have a common boundary and one is seen as a figure and the other as a background, the immediate perceptual experience is characterized by a shaping effect that emerges from the common boundary of the fields and that acts in only one of them, or with more intensity in one than in the other.
4. A figure is characterized by having a complete contour line, while the background borders behind the figure.
5. Edgar Rubin created the visual image called "Rubin's vase," where he establishes the ambiguity of the image as background or as a figure. It is possible that Rubin was inspired by the images that the French royalty made to perpetuate their power in engravings with profile images of the royal family imperceptibly immediately on funeral urns or on weeping willow trees, since it was forbidden to have images of royalty during the French Revolution, these images were called invisible images. The phenomenon of ambivalent figures is only one state, in the perception of background and figure. This is a characteristic and not the concept itself. Possibly in its complementary state, it has its ambiguity.
6. Anisotropic: it refers to images that do not have the same visual weight depending on their perceived position. A very popular example is the yin and yang.
7. Concave and convex: for Rubin, convexity tends to gain ground over concavity in the perception of background and figure. In my book "Ideas in Forms," I wrote an essay entitled "the dialectic of concave and convex: what contains and what is contained."

At times, it is more intriguing to observe how things behave rather than passing judgments on what we observe, or categorizing them according to rules when it should be their qualities that define them.

Concave and convex forms manifest themselves irrespective of how humans perceive the positive and the negative. The scope of action of such forms is not to oppose, but to manifest within. It does not matter which one dominates, stands out, or correlates, but rather how each one manifests itself in space. We should observe what qualities enable the observed outcome.

Concave:

It manifests as a dominant form. Its purpose is to stand out, and everything else is subordinate to its image. Its dominance is complete and absolute; if not, it ceases to be because it does not need anyone's company.

Convex:

Its form is felt in various ways, all of them extremely interesting. The convex can manifest itself as what is contained, as a container, or both simultaneously. It is this quality that distinguishes it. Additionally, the convex establishes a reciprocal relationship between the image and the background. The figure can be visualized as both background and image simultaneously. Now, when we attempt to turn a void into a concrete object, its reading refers to a full convex form, and its perception tends to confuse us because we are not accustomed to it. This new space transforms into an inverted convex form. An example of this is when casting is performed, and we use the mould as a form to be perceived as concave, as is the case with the Spanish sculptor Josep María Subirá, or like the English sculptor Raquel Witherratt, who fills an empty building with concrete.

8. Edgar Rubin exposes that texture acts in favour of the visual image.

"Thinking through the Void."

First of all, to understand this perceptual relationship, one must delve into polarized thinking. In my artistic experience, observing, reflecting on, analysing, reacting to, and interpreting the things I perceived represented for me a learning that showed me the need to have a different way of thinking, which I have called "thinking through the void," an invitation to visualize things in a different way than seeing through opposition, objection, or judgments. Observing and adopting the way nature behaves represented an extraordinary analytical tool for my intellectual growth.

There is no evil in nature, as we humans conceive it. This is only a human creation. When we observe how things behave in nature, we do not do so evaluatively but as an expression of their behaviour. For example, observe how good behaves: what it does is to create good and it moves with all its splendour, creating an expansive wave of joy. Meanwhile, on the other hand, evil only creates evil and will rot on its own. It is also observed that night and day are two different ways of "being" and not necessarily opposed. Their effect, at times, gives us the impression of opposition, and at others, of complement.

In that process of translation from one state to another, there are countless other ways of being. It's like when we are doing a tonal degradation from black to white in painting: inside, there is a rich range of grey tones. Each of them is a way of being. We could say that it acts in the same way as a zero on the left; it is not worthless but it marks the value. It is not a space whose design is disparaged, but it occupies a preeminent and decisive place to create that polarity in the design.

The vision of the background or surrounding space as void:

"Space before being empty is content."

Melquiades Rosario-Sastre, 2009.

In his writing '*Art and Space*', in 1959 Martin Heidegger makes some very interesting observations about space as a void in reference to sculpture. I quote part of the writing verbatim to better understand it.

Heidegger says:

"What would become of the void of space? The void often appears only as a lack. The void would then be the lack of filling empty and intra-worldly spaces. Undoubtedly, the void is precisely related to the peculiarities of the site and therefore is not a lack but a creation."

Again, language can offer us a wink.

In the verb to empty ('*leeren*'), the original sense of finding ('*lesen*') is manifested, in the sense of finding that works in the place.

Filling the glass means finding the content in its free becoming.

Pouring collected fruits into a basket means: preparing a place for them.

The void ceases to be nothing. Nor is it a lack. In the embodiment of plastic arts, we play with the void as a way of granting, seeking, and designing places.

Following this thought, when I was young, when making a casting or mould, a study partner, Adelino González, asked me, "If we are filling it, why do they call it making a casting?" Of course, at that time, we could not distinguish the action because we thought by opposition and not by concept. This emptying, depositing on a sculptural mould, is also used in building construction when making moulds for columns and other needs in that task.

"The Conception of Space and Three-Dimensional Objects."

Now, delving into the relationship between sculpture and space, I could say:

First, space is deep and not three-dimensional. Three-dimensionality belongs to objects, not to space. This is where they unfold, where three-dimensional objects manifest themselves. Seeing space as three-dimensional space reduces it to a concrete object. It would be like in ancient times, where the horizon ends there is a precipice. As if it were a cube.

To express it more critically, space and three-dimensional objects are enemies. Objects as concrete forms run through their own dimensions and are afraid of open space. (hence the

dialectic, of Ponce is Ponce and the rest is parking). Capitals, by absorbing the form of concrete objects, only run through their own parking and open space terrifies them. In this way, although we live on an island, when we go into the centre of the country, we say we are going to the island, we are going to the vastness.

Entering space has been a concern of artists for a long time, especially sculptors. It has been fruitless to use three-dimensionality to enter space, so some have proposed a fourth dimension to solve the problem. An example of these is Carl André, who created a piece using many wooden blocks placed in a line to propose his fourth dimension. In fact, what this artist has been doing is proposing fractal dimension as a more efficient way to enter space. In fact, his work entitled '*Secant*' is a simple form of fractal dimension. Also, in his proposed work entitled '*144 Magnesium Square*', he proposes the fourth dimension to enter space; in this one, a square is equivalent to the 2nd, 4th or 8th, as well as to the whole. In other artists like Richard Long, in his endless path of stones, we can find a way to manifest in space.

Symbiosis of Technologies in Contemporary Sculpture

MOISÉS GIL

ABSTRACT

Contemporary sculpture is constantly evolving, and in its investigation of new creative frontiers, it has embraced 3D technology as a revolutionary tool. This marriage between traditional sculpture techniques and the possibilities offered by 3D technology has given rise to contemporary sculpture with all its aesthetic behaviors that this entails.

Sculpture, one of the oldest forms of artistic expression, has found in 3D technology an unexpected ally of great help to the sculptor. By merging the tangible with the digital, contemporary artists investigate new dimensions in sculptural creation. This combination not only allows for the production of works of great complexity, detail and size, but also raises fundamental conceptual questions.

In this exploration, we will analyze how contemporary artists navigate the fertile ground of sculpture, fusing traditional carving, modeling, and casting techniques with the design and manufacturing capabilities offered by 3D technology, as well as the use of state-of-the-art materials that enrich the semantic contents of the pieces produced. Through this creative synthesis, new perspectives are opened on the relationship between art and technology, the perception of space and form, and the interaction between past and present.

In the world of contemporary sculpture, this convergence of the traditional and the technological not only reflects the evolution of art in the digital age, but also raises profound questions about the very nature of sculpture, materiality, and artistic expression in an ever-changing world. Throughout this analysis, we will explore the conceptual motivations that drive artists to embrace this fusion and examine outstanding examples of works that celebrate the conjunction of sculptural heritage with the digital tools of the 21st century.

Symbiosis of Technologies in Contemporary Sculpture

MOISÉS GIL

Sculptural processes have evolved hand in hand with the aesthetics that were sought to be achieved and the technological advances that have accompanied the progress of humanity. Sculpture, as a discipline, has been nourished by these advances to the point that nowadays computing, through three-dimensional technologies (3D technologies), plays an essential role.

We distinguish three phases of the current sculptural process using 3D technologies. The first of these is the generation of the virtual object, which can be scanned from a pre-existing physical model or generated by modeling software from scratch. Second, the processing of the virtual object, adjusting it, rescaling it, giving it texture if required, etc. Finally, the last process is the materialization of this virtual object into a physical object, in this part of the process 3D printing intervenes, which can use various supports, such as resins or expanded polystyrene.

In each of the steps of the process described, various factors intervene that establish a dialogue between the most archaic sculptural processes and the most contemporary. The conceptual and technical bases of sculpture, such as subtraction or addition, the analysis of the three-dimensionality of objects or the study of proportions is crucial for its success.

The use of 3D modelling and reproduction in contemporary sculpture dates back to the early 1990s. Shortly after the first 3D printer patented by Hideo Kodama in 1981 (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2022), visual artists saw the aesthetic and technical opportunity that this technology represented. Examples such as Karin Sander, Anish Kapoor, Katharina Fritsch and Jaume Plensa demonstrate the potential of this technology. Each of these referents uses the different techniques that 3D technology offers us to play and give character to their works. For example, Jaume Plensa plays with the deformation of the virtual model, Anish Kapoor with printing technology or Karin Sander with the scanned object and scanning technology, incorporating topographic data to recreate natural landscapes.

In this paper we will analyze the sculptural process through 3D modeling applied to large-format sculptures for public spaces. Specifically, the case of the sculpture presented at the ALMA Sculpture Park. In my case, I have used a plasticine model which we scanned with the technique based on photogrammetry and which was later printed on expanded polystyrene using the three-axis CNC. Finally, the symbiosis with the traditional sculptural process is established in the last part, in which the different printed pieces are assembled, some pieces are retouched, adjusting the proportions and the final texture is worked on manually with the help of putty and classic tools such as spatulas.

The first step is to model the sculpture to the size that is most comfortable. It is modeled in plasticine, depending on the plastic and expressive needs of the details, one or another brand of plasticine is used. During modeling, it is taken into account that the purpose of such a model is to be extended. Any distorted detail can seriously affect the formal and expressive content of the final work.

Once the physical model is made, it is scanned to generate a virtual 3D model. There are currently numerous scanning technologies. Traditionally, this process has required expensive and specific equipment, but nowadays you can use your mobile phone camera to scan

physical objects. There are different applications that allow you to do this process and process the images captured by your mobile phone generating a 3D model. Using artificial intelligence algorithms, the software predicts the three-dimensional structure, filling in those points that could not be captured optimally or discarding photographs that do not add information to the model.

The scanning process requires a place with a dim light and no strong shadows. The part is positioned and images are captured from all the angles that the application requires. Usually concatenated and overlapping images are required, the task of the software is to generate the model from this succession of images. There is the possibility of processing the model a posteriori, through which new images can be provided to regions that the software has not detected correctly.

Once the 3D model is obtained, it could be processed with a 3D editing program. However, in our case it wasn't necessary, as we want to be faithful to the model and use it as a framework. The changes required by the piece will be incorporated through manual sculptural techniques once the piece is printed, so that the three-dimensionality of the piece can be physically worked.

Once this digitization and retouching process has been carried out, we send the file with the final model to the company that is going to make the piece to the desired size. In our case, the final figure you want will be 3.20 m high. The company's first task is the exploded view of the figure, so that the expanded polystyrene milling machine can generate each of the pieces that make up the figure and optimize the material.

Milling is a simple process. However, the tricky part is adjusting the machines: placing the right cutter and calibrating the milling definition. These machines allow you to determine the pitch of the cutter from 1 mm to 12 cm, depending on the desired definition. The exploded view made for our sculpture requires a step of 6 mm to 8 mm, since we are more interested in the structural configuration than the detail, which will be worked on later.

Once the pieces are in the studio, they are assembled, with the help of a mobile application, by anchoring and gluing them. During this process, possible deviations resulting from scaling and 3D reproduction are retouched, adjusting the structural volumes to the proportions of the final figure by adding or subtracting material, classic sculptural processes.

Subsequently, once the piece is completely constituted, it is a matter of defining and giving character and texture to the final piece. By means of electric knives, scrapers, files or blades, it is given the expressive level that, together with resin modeling, ends up defining the piece. Specifically, the general model is scraped to remove possible steps left by the milling, then we work with files that end up modelling the volumes in a more subtle way. To provide a more solid, cohesive and climate-protected structure of the public exhibition site, the expanded polystyrene sculpture is coated with fiberglass (MAT 300), which is adhered with a styrene-free acrylic resin (JESMONITE 100), which is manually applied to both sides of the resin. As can be seen, each of these steps, which are nothing more than subtraction and addition, soften the original model until the desired expressive and formal result is obtained.

Once the piece has been coated with the fiberglass, we move on to modeling with *thixotropated JESMONITE 100* acrylic resin. This is worked to the point of putty in order to give the final finish. The application of this putty is done with metal spatulas, respecting the gesture in order to emphasize the chiaroscuro and the slight aesthetic vibration of the small shadows it generates. If there are areas that we are interested in smooth, we proceed to sanding, the contrast of textures is interesting, as it emphasizes the gesture and above all the volume.

As conclusions, I would first like to highlight that technological evolution is not tied to the disciplines that generate them (engineering, computer science, etc.), but that through the interaction of these more technical disciplines with the more artistic ones, synergies are generated that also help the aesthetic progress of the sculptural discipline. This symbiosis that we talk about in the title of the paper is bidirectional, through interdisciplinarity we achieve the development of new technologies and at the same time this returns us with more aesthetic possibilities. Second, sculpture is not a discipline detached from economic activity, the processes of 3D reproduction open the possibility for sculpture to be part of the economy through the reproduction and application of new techniques that arise from this symbiosis. Third, 3D scanning makes it possible to generate a very valuable digital documentary archive, allowing works to be stored, such as now the reproduction of the '*Dama de Elche*', but also of current artists, in a format that can be transmitted and that is not limited to a specific physical space. Finally, this evolution of 3D technologies offers an opportunity to democratize the sculptural process, traditionally the sculptural practice has been exclusive, currently this technology opens the door to numerous creators who can contribute and disseminate their work without the need for the physical space and resources it requires.

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The New Public Sculpture as a "Re-politicizing" Agent of Public Space in the 20th and 21st Centuries

ROCÍO PLANA FREIXAS

Abstract

After an approach to the concepts of public art and public space, sculpture is proposed as a possible "re-politicizing" agent of the latter in the global city of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; restoring its essence as a space for exchange and discussion in which both the common and the divisive have a place. On the one hand, the place created by the sculpture in the public space would facilitate the communicative human interrelation by relating what lacks it and thus advocating for a positive concept of dispute; and, on the other hand, through a series of aesthetic strategies, it would influence the perception of the tangible and intangible reality that surrounds us, thus favouring the questioning of the norms and conventions that regulate the acceptable uses of public space and, therefore, also social change.

The New Public Sculpture as a "Re-politicizing" Agent of Public Space in the 20th and 21st Centuries

ROCÍO PLANA FREIXAS

To talk about the new public sculpture requires that we first deal with the concepts of public space and public art. Thus, among the practical attitudes that occur towards a space and the ways we have of thinking about it, "the consideration of a space as social" and "the belief that the space is primarily public, that is basically for-the-public" (Riggle, 2010, 255) would stand out, which would anticipate the socio-cultural function of public space "as a cultural space that facilitates self-expression" (2016, 192). That is, the action of expressing oneself – "the most important way for people to connect, navigate and grow with each other" (Glasser, 2017) – as a public act. However, moving from a state of (self) protection to a state of collaboration requires that we identify with the symbolic value of the space chosen to express ourselves, with the group we interact with, and that we feel represented by the cultural values it contains, which determine the meaning of our expressive acts. But there are two conditioning factors: the continuous change of its materiality, which impacts our perception and way of interacting or expressing ourselves in it, and the variability in the value given to self-expression in different cultures. At present, constructed forms, which "constitute one of the most significant codes for interpreting the basic structures of a society's dominant values" (de la Torre, 2015, 502), reveal how neoliberal discourse restricts access to and uses of public space; and, in addition to the challenge of intercultural communication, "immaterial communication has modified the links between the private and the public" (de la Torre, 2015, 500). In conclusion, if we relate "society, culture and space with the temporal evolution of our cities" (Garriz & Schroeder, 2014, 30), their space is globally defined by the exclusion of difference or the search for "the community of similarity", which according to Bauman "is a sign of withdrawal, not only to the outside of otherness, but also to the commitment to the lively but turbulent, involved but cumbersome, within the interaction" (de la Torre, 2015, 502). This social distrust, or lack of communication with others, deteriorates our sense of belonging and identity, reducing our level of participation in society.

A city project that watches over the essence of public space as a place of relationship and coexistence, as we had culturally assumed, should admit proposals from other areas; Which leads us, secondly, to try to discover what attitudes of art could activate its potential as a place of cohesion and exchange. "In the case of public artworks, the fact that the work is intended to gather together the public to reflect on an issue of common concern by means of an aesthetic interaction is a constitutive part of the experience" (Puolakka, 2016, 372), explains Hilde Hein. This leads us to consider public art that is (1) capable of forging a specific audience, almost like a "congregation" (Hein, 2006, 49); (2) through artistic interaction; (3) aimed at reflecting on a topic of common interest – let us remember here that urban imaginaries take precedence over citizen perception and action (Silva, 2006); (4) in which the work of art is understood as an interaction with our space, "which gives it a stability that is not stagnation but rhythm and development" (Dewey in Hlebovich, 2013, 5). This co-creation speaks to us of a political dimension that refers to the polis or city: not all manifestations of public art necessarily destabilize the environment they intervene in, but all public art projects "are subversive in a different and more profound sense: they challenge norms and conventions regulating acceptable uses of public space" (Baldini, 2016, 188). Along with this subversive nature, its relationship with the social reality of the place and the interests it serves are key

aspects of its agency that will determine whether or not its impact on the city and citizens corresponds to a "public good" (Lum, 2020, 247).

Taking into account all of the above, we believe that the new public sculpture could be considered a re-politicizing agent of the public space of the ss. XX-XXI. The properties that identify and distinguish it from traditional monumental sculpture would not be related to a general order – that is, of power – but, on the contrary, would respond to the interests of the citizenry. This approach of art to the citizen would reflect some of the ideas raised in the debate on the artist and the city that at the end of the twentieth century "progressively shifted from philosophy and sociology to cultural criticism" (Guillamon, 2019, 102-103), mainly the split between Culture, with capital letters, which would be concerned with being and becoming and politics, that it would give priority to the state of affairs. This would be related to two other aspects that would serve to explain its social impact and its aesthetic value together: the fact that the new public sculpture is constituted as a dynamic element within the public space, as opposed to the traditional conception of sculpture as a static art, and the opening of its language through a series of aesthetic strategies aimed at "making us see" (purpose of art, according to the Russian critic Victor Shklovsky) and make us "see everything" – because "people must be able to read and see everything. There must be opportunities for all; this is the process in which we move" (1988, 219), as the visual poet Joan Brossa claimed.

Among these strategies, I would highlight those that activate a relational reading of the city: duality as an inherent quality of the piece; a configuration that emphasizes different perspectives; the focusing of vision towards a point beyond the image, transmuting absence into presence and evidencing the plasticity of the limit according to the notion that the sculptor Eduardo Chillida had of it, for whom it was not an impediment but a possibility; the use of some elements to influence the idea of movement, for example water, which for the sculptor Jaume Plensa would symbolize the large public space whose coming and going of the waves resembles the process by which our identity is formed, that is, belonging to a group and at the same time differentiating ourselves from others; the creation of "structures of enchantment" (Lefebvre, 1996, 173) that seduce citizens from the aesthetic, but also beyond the aesthetic, so that "space is not only the stage of the real, but also the architect of that reality" (Manuel Castells in De la Torre, 2015, 498).

We see, then, that the relationship of the elements in the aesthetic experience, as proposed by John Dewey, "it is not harmonious, but live and tension filled" (Puolakka, 2016, 379), differentiating in this also the new public sculpture from the conception of beauty according to the classical precept. Behind it would be the attempt to give an answer that attends to the plural reality in which we live through the concept of the common, but avoiding falling into "a model in which the whole is more important than the parts, in which homogeneity imposes itself on difference, in which the values of harmony and order displace the singular presence of freedom" (Guillamon, 2019, 106). All this would reveal a physical and psychic place of encounter and rest similar to the "point of stillness and receptivity, the point from which it is possible to see the totality of things" (López Castro, 1993, 76) longed for by the poet José Ángel Valente; but not in the sense of lethargy, but "a place where you can rebuild yourself, where you can find energy, where you can recharge" (Jaume Plensa in Maisler, 2014, 6:27) with others. Thus, taking into account that "the exercise of citizenship comes mainly from the aesthetic affectation, from the set of sensitivities that are mobilized when an aesthetic is implemented in the city" (Pérez, 2014, 134), the social impact of the new public sculpture

would lie in the creation of a place between the visible and invisible city from which it is possible to “reconstruct the public space as a political space where the encounter of what is diverse takes place, producing at the same time conflict and contact” because, as Heraclitus said, it is from the opposite and not from the identical that the chord is obtained. The construction of this non-imposed harmony would respond to the hope and trust that Heidegger placed in “the new public sculpture when it comes to reconfiguring the environment and the construction of cities and human environments, in that sense of the need for consideration and learning to inhabit, before and at the time of any constructive act” (Pinilla Burgos, 2014, 213) – “inhabiting” both on the plane of purer thinking, Pinilla Burgos clarifies, and in a practical and vital sense. The new public sculpture as a “place-between” from which to read (and write) the city.

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Escultura monumental polaca en la era del realismo socialista

TOMASZ BIELAŃSKI

ABSTRACT:

El autor analiza los supuestos más importantes del arte durante el régimen totalitario. La ponencia presenta ejemplos de los objetos más importantes que se construyeron en la era del realismo socialista, los que han sobrevivido hasta nuestros días y los que fueron destruidos.

Se mostrarán objetos que han sido adaptados al espacio público. Se citarán problemas y causas de aceptación social de ciertos objetos y esculturas que merecen especial atención debido a que la visión artística va más allá de los principales presupuestos de la corriente artística destinada a servir al régimen.

Escultura monumental polaca en la era del realismo socialista

TOMASZ BIELAŃSKI

El final de la Segunda Guerra Mundial en Polonia fue también el fin de los sueños de los artistas de vanguardia sobre su posterior desarrollo. Los artistas de un arte abstracto, en particular, pueden haber sentido una sorpresa desagradable, porque generalmente fueron ellos quienes, junto con la revolución en la cultura y el arte, en sus demandas trajeron también la revolución bolchevique a la sociedad. La tragedia de los creadores del arte abstracto fue que allanaron el camino a los comunistas con cambios radicales en la cultura al derrocar la tradición, y específicamente en el arte, al rechazar la representación de la realidad existente y el realismo. Sin embargo, estos artistas no tenían idea de que los comunistas encontraban el arte abstracto poco atractivo porque era demasiado complicado y no era un buen portador de nuevas ideas marxistas. Los comunistas necesitaban un arte sencillo que pudiera llegar fácilmente a la sociedad visualmente. A partir de entonces, el arte iba a desempeñar sólo un papel propagandístico, los valores artísticos pasaban a un segundo plano y el objetivo principal era fortalecer la posición de poder. El realismo en el arte volvió, esta vez fue el realismo socialista, y los artistas no tenían más remedio: o adaptaban su trabajo a la construcción de un nuevo sistema político, o perdían la confianza de las autoridades y eran rechazados: no podían participar plenamente en la vida de la sociedad, perdían sus puestos de trabajo en escuelas, universidades e instituciones culturales.

El funcionamiento de los monumentos de la era del comunismo en Polonia se puede dividir en tres etapas básicas: la primera son las circunstancias en las que fueron creados (la introducción de un sistema totalitario en Polonia y la subordinación del país al estado dominante, que era la URSS). La segunda etapa, la existencia y la funcionalidad, que se ocupa del tema en relación con el cual se creó un monumento determinado (celebraciones organizadas en los monumentos por la administración estatal) y la tercera etapa, la liquidación o supervivencia de las circunstancias desfavorables después del final de la era del comunismo y los cambios sociales y culturales que siguieron. Esta tercera etapa, que tuvo lugar después de 1989, dependía principalmente del tema al que se dedicara un monumento determinado; Se pueden distinguir tres cuestiones básicas que impulsan la necesidad de crear monumentos.

La primera ola de monumentos en el espíritu del realismo socialista se produjo a mediados de la década de 1940 y se dedicó principalmente a la idea de gratitud al Ejército Rojo y a la hermandad de armas, y también se recordó a los héroes honrados de la revolución, incluido el más importante: el líder Lenin. La tarea básica de estos monumentos era la dominación decisiva y clara de la ideología del comunismo en el espacio público. El líder de la revolución, Lenin, es retratado con mayor frecuencia majestuoso y orgulloso, seguro de sí mismo, centrado en sus visiones e intenciones. Los héroes y soldados revolucionarios suelen presentarse en preparación para el combate, a veces las figuras van acompañadas de algún gesto turgente. La mayoría de las veces, los personajes se presentan de manera realista, clara y con un mensaje que no deja al espectador ninguna duda sobre sus intenciones. En solo una docena de años, más o menos, se erigieron más de 500 monumentos que expresaban gratitud al Ejército Rojo en toda Polonia. Los activistas comunistas intentaron llenar los centros y plazas de las ciudades y pueblos reconstruidos, paradójicamente, también se erigieron monumentos en lugares donde el Ejército Rojo cometió crímenes contra la población local.

El monumento a Lenin en Nowa Huta merece una mención. Era el último elemento, aparentemente desaparecido, de la ciudad recién construida, por lo que el monumento se erigió en la Avenida de las Rosas, el lugar más representativo y convertido en el lugar húmedo de las celebraciones comunistas más importantes. Vale la pena decir aquí algunas palabras sobre la idea misma de construir la ciudad de Nowa Huta, porque se considera una de las soluciones urbanas más interesantes durante el realismo socialista en Polonia. Nowa Huta fue el proyecto más importante de ingeniería social y su transformación en línea con el espíritu de los objetivos comunistas, por lo que se suponía que era una ciudad ideal para la propaganda del sistema. Las autoridades comunistas decidieron que lo mejor sería construirlo en las inmediaciones de Cracovia, una ciudad con una orgullosa historia y antigua sede de los reyes polacos. Nowa Huta iba a ser una nueva ciudad modelo de trabajadores, leales a las autoridades y comprometidas con la idea del comunismo.

Aquí, el enorme monumento a Lenin parecía ser una parte integral de la ciudad recién diseñada, a diferencia de los monumentos erigidos en muchos otros centros históricos, donde generalmente se consideraban una especie de violación del espacio histórico de la ciudad.

Otro tema en el que se hacía mucho hincapié en el mensaje de que los monumentos debían pasar a la sociedad era la división y el orden comunistas. Es decir, debía quedar firmemente codificado en la conciencia de la sociedad que los líderes de la revolución y las autoridades eran responsables del pensamiento, mientras que el papel básico de la sociedad era un trabajo intensivo. La eficiencia del trabajo fue de particular importancia en la propaganda de la construcción de un estado de bienestar, razón por la cual muchos monumentos a los representantes de las industrias clave de la época aparecieron en el espacio público: mineros, trabajadores siderúrgicos y, a veces, también agricultores, entrelazados en composiciones más grandes. El espacio de las ciudades, especialmente de los grandes centros industriales, se llenó de siluetas de trabajadores fornidos, sosteniendo herramientas (martillos, picos) en sus manos, atributos de la "gente trabajadora" y expresando su disposición a emprender actividades profesionales.

Los temas presentados anteriormente se implementarán a lo largo del período del comunismo, pero en forma de realismo socialista duro persistirán hasta la muerte de Stalin en 1953, y luego la forma y la forma de los monumentos comenzarán a transformarse gradualmente, a veces incluso acercándose al arte abstracto. El alejamiento de los supuestos estrictos del realismo socialista será cada vez más visible, y los artistas abordarán gradualmente su trabajo con mayor libertad y creatividad. El alto valor artístico de algunos de estos nuevos monumentos permitirá incluso que se conviertan en hitos locales.

Las autoridades comunistas llenaron escrupulosamente el espacio público de monumentos y símbolos. Curiosamente, los últimos monumentos se completaron a mediados de la década de 1980, a pesar del claro declive del comunismo, que terminó oficialmente en 1989.

¿Cómo reaccionó la sociedad a las decoraciones comunistas en el espacio?

Muy a menudo, los monumentos comunistas eran objeto de la frustración y el descontento de la sociedad con el sistema totalitario imperante. La mayoría de las veces, al amparo de la oscuridad, fueron rociados con pintura, incendiados o, como en el caso del mencionado monumento a Lenin en Nowa Huta, incluso hubo intentos de volarlos.

Sin embargo, tras la abolición del comunismo, los nuevos gobiernos locales asumieron la liquidación de sus símbolos y objetos existentes en el espacio público. La mayoría de las veces, bajo la influencia de la opinión pública, emprendieron acciones para dismantlar los monumentos más controvertidos. Naturalmente, las reacciones del público no fueron claras, o más bien el enfoque fue polarizado. Para algunos, los monumentos comunistas seguían siendo propaganda descarada y un símbolo de la esclavitud de Polonia, para otros eran meros elementos de orientación en el espacio urbano.

Un investigador externo de la historia del arte puede surgir una pregunta: ¿por qué, después de la caída del comunismo, los monumentos no se dejaron como testimonio de la historia y por qué no fueron tratados como obras de arte, como algunos de ellos sin duda lo fueron? Sin embargo, hay que recordar que los monumentos realistas socialistas, aparte de sus aspectos artísticos o de su carencia, conllevaban una enorme carga emocional para millones de polacos perjudicados directamente por el régimen, incluidas las familias y allegados de aproximadamente 150.000 personas asesinadas por estas autoridades.

La conciencia de las pérdidas sufridas y el recuerdo de las injusticias sufridas por la sociedad se reflejaron en una ley parlamentaria sobre la descomunización del espacio público, como resultado de la cual, en primer lugar, se cambiaron los nombres de las calles y plazas, y la siguiente etapa fue la eliminación de símbolos y monumentos que hacían referencia al sistema totalitario. Sin embargo, hubo un problema relacionado con los enormes costos de la demolición de los monumentos y esta es una de las razones por las que algunos de los monumentos han sobrevivido hasta nuestros días.

Por lo general, inmediatamente después de 1989, se retiraron los monumentos construidos y dedicados a los líderes del movimiento comunista del período estalinista, así como a los comandantes y representantes del Ejército Rojo.

A veces, pequeños pero importantes detalles como la estrella, la hoz y el martillo, que eran símbolos del régimen, tuvieron un impacto decisivo en la liquidación de los enormes monumentos.

En la actualidad, la situación de los monumentos restantes sigue siendo incierta.

El Instituto de la Memoria Nacional exige su eliminación de conformidad con la ley de descomunización aplicable, mientras que los gobiernos locales, que asumen los costos de demolición y eliminación de dicho monumento, están buscando otras soluciones. Las asociaciones y comités para la defensa de monumentos individuales, que participan en su conservación o traslado de los mismos, son útiles.

La eliminación de los monumentos que representan el simbolismo comunista del espacio público parece justificada, pero, por otro lado, también son importantes para la historia y la investigación sobre el realismo socialista, por lo que es necesario considerar (y financiar) la preservación de los monumentos más interesantes de los restantes, por ejemplo, en espacios museísticos separados creados para este propósito. Por supuesto, los monumentos reunidos en un lugar nuevo -un museo- se ven automáticamente privados del contexto del lugar para el que fueron diseñados, pierden su fuerza expresiva y se convierten en un recuerdo, una caricatura de la idea que guió su creación.

Urban space – creation and reflection

VÍCTOR OCHOA SIERRA

ABSTRACT

A reflection on some of the most controversial issues surrounding the world of monumental sculpture, from the personal point of view of an architect and sculptor with an interesting list of projects, competitions and awards, both national and international.

As a review, it addresses issues such as the conflict between art and architecture; how to tackle a monumental sculpture project; the role of memory in urban sculpture; monuments and anti-monuments; the new forms of sculptural representation or the always complicated relationships between art, artist and artefact.

Urban space – creation and reflection

VÍCTOR OCHOA SIERRA

I am fascinated by embedding monumental sculptures like huge chess pieces in the complex urban chessboard and I could, while we are at it, make a brief assessment of what that chessboard has been in the past, in the present, or consider what possibilities can be generated in the cities of the future.

But first I would like to make a brief simplification of what we understand by Monumental Sculpture, which using the *common understanding* would be the enormous sculpture or out of scale, which through history, legend or longing evoked the enormous winged bulls of Mesopotamia, the Sphinx of Giza, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Zeus of Olympia, the Easter Moai, the Olmec Heads, Leonardo's Sforza Horse, the Statue of Liberty or the Christ of Corcovado, and which are prolonged and settled even more strongly in our current imagination through cinema with the scenography of the chariot race in '*Ben-Hur*', the giants of '*The Lord of the Rings*', the spaceship in '*Alien*' or the gigantic black face in '*Prometheus*', etc.

And when we don't have the human figure as a reference and we create abstractions that mark the art of our time, then it is enough to replace the "out of scale" with the "impressive", and with just these three qualities we can enter the urban.

How do we know if we are suitable for monumental sculpture?

When in our sketches of the work we draw tiny figures next to it, because those puppets consolidate them as monumental sculptures, it's as simple as that.

What does it mean for the sculptor to enter a "city"?

Do the spiky steel and glass voids of Shanghai condition the same as the ancient, variegated and congested markets in Delhi?

No.

Will the future city be like the gigantic '*The Line*' of Saudi Arabia, which undaunted and mirrored crosses more than a hundred km without formal alteration, or will it continue to expand and devour the territory in Los Angeles? Will it become entrenched from within, like La Villa 31 in Buenos Aires, or will it lie in wait, inexorably enveloping the urban center, just as the slums of Cairo and the favelas of Rio de Janeiro do?

"The city" has too many faces inside and out to delimit it, and that strict and imaginary succession of rings with which they try to differentiate the possibilities of monumental sculpture, depending on whether we focus on the old town, on the new developments or on the suburbs, does nothing but hold our unique artistic creation with the rigid legs of municipal regulations.

I imagine the city in the style of 'Blade Runner', where all the variants of the past and of what we are and pretend to be, of what others saw and see, felt and felt, hear, enjoy and suffer, and where our monumental sculptures will be gigantic meteorites or holograms without "concertinas" that oppose the material to the virtual. the music to the advertising noises, the luminous noises of the alleys, and the traffic jams of people, animals and vehicles of the clear avenues and huge squares. That somewhat carnivalesque urban space impregnated with chaos has already colonized a large part of our world and cities, it will continue to do so, I

hope, and it is more truthful for the artist and his breeding ground, than the neatness, typology and regulations of an aesthetic vision fixed and imposed by 'ARTE-FACT'.

RELEVANCE AND COMPLEXITY OF MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE IN LARGE CITIES

And then, if we admit the creative diversity of monumental sculpture in the even greater diversity of urban spaces and circumstances, how do we channel our work?

There are two forms (counterpoints). The one that tries to "integrate" itself into that core or consolidated environment and eagerly searches for the hole or plot to re-signify and enhance it without stridency, and the one that "embeds" the sculpture, knowing itself to be strange and alien, like a meteorite that fell from the sky or something that emerged from the bowels of the earth to shock with its shock wave what "was" before.

I'm that drastic in those counterpoints to mark the ends of the bridge on which we stand. We can seek a balance that makes our sculpture vibrate within that morass or emptiness on which we find ourselves, without wanting to dismember it from its previous meaning, scanning and re-looking at its history and presence to integrate into it our embryo of monumental sculpture, or open the channel of our intuition and our ancestral shoots and swarm over that artistic abyss without ambiguity, that is, to "sedate" everything we have learned from the site in order to conquer it.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Taking a step back, I naively mentioned the "urban board", which, as we have already seen, is not usually flat like a board, nor gridded, nor orderly, but rather hard and entrenched between the pitfalls that architecture and urbanism, first cousins, have overcome, leaving nature and other very important aspects as marginal or simple fixing (there was a saying in the School of Architecture that said that only bad architecture needs to be solved). ivy to cover it).

Worse still, because today avant-garde architecture has been stripped of the need to share or stage together with the other arts, be they sculpture, reliefs, murals, painting, etc. and it develops with absolute naturalness without them, and even has a dislike of wanting to "adorn" its virginal and sober sterility (which I am not talking about the Monastery of El Escorial, not to be confused, nor the Guggenheim), while the monumental sculpture tries to assault the interstices or voids that have been left over with some impositions of "illegal" migrants. There is not even a conflict or a court of compatibilities.

TACKLING A MONUMENTAL PUBLIC SCULPTURE PROJECT TODAY

Since Urban Planning and Institutional Architecture do not count on us and that, although we move like "squatters", we are not satisfied with the simple occupation of roundabouts and those few marginal spaces, what do we do? I believe that in this aspect of vindication I can offer very little to help you and therefore I will not knock on more doors in that direction.

We are the type of artist who, even knowing that: talent is more than enough for success, for happiness it is not enough (C.J.C.) compensated by the fact that without soul and talent almost everything is nothing, we get involved, we enjoy and we are anxious to come to materialize with dignity some dreams, which we know are unfeasible for the rest of the professionals.

Sculptors only dream of what they are capable of materializing and we get involved in its constructive aspects, assuming that the voracity of learning takes away our vitality. And that's why I'd like to give you some keys to venture into that challenge more calmly.

CLASSICAL MONUMENTS. THE ROLE OF MEMORY

It is said that Michelangelo's great tragedy was to put more effort into the tomb of Julius II than the Pope himself, let alone his successors once the Pope died, who had not the slightest interest in paying for such a funerary monument for the Vatican. This exemplifies the impossibility of the artist himself being the one who leads the execution of a monumental project, and that your "personal monumental visions" will have to be filed away along with your dreams and nightmares, except for the covert exceptionality of owning a piece of the city and having the considerable money to pay for it, or of taking a risk and robbing an emblematic place in that city as was done with the Bull of Wall Street.

That is why I speak of the "Assignment" in capital letters, and do not be afraid or hesitant about it, because to create you are always alone and alone or vice versa; Listen to me, nod and forget it, that no one knows more about your dreams than you and that ART is what artists do and not what they say "what is it or what they do".

History has given us the compendium of the 7 Wonders of the Ancient World. It doesn't matter if there were 7 or if today, we say that there are already 100, because the perfume they left on the prints and stickers of our childhood clearly mark what we consider Monumental Works of Art Exceptional and worthy of imagining and contemplating them. It is said that tourist routes and the first travel agencies were created as early as the ancient world to visit them.

Of those wonders we have only one, the Pyramids, since others were so ephemeral, such as the Colossus of Rhodes, that if it were not for their exceptionality as a monumental sculpture they would not be engraved in the "universal imagination".

MONUMENTS AND ANTI-MONUMENTS.

Can a monumental sculpture be made that we can gauge as a disaster?

There is a contemporary artist, E.A., who dared to make the list of the Olympic champions of the anti-monuments. His statement alone sounded like something dramatic, like comparing The Christ and The Antichrist or Matter to Antimatter, etc. He would refer in a lengthy double-page article to the alleged monuments that he claims are atrocities. I had the opportunity to meet him at a medal ceremony and I took the opportunity to congratulate the director of the gallery and friend, who was holding his plaque and medal in her hands, telling him: Congratulations, because he is one of the few whose artistic value is far surpassed by his human meanness!

Although the animosity tends to focus more on the nickname, such as that monument in a square in a town in Madrid that they call "El Coño" (*the Cunt*) because at the inauguration the citizens asked each other in front of the gigantic sculpture: But what the cunt is this? (Spanish colloquial way of 'What the hell is this?' – Translator's note) and that's how it has remained.

It doesn't justify us that "big horse, whether it walks or not", but once you give shape to your creation you must fold your mirrors, because monumental sculpture is already part "not of you" but of the street and its glories and demons have little to do with the traditional artistic work that we contemplate in museums, entities, galleries, gardens or houses.

NEW MATERIALS IN MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

We are going to ignore the so-called noble materials, bronzes, steels and other metals, wood, stones, marbles and terracottas, etc. (and of course those that almost destroyed our natural heritage such as ivories), which since ancient times have materialized artistic works whose beauty, resistance and durability have well-experienced channels. Nor am I going to go into others of our time, such as concretes, Corten steels, resins, etc., so used in recent monumental sculpture because they share with the previous ones a hard work in their manufacture and in the procedures, workshops and studies necessary to develop them and for which there is no space in a brief talk like this.

I now consider it of greater interest to sketch the materials that appear on the back of digitization and digital 3D and virtual printing, which do not even try to compete with tradition they are not based on traditional procedures, but they also address that primal sense of materializing the dreams and visions of which we have spoken so much and which suppose a risky interpretation of Art itself.

DIGITAL SCULPTURE

The mere fact of digitizing a sculpture already turns its archive into the "original basic model" on which to work, reproduce, manipulate, correct and even transform and distort that model into another Work.

Not only that, but we can go back to ground zero on a trip to the past, twisting its scale from the microscopic to a planetary scale; travel inside and out like a drone, and all from a corner with Wi-Fi from anywhere. It is not a miracle because in it he carries the penance of beings who have been shaping our existence for millions of years with our hands and our fingerprints, and getting lost from it I don't know where it is going to catapult us or discard us... but for the moment they seem to compensate for their possibilities for "The Monumental Sculpture"

HOLOGRAPHIC SCULPTURE

They speak and move as if they were there, like seemingly tangible ghosts that we can pass through and that supplant the evidence of reality. For the time being, some senses are occupied, except that of touching and smelling, but in a short time not even that and when it happens, if they seem real to us, it is because they are, even if they are not there, and that will affect the monumental sculptures.

Nor can we anticipate the concepts that will govern Art in the future and whether Art, Artist and Artifact (Art Market) will have the same values that we give them today, but at least with this virtuality we will not plunder the fragile existences of natural noble materials, and if everything goes out of our mind, what is going to stop us from grabbing a graphite or a piece of clay to continue creating in what we would call "Post-Cave Art"?