

DOCTORATE SCHOOL OF THE HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF FINE ARTS

DLA DISSERTATION THESES

JANOS KALMAR

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SCULPTURE IN SPACE

SUPERVISOR: DR. HABIL, DLA ADAM FARKAS

This brief essay puts forth three personal reasons that made me decide upon writing the dissertation. Since, I think, the clarification of its content may have a role in the creative work of any contemporary artist and not only in mine, and it may also bear on the life of other people who regard art as part of their lives, I deem it necessary to share its content. Also, I have been increasingly aware of several processes of isolation in contemporary sculpture mainly in the public space, but also in private spheres. Besides, I find that there is a dearth in overt and audible opinions uttered by fellow sculptors and older masters. This led me to write this doctoral dissertation.

The first reason for writing it is that I have long felt the need to clarify and summarize my own views of the world in conceptual terms as well, in addition to creating sculptures. Within that, the main point of interest for me was naturally to clear my relationship with art in general and sculpture in particular. The first thing to explore was therefore the human drive behind the 30,000-year-old tradition of creating objects, or, in other words, I wanted to see clearly what makes man take a piece of stone, clay, wood in his hand to apply signs to it. This activity is, of course, inseparable from our human environment, from the space we live in; therefore I had to find the motives that guide man in his attitude to his surroundings – as a point of departure. So the aim was to uncover the motivation for object – and space – creation. That is why I wrote about the most elementary motifs of space formation, the different acts of founding a home, making and placing various sacred objects – all present in every age in their specific forms of appearance. Verbalizing all these fundamental human motives to shape space and art works was also important for me because we are provided with enormous quantities of information which, by the nature of the wealth of supply, reaches a magnitude and quality that makes Man hesitant in both creating his world view and keeping it throughout his life. These circumstances also warn of the danger that in art instead of solving the raised problem itself, we are often concerned with analyzing its symptoms and consequences, which evidently influence the motives and outcomes of shaping our environment and art works.

The second reason for writing the dissertation is the question of the lack of autonomous sculpture mainly in public, but also in private spaces. This is partly attributable to the deficit in public knowledge about contemporary sculpture and to the claim that this defective knowledge is sufficient. This motive is also supported by the experience of seeing sculpture in homes, galleries, offices pushed up against the wall, and the need for the clarification of the questions their interpretation raise. This required a review of the basic elements of the formal order of the sculpture in space as the source of a sensual experience of art, the investigation of each partial area leading over to several related questions. One of the – for me important – conclusions drawn from the study of these questions is that a sculpture in the classical sense is a visual and tactile, or more generally speaking, a sensual object and experience irrespective of its roles assumed in the constantly changing general consciousness. It is a spatial experience, and it is the personal features of the unique situation a sculpture creates through which any human content can be communicated, with particular regard to the complex artistic message of the work of art that withstands verbalization.

Since a sculpture cannot be separated from its surroundings, I had to survey the possibilities of its presentation. I had to examine its relations to space, the originally spatial nature of form and the joint appearance or “aura” of form and space, and also the possibilities of a formal language that is suitable to convey the human, artistic content, its communication in a given space.

The examination of the nature of a sculpture’s appearance in space made it clear to me that parallel with this theme I had to address myself to the complex spatial – and not only the visual – experience of a sculpture, and to the nature of artistic content. Speaking of the everyday roles of sculpture I could not shun an analysis of its place in private life, and trying to evade the field of psychology, I had to touch on the personal, subjective roles and possibilities implied by the possession of a sculpture.

The third reason for writing the dissertation is the following: Upon the influence of explosive technical and communicational development in the past forty years or so art, which is concerned with the interpretation of the radically changing relationship between man and the world round him, has assumed new tools and viewpoints, bringing about new styles. It is my private business that these happenings have made me reconsider my value system which determines the creation of my sculptures, but I had to realize that it is a question for all those concerned in a variety of capacities what makes the things they create, collect or view contemporary and topical, so I devoted special attention to this issue. It was beyond my interest to embark upon the contemporary trends. What intrigued me was man’s situation as they formulate it, and here I have encountered deficiencies and further questions. Through the implications of identification with tradition or, conversely, with the negation of tradition I tried to explore the roots and motivations that – if demonstrable – create links between them and expose man’s independent, autonomous creative intention and comprehensible place in the world.