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INTERVIEW / ANG

Do you remember that moment in your life when you discovered that the sculpture is the thing you want to do, your way to express yourself?

At the age of around 12, I came across an art book in which I saw a reproduction the Altar of Veit Stoss. It sparked the idea of sculpting in me.

The subjects of your works are usually open, universal, leaving a lot of space for imagination.

What motifs or symbols irritate you enough not to exploit them creatively?

The perennial topic of my works is a human being. The human being as a pilgrim, a searching one, contemplating his purpose in this world, travelling both in real and metaphysical dimension.

Furthermore, as a being associated with nature and at the same time separate from it. My next big topic is nature, its beauty and magic. I have a feeling that such extensive, unspecified topics allow for free selection of means of expression, because they are non-literal, unfinished, in which the viewer and recipient will be able to add their own meaning.

There is a pilgrim motif in your work, often as a universal symbol of a man's path through life.

Could you tell me more about this topic?

I created a whole series of works entitled *Pilgrims*. They are contemporary sculptures made of wood, symbolizing, as you said, the path of a man, very broadly understood. The path not only through life, but also through the questions he asks himself and through his own development.

In general, the inspiration for me is the subject of the man himself and his eternal questions about the sense of existence, his struggling with transience of life. I created other series related to these issues, such as: *Woman and man*, *Carved with Fire*, *Eco*, *Prehistory*, *Winged*, *I am*.

One of those exceptional and original materials is certainly black oak. How is this uniqueness manifested?

Black oak, also called Polish ebony is wood that can be found in swamps and backwaters. His age is estimated from several hundred to several thousand years. The longer the aging time in water, the darker the oak color. The oldest black oaks are navy blue or black, gray - when the wood is younger. Before working with this extremely difficult material, wood must mature for about 10 years in the sand to achieve the right properties. So, the choice of this raw material is not at all accidental. The black oak

embodies already the weight of time, has its own history, has a subconscious message contained in it, which is later completed by thought and artistic concept. The nature of the black oak closely correlates with the artist's message. It is therefore a very conscious choice.

Since we talk about wood, your unique technique is called 'carved with fire'. What does that mean?

The wood goes to the smithy, where the surface is treated, in a controlled manner, with hot coal and a burner. This results in a specific structure on wood. The wood prepared in this way, combined with forged metal, gives an unique contrast effect, in which the heat of fire-treated wood intensifies the on metal effect and vice versa.

I assume that all these techniques can be found in the works of the current exhibition?

Yes, you will be able to see both black oak and fire carved wood elements, as well as white sandstone sculptures and smaller forged steel forms. Human figures are captured in a schematic and abstract forms, accompanied by birds, made in various sculptural materials.

What meaning has the material itself for creative expression?

It can be said - fundamental. An example would be the aforementioned black oak, whose both nature and time-consuming processing are closely related to the thought contained in the work. It is a material equipped with a message of time. It symbolizes time vividly. Also sandstone with its hygroscopic structure and various grains, treated with chisel gives the entire spectrum of textures, from raw roughness to subtle smoothness. By combining stone with metal, wood or glass, you can achieve very different effects.

Each of these materials speaks in its own individual language.

What impact on your work has meeting people?

Open airs, symposia and creative meetings are probably the most important meetings for me. There is an intensive exchange of thoughts, artistic experiences, there are inspirations from the art of others and learning from other artists.

I am a bit of a pilgrim myself, I travel a lot around Poland and abroad. I meet artists from various fields, including musicians. In all those places that have resulted in creative exhibitions and serious projects, the so-called 'human factor' is very important in the artist's development. The conditions that were provided there allowed for some comfort of creation and comfort of being. The respect for the artist and the appreciation for creative work are extremely important. Unfortunately, they do not always occur.

I enjoyed working in Spain, Majorca, where I had two individual exhibitions. In Germany during the metallurgical symposium I made some monumental sculptures that were 5 meters high and weighed several tons. I also remember Sweden, where I worked with post-glacial pebbles. Everywhere, people created a very favourable atmosphere, which is important for such distinctive work as the work of a sculptor.

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