

KOSSO ELOUL: LIFE WITH SCULPTURE AND A QUEST FOR THE FUTURE

This exhibit came about as a result of a 1991 invitational exhibit held at the Royal Canadian of Arts, for which I was asked to represent sculpture.

Question: "How does a sculpture come into being?"

- It is the output of a creative drive from the heart, the mind and the personality of an artist. In a way, the artist becomes a vehicle for the sculpture's birth and the sculpture's meaning/being becomes independent from its maker.

The marionette Pinocchio who was whittled from wood by Giapetto got up and ran away towards his own personal future. The same is true of my sculptures.

My sculptures were created within definite cultural and historical parameters. How do my sculptures relate to changes in perception wrought by time? I have seen my own sculptures which I thought I knew absolutely well (since they came out of me) unexpectedly change meaning, change personality when they were taken out of one location and transported to another.

Let us take my sculpture "*Inner City Gate*" for example. When it was located at the Toronto Dominion Square it seemed to be walking, moving. It had an air of mobility about it. Once it was moved to the green hill of the Toronto General Hospital's entrance it looked much more static, anchored, immobile.

Or let us take my sculpture "*Equinox*". Its transfer from the University of Toronto Quadrangle to a downtown location brought in focus a whole new set of meanings previously dormant in this sculpture. It's magical.

This exhibit of 28 panels, of models and sculptures offers the viewer an opportunity to acquire an understanding of my world of sculpture. The panels are addressed to you the viewer, to the art world and to society which in turn uses art for its own needs.

As Louis Applebaum, the composer, said: "Without Beethoven there would be no symphony orchestras." Arthur Gelber added: "Without the artistic dimension, there is no culture, and without culture there is no civilization."

Society uses art and sculpture to express civic and national pride. The city of Kingston, for instance, chose to celebrate its 300th anniversary with the sculpture "*Time*". Ontario's Bicentennial was commemorated with the sculpture "*Time Capsule*". For Toronto's 150th anniversary I created "*Meeting Place*" and for the City of Hamilton's Civic Square "*Canadac*".

A sculpture can also be a voice from one country to another. Like Mexico's salute to Canada with sculpture "*Signalos*", or the very recent one "*Candchin Rock*" conceived for Canada's embassy in China.

Many times corporations use sculpture as a symbol of their stature and prestige in the corporate world or as reward of their success. "*Nova Gate*" in front of Nova Corporation's head office in Calgary is a good example of this.

My attitude is that "less is more". It's simpler, clearer and calls for making hard choices. The world I presently find myself in is the world of the "much more" . . . with so many more items to consider. It can become excitingly overwhelming to a point of wanting to include everything as if "more is better". It is not a world of "choosing" but of "sampling" everything. It is a world of never being hungry and at the same time, never being really satisfied or the world of being both hungry and satisfied simultaneously . . . or simultaneously being happy and unhappy . . . such as crying and laughing at the same time, the perpetual energy of the Yin-Yang.

There will be a slide talk during this exhibit. For me the talk is a link between the audience and this exhibit. It will help the viewer to connect and learn and to enlarge their own capacity to enjoy sculpture. Interaction with art/sculpture allows for fine tuning our own ability to express our sensibility. It is a search for understanding and connecting with works of art as a human expression of human needs. It is an affirmation of being very much alive.