ECRITS ET TÉMOIGNAGES DE
21 SCULPTEURS

EDWARD ALLINGTON
CARL ANDRE
MARCEL BRAITSTEIN
POL BURY
CHRISTO
GEORGES DYENS
KOSSO ELOUL
ROB FISHER
ANDRÉ FOURNELLE
HANNAH FRANKLIN
ÉMILE GILIOLI
ÉTIENNE HAJDU
MARIO MEROLA
JOËLLE MOROSOLI
DENNIS OPPENHEIM
MARTA PAN
ROLAND POULIN
GUERINO RUBA
PHILIPPE SCRIVE
YVES TRUDEAU
DOMINIQUE VALADE

FINI / INFINI
KOSSO ELOUL
DUALITY

It captured me, ever since I suspect, I found myself in a love/hate relationship while still in highschool — this highly personalized experience made me look, accept and get involved in other yin/yang phenomena.

I find the yin/yang, the cutting edge of intensity for both stability/instability, each one is at its utmost at that point, and that is what I search for in my sculptures. Which being non verbal contain volumes ... my using steel and stone as a reality I reach for the unreal — where inert matter borders with the illusion of movement, a potential movement, an implied motion. This sculpture "Zero Gravity" was chosen by the Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, was chosen to be placed in the center of the oval table used by the heads of state during the G7 economic summit in June 1988. The sculpture was a symbol. One broadcaster put it so: "the sculpture expresses the present state of affairs ... a relationship in the making ... hope."
Many of my works state the obvious. Often we manage to ignore the obvious... It's strange that by simply stating the obvious it becomes ambiguous. Even mysterious. Example: If my theme is to symbolize 'support' I'll take it to the limit on the border of its extremity where it meets its opposite... this sensitive fine tuning to reach the point where opposites meet is an essential factor in my art. I search for the one point where they intersect. Creative dancer/choreographers have this pull-push experience expressed by their own bodies. When the mime expresses wordlessly, ecstasy or is it an expression of utter agony? Some african masks have this wonderful duality.

**A DISCOVERY: BOREDOM IS USEFUL**

I could never take boredom gracefully — I sensed its danger: Boredom could kill me... but boredom is useful!
Once after the first week in Barbados I was fit to be tied... bored. I found myself cutting sculptures in chunks of cheddar and turnips... they served like shorthand notes till I got to my studio... in Palm Springs the most beautiful of houses, cacti, garden, pool, etc. One week and I got bored — 'a hell of a house guest' — I thought — so I went to a florist, bought his green styrofoam, a good knife, sandpaper and a rasp and got me a corner... life became wonderful again — all because of boredom! I came back with a group of excellent models, ideas for sculpture; some of my most significant concepts — and a feeling of unparalleled fulfillment.

It's the yin/yang i.e. boredom — creativity.

Boredom empties the mind of all concerns, all ambitions, it leaves me blank and hungry. Imagination comes in to fill the void and its a very special state of mind: Freedom from the brain... free from the logic which can be manipulated (ask a good professional convincer) ... logic has its limits (like, which or who's logic you choose?) ... the pro and con of an argument. The instant instinct takes over, that good old personal, immediate and trustable source of the answers: Yes or No. Shall I keep this new model? Shall I
realize it as a sculpture? Yes? No? ... And all of that came out of 'boredom'... so boredom is / can be energy!
The frustration, the anger, the feeling of being trapped into an unacceptable state of mind ('boredom') is advantageous... it can clear the decks of all worries, ambitions, duties, the everyday turmoil of living — when I become blank — 'tabula rasa' sculpture flows in...
I still make my models from styrofoam, balsa wood and cheddar cheese... in straight fast 3-dimensional fashion and ask the outcome: Yes/No and go on from there.

THE SCULPTURE CREATES ITSELF

Using the sculpture like a baby uses the womb to make itself be. And then it's freed from the sculptor...
I believe a sculpture 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 it's maker.
The marionette Pinocchio who was wittled from wood by Giapetto got up and ran away to his own personal future.

The same is true of my sculptures.

My sculptures were created within a definite cultural and historical parameter. 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) unexpectantly 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 Toronto General Hospital’s entrance it looked much more static, anchored, immobile.

Or let us take my sculpture "Equinox". It’s transfer from the University of Toronto Quadrangle to a downtown location brought into focus a whole new set of meanings previously dormant in this sculpture. It’s magical.
In selecting works of special merit, we take it for granted that we look for excellence in craftsmanship and professional competence. Beyond that we look for qualities that, as I try to name them, quickly elude the world of words. Sculpture can capture feelings, vision, perspective and belief, making these concrete and available to others, at a powerful, sometimes primal level. I personally look to be awakened, shook up, even disturbed by a work of art. I look to the work that shifts my frame of reference, to something new, that sits perhaps "on the edge" of things and yet clinches a certain fit between the sculptor, the sculpture and the engaged viewer. I look for the work that has, suddenly, life of its own, intersecting your and my own inner life, instantly grabbing us.

Let us all be open to that experience here! Go to it, friends, and thank you for including me.

KOSSO ELOUL
I am excited and gratified to be here today as a selector (juror) to share this adventure with you. The 1988 exhibit offers the viewer a treat, food for the spirit, surprise for the eye, joy.