

Celia GOUVEIAC

BIOGRAPHY

Celia Gouveiac de Sousa was born in Brazil, but lives and works in Bordeaux.

She was a child of the '70s in a Brazil still under the dictature of the Generals. She came from the town of Agua Branca in the farming territory of North East Brazil, a region somewhat exotic in the eyes of Europeans, but where the young Celia rather doubted her destiny given the mere far off vistas of limitless valleys.

It was via the art of literature that this adolescent was to proclaim her independence of mind, thence the art of song brought her first vitality of expression. This declaration of independence and freedom will next be enthused by contemporary dance and confirmed by her implication in theatre, two domains which in turn will mark important discoveries in the exploration for expression in the mind of a young woman in search of a raison d'être. She then achieves a decisive step in her destiny at the People's University of Sao Bernardo do Campo where at 19 years old she becomes an actress.

When she first crosses the Atlantic, it is in France that she undertakes an intensive course in classical theatre for two years at Paris's Ecole Les Enfants Terribles. Her exposure to working on stage was an essential tool for expressing a message, interchange and in self confidence .

Forever independent and intransigibly so, she is then and finally drawn to 'matter' which takes up all her attention and which will satisfy fully her will to express herself, employing her hands to work the plastic arts, a reconversion and transfer of interest appetised by her fascination with the major European artists' biographies.

Once she meets the sculptor Petrus, her conclusive orientation towards his favoured medium sculpture is determined. She then follows the academic teachings of the Grand Master, Emeritus sculptor, for the next three years.

From 2002, her plastic artistic expression will alternate between sculpture and pictural creations, using colour principally onto works of generous proportions on wood, canvas or paper supports.

Moving in the same year to La Turbie not far from Monaco, she meets Salette Vianna, President of ONG, casa de menor France, a Charitable Trust which assists disenfranchised children all over the world, and particularly in Rio de Janeiro. She sets off on a number of occasions on their behalf on humanitarian voyages, and where these benevolent missions permit her to create initiation to drawing and modelling workshops to stimulate the interest and application of numerous children whom fate has defavourised.

Celia records these moving experiences in a number of ways, by interviews, the production of a documentary film (by Marc Challybi from the Bout à Bout Agency, who spent ten days witnessing the Association at work in Rio). A group of photographic exhibitions will also be born representing these defavorised children, plainly cathartic.

This a response which will revise her creative process : she will sign off a first series of paintings entitled 'Childhood Portrait'.

These works will be shown publicly from 2001 and in a private exhibition in 2003 featuring an oil on canvas 300 x 200 cm as a triptych for the Art Biennial in Florence.

Childhood Portrait is re-named 'Cry of Hope'. She will pursue this documentary work until 2008.

Alongside a compassionate artistic stance, unified by its means of expression, a subject, one of importance to society, creates a transition, for it is thanks to the artist's transformational act of emotion, with its raw representation of sometimes unbearable distress suffered by these children that she offers these tiny worldwide victims a certain consolation and, especially, some dignity.

Celia Gouveiac is ruled by her artistic passion, by humanity and its relativity across the world, by the complex and conflictual connections

That link cruelty and love and form in large part the material she expresses. In 2005 the artist opens her studio in Nice, where at the outset she teaches sculpture. It is from this period, following numerous exhibitions between Monaco and St Tropez that her work often appears in the Press.

Once more heading horizontally, this time from Southern France to Occitania, laden down with artworks, dreams and projects, she settles in Aquitaine in 2011 so as to continue her career in Bordeaux.

Settled in, she pursues up to 2016 a project born in 2005, sculptures expressing an immediate message, and a cross between shape and symbol, Pop Art and Positivist Activism : the production in multiples of a hand with snapping fingers, the 'Yes to Life' series ; followed up in 2015/17 new pictural directions with the 'Dare !' series.

2017 as well sees an end to her 'academic' approach to sculpture, for her until then pivotal, whereby only the variable human form, albeit sinuous and carnal had motivated her. She distances herself from the external and invests in an 'internal' research, creating symbolic forms to represent the soul, humanity and produces a novel set of series, from 2018, of 'Hearts and Souls', an ongoing project in 2020.

Bertrand Boucquey

Celia Gouveiac

My artistic approach

Painting and sculpture are both favoured by Celia, never simultaneously, but each one intensively. Some years spent on the one, one can say exhaustively, she passed inspirationally on to the other. As such, her paintings represent three major series wherein the artist moves seamlessly from figuration (<Portrait d'Enfance>) into abstraction (<Osez/Dare>) forms covering the pictorial areas and which relate in a sense to the sculptures that follow.

From 2017, sculpturally, notwithstanding her classical training, she seeks passionately to mould the body but simply as envelope ; with its geometry and proportions, and even more so for the habitat it represents. Man 'lives within' a sculpture as long as he is on earth ; A mobile structure, perfection in itself, which gives us existence and to stand upright without awareness of it ; this also fascinates the artist.

From 2015, Celia Gouveiac heads towards a much rawer production and shrugs off traditional beauty in favour of a search for interiority, and for univereal and timeless symbols, indicating to us the already grasped solution, unconditional love and the making flesh of it. Two long-line forms intertwine, kiss, their heads melting together forming a heart. The <Soul/Hearts> series is born in 2018. One can no longer distinguish man from woman, rather to imbue, if you like, seen publically, the idea of one human adjacent to another, a luminous osmosis simple and natural, an ode to Life which underlines the utter fascination felt by the artist for humanity, all at the same time genial and mediocre !

Be it modelled (in wax for a bronze) or carved directly with a chainsaw on oak, what counts for the artist is, at the moment of creation, the fusion between her, the material and the tool utilised, over and above any intellectualisation, rather the knowledge that the hand must be used and the work is there to be made. She is particularly aware of 'accidents' which can occur in the material used, or in the tools used, for each has its place.

Her results are forms that carry a powerful simplicity, vertical standing works which transcend reality and call out to us their universal message.

Virginie Boro.