

Marlborough

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Magdalena Abakanowicz: A Survey 1987-2009

March 28 - April 27, 2013

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery announce the opening on March 28 of a comprehensive exhibition of works by the world renowned Polish sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz. The artist is recognized as one of the most original and powerful sculptors working today, and Marlborough's show will offer a unique opportunity to view the artist's work over a twenty-one year period, from 1987 to 2009. The exhibition will continue through April 27, 2013.

The exhibition will consist of approximately fifty-five works which include individual pieces from the artist's various "cycles" such as *War Games*, *Hoofed Mammal Heads*, *Coexistence*, and the *Anatomy Cycle* as well as three of the artist's "crowd" figures such as a group of ten standing children entitled *Bambini* from 1998-99. Among other works in the show the exhibition will feature three of the artist's emotive, tactile *Plaster Bodies* which combine plaster and wood into an ineffable presence and achieve a zenith of the artist's quest for creating works about the nature of organic substance. In this regard the artist has used a number of media and materials and the show will include works in burlap, cotton resin, linen threads, bronze, wood, steel, iron, and aluminum among others.

Much has been written about Abakanowicz's life, how she emerged as an artist from war torn Poland, and her unique vision. Writers have commented on her distinct sculptural vocabulary, its original use of materials and figurative form. Her work is capable of invoking deep feeling and can reach into a timeless, mythic quality. Robert Hughes in *Time* magazine referred to its "dark vision of primal myth" and Barbara Rose, in her monograph, *Magdalena Abakanowicz* (Abrams, 1994) wrote the artist is "a shaman who receives and transmits messages in a visual language that is more universal than words." Abakanowicz, a deep thinker (Michael Brenson said she has one of the most original minds he has encountered), said of her own works, "Longings, disappointments, and fears teach me how to build their shapes. My imagination makes a choice."

Among the seminal works exhibited, both the *Anonymous Portrait* series, 1987 and the *Anonim* series, 2009 depict disembodied heads that appear to be scarred and deformed. In the essay for this exhibition catalog Mary Jane Jacob writes that Abakanowicz has the:

determination to materialize her vision in the face of the tumultuous world into which she was born and, hence, to fight against the circumstances fate dealt her. For Abakanowicz, art is an expression of survival, but even more so, of vitality, of her life. We see this in her Anonymous Portraits and Anonim series - testaments to herself, her endurance, her face, and perhaps more so to the eternal face of humanity, the ancient ideal of the human being standing between god and oblivion.

Abakanowicz has had over 150 solo exhibitions in Europe, North and South America, Japan, South Korea, and Australia. She has exhibited at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Jardins du Palais Royal in Paris and the Muzeum Narodowe in Poznan. Her most recent solo exhibitions include the Palacio de Cristal, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid and Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia, both in 2008, and the Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro, Milan, in 2009. Several works were exhibited in the 'Energy and Process' wing at the Tate Modern for the duration of 2010, and her survey exhibition *The Human Adventure* at the Akbank Art Center, Istanbul, recently ended in January 2013.

Among numerous awards and distinctions, Abakanowicz has received seven honorary doctorates from universities in Europe and the United States as well as the Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France. She was also awarded the

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prestigious International Sculpture Center's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005. In the past twenty years Abakanowicz has developed a number of site-specific sculpture installations that incorporate multiple figures or elements of increased scale. Among these are *Negev* at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1987; *Space of Dragon*, Olympic Park, Seoul, South Korea, 1985; *Becalmed Beings*, Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan, 1993; *Space of Unknown Growth*, Europos Parkas, Lithuania, 1997-98; *Unrecognized*, Citadel Park, Poznan, Poland, 2002; *Space of Stone*, Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey, 2003 and, most recently, *Agora*, a sculptural group comprised of 106 unique cast-iron figures measuring over nine-feet tall that was permanently installed in Chicago's Grant Park in 2006.

Abakanowicz's work can be found in numerous public collections including the Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Ludwig Museum, Cologne; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; National Gallery of Art, Washington and the Sezon Museum, Tokyo, among others.

An illustrated catalogue with an essay by Mary Jane Jacob, curator and professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, will be available at the time of the exhibition

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