



THOMAS WELTI

The Contemporary Representation of the Female Figure

To me, representing the female figure in a contemporary style means studying space, mass and volume from a formal, human and sensual perspective and placing these elements in a certain order. Making form emerge through emotion and knowledge. By artistic possibilities, I mean the combination of sensitivity to experience, emotion and knowledge. Form results from the artistic ability and craftsmanship of the sculptor and

ceramist in interpreting what they have discovered and imagined. This complex of problems is fundamental, not necessarily linked to the figure, but recognisable from and applicable to it.

Space and mass produce defined volumes and create form. What the sculpture means results from the sculptor's and ceramist's experience, opinions, imagination and will to form. Volumes (large or small) become delimited, have a beginning and an





ILLUSTRATIONS -

opposite page top to bottom - "The Prayer"
- "Passion"

above - "The Dreamer"

end, reveal tensions with high points, interpenetrate each other, push aside space or assimilate it, form contours and silhouettes.

With a wonderfully gently sweep, lines become contours, contours become female forms, sensual, vibrant, erotic. And at the same time, bodies become forms, both abstract and real. The transitions are fluid, just like the fluid contours that form the female figures.

The degree of detail ultimately produces a highly differentiated surface. Forces working outwards from the inside encounter the outer world with the border of their skin: smooth or rough, light or dark, forbidding or challenging to the sense of touch. The starting point and initial stimulus is the figure, the individual. The aim of all endeavours is again humankind itself.

The human body has always been a central theme of sculpture. The three dimensional representation of the human form has also

always been an expression of a certain relationship to the body, which changes in accordance with the prevailing social, political and economic forces.

The visible, genuine individual, the undiluted human is naked and the history of the nude is dominated by the question of what degree humankind permits a precise and unreserved self-reflection through art.

In German the word usually used to describe the artistic representation of the naked human body, "Akt", is significant. It derives from the Latin word "actus", which means action or movement.

One of the banal basic problems of art is the representation of movement; actually, it is not possible. To be precise, even videos, films and the new media consisting of pixels consist of individual still images. Nevertheless it is important to realise that representations of the nude always have to do with the attempt to portray movement, or at least a frozen movement. The "pose" is almost as revealing as nakedness itself.

TECHNIQUE

Thomas Welty models his figures in a stoneware body from Montelupo. They are bisqued to 960°C, and the white figure is then finely sanded and painted with graphite and varnish without further firing.



THOMAS WELTI was born in Baden, Switzerland in 1955. After working in management in a food company, he attended evening classes at the Schule für Gestaltung in Zürich and further training courses in sculpture (especially life modelling). In 1996 he moved with his family to a small village called Chianni, near Pisa (Tuscany), where he has set up his ceramics studio in a 300 year-old house. His stone and wood sculptures are made in the open. The human body is the principle theme of his work, especially the female nude in a slightly abstract form. He passes on his knowledge and experience in courses at various art schools, including the Keramik- und Töpferschule, CH-Gordola-Tessin; Kunstschule Cäcilia Wameling-Richon, CH-Untersiggenthal; Hobby Hotel Vitznau, CH-Vitznau, La Meridiana, International Centre of Ceramics, I-Certaldo-Florenz.

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