

I have always intuitively felt what as my world in art. All the time I have regarded the image of the human being as an inspiration and a challenge. I know that as long as we subjugated to gravity, walk on two legs, make love and bear children and die, the human body will be a theme in pictorial art. It concerns ourselves and our own bodies and souls. For a visual artist these things cannot be divided. The further an artist can penetrate into the structure of the human body and construction and extract the essential and reinforce this with light and shadow, the more strongly the individual will feel the work of art as some-thing living and which they can enter into, feel in their own body and soul.

To create sculpture is like making two hemispheres fit together. One arises from the earth, and the other descends from heaven. The line which is created where these two meet, describes the form's outer boundaries in space and shows the division between the earthbound and the heavenbound parts of the form. The earthbound is that which adheres to willpower and reasoning, it creates the base for the illuminated, heavenbound part.

Of all the profound remarks which have been uttered on behalf of masterpieces up through the ages, I would say that the statements on substance and being in touch with reality in works of art are a recurrent aspect. This is an inspiring acknowledgement, because the world and people are here and now and always ready to be seen and experienced and reproduced - to the joy of the artist and the viewer.

I am not an artist because I believe that I can change the world through what I create. I work for the salvation of my own soul, to find a balance in the world. Since my artistic activity means so much to me, I suppose that it also means something to some of those who regard what I make, and this pleases them.

The art of our times gives a fragmented, chaotic and incoherent impression. To induce some order into this mess, we have instituted a sort of priesthood who are supposed to possess the necessary sensitivity and insight to tell us what is good and new, what is bad and what is obsolete and uninteresting. When these high priests divine something as art, then it is art. If we then amalgamate this priesthood with economic interests and appeals to snobbery, related to that which is expensive, and that which is so-called new and different, we arrive at an art life which in its fashionable exclusiveness can only exist under cover of "modernism". This form of art refers to a surprisingly narrow group of people compared to the billions in turnover, a very exclusive world of gallery owners, critics, museum curators. This world is about to break up. Its nourishment has long since ceased to flow. The critics are forced to alter their earlier judgements. In the meantime, art is being created.

I wish to include, not limit. What I want to do is to collect the different threads and move in towards the centre. Modernism shattered the magic mirror of art, and most, - but by no means all - artists feverishly grasped for the partial truths which were its result. This drove art further from the centre, way out into tiny crystalline fragments which have already long since lost all contact with their spiritual source. If pictorial art is again to include a spiritual dimension, it must collect the threads and move into the centre again.

I build up my figures in clay. It is a wonderful material which forms itself according to

your will. Clay is supple and organic, I feel that I can form it in time with my own experiences of the human body's forms. But at the same time that clay is pliant, it is demanding. It offers resistance all the time. This is due to it not having any stable form, *that* is for me to discover and implement.

My art is about life, my language is that of the intersection of light and shadow in the forms of human anatomy. The human body and the human soul are inextricably fused together, and this is the meaning, goal and motivation of my art and my actions. I use all my energy to break through the illustrative shell and into the inner construction of natural forms.

It's the heights and valley floors in form that I must concentrate on right from the beginning. If I break down and level out the differences, the sculpture loses life. On the contrary, I endeavour to accentuate and highlight these differences in the altitudinal plane. It is the light on the peaks and the shadows thus cast which create inner life in the sculpture. Many try to compensate for the lack of lustre in this plastic play of light with either a rough surface full of holes or a high, polished, glistening, surface. This is all in vain.

A geometridal body can be analyzed and learned. An organic sculpture can only be experienced and created in relation to gravity and your own feeling for bodies. After it has been created it can be viewed and experienced independently of the perpendicular and horizontal.

He who wishes to build a house, lays a foundation stone. In the same way, I decide on a point on the surface of the sculpture right away. If I move this point, I just move the whole sculpture instead of adjusting the whole form.

The purpose of everything I do is to unite the actual world and the inner mental view, to create an expression which is an indivisible entity.

For me, humanity has always been centre of the Universe, a fully integrated entity which comprises and includes everything physical and spiritual. I cannot understand that an abstract form is more interesting than the human body. It is the most perfect medium to express one self through, also because the viewer himself or herself can experience all the forms transposed to his/ her body. What has been termed expressive in my work is that I have attempted to penetrate into the body which the viewer has. It is essential for the experience of art on a higher level that the artist and the viewer have a common field of reference which implies that the person viewing the work of art can experience something of the quality inherent in the artist's rendition. This has to do with recognition. I am that the viewer and the artist will misinterpret each other if art departs from this world. Imageless art is, after all, not accessible on a purely spiritual level.

When I work with sculpture in direct contact with the living organic form in nature, the experience of my own inadequacy is a constantly recurrent condition. At its worst, it is as if a higher being throws me a few crumbs. I pick them up and continue, much comforted, on my way.

Whatever the material, form is essential. Good sculpture is a question of modelling, in as much as you cut stone or fashion of clay. The appreciation of form is at all times the really important issue, the forming process as such is a mental process, independent of

the material. The form inherent in a Greek sculpture is the same, whether it is of marble or bronze. The same can be said of Bernini's sculptures.

Pictorial art has at all times expressed itself through visual images of the world we see around us. History has demonstrated to us that this image of the world can be stretched pretty far in different directions, but I feel there is a sort of gravitational field which maintains it in place and saves the picture from disappearing into void and emptiness. The cave painter expresses what he sees and knows, we experience his rendition and his abilities to convince us of the truth in what he has seen.

I never forget the first time I came to Åsgårdstrand. It was like strolling right into a painting by Edvard Munch. The atmosphere, the colours and landscape forms, it was all there. Munch had extracted something essential and shown it to me. But it wasn't something he'd just invented. The landscape, the atmosphere, the colours, they are all still there. You can walk in the streets of Cairo and suddenly recognise a pharaoh you have seen in the museum, the same aquiline profile, the form of the eyes and cheeks. At moments like that, time ceases to exist.

When I have a model, I copy it as accurately as possible. I never change anything in my observations and the experience they give me. Nevertheless the result is far from cast. After all we don't just see with our eyes, but also with our heart and brain.

A sculpture is a picture, a relief in which light and shadow are at play. Like a painting, a sculpture is not reality itself, it is a picture of reality. An illusion. It is absolutely necessary that an artist be true to himself. It is important that people know who the artist is, what he represents, understand that he has a world of his own. If he develops it and imbues his work with quality, he will be victorious. Independent of the vogue of fashion.

From the almost Gothic Johanne Dybwad sculpture I have slowly, but surely worked my way toward what I feel is a fiercer and more organic form. This has been a slow process of development. But my relationship to mankind in the centre of all my work, has remained unchanged.

When I won the competition for the Johanne Dybwad monument in Oslo in 1957, I was 21 years old and had just graduated from The Art Academy. It was a flying start which was to be of great importance to me. Two years later I received a prize in the competition for the Queen Maud monument in the Palace Park. I received the third prize and thereby confirmed my presence. Both these sculptures contained a lot of poetry, influenced as I was by modern Italian sculptors, first and foremost Marino Marini, who had an exhibition in Oslo at the time.

Critics have a rather bad relationship to my sculptures, using phrases like "bombastic", "pathetic", "gestures from the past" and so on. *That* I do not take so seriously, I cannot change for that reason. On the contrary, I view such a reaction as a good omen, as a compliment. A professional art viewer is condemned to have an opinion about everything. In this way he tires of art and creates a barrier of professional prejudices. The day an artist starts to win the favour of critics and starts receiving gold medals, that is the time for him to ask himself whether he has lost the fire inside. For me it is totally irrelevant whether my work is called art or anything else.

My objective with what I do, is to get the physically expressive to voice a spiritual dimension. I am constantly working at emphasising the form's relief in light and shadow, thereby creating life.

I think in the same way whether I am modelling or doing graphic work. It is always the same circle of motifs, the naked, nonenvironmental human being which occupies me. Something the motifs some form Greek mythology or Biblical stories. The art of the past is a prerequisite for what we create today. We cannot pretend that we are the first.

All figures up to natural size I create directly. I feel myself that I work best in larger formats. The sculptures develop as I go. I make the models for the large work in half size. Afterwards I enlarge these to full size. I always enlarge my sculptures myself. That adds more life and meaning than doing it mechanically.

When I was reading history of art at the age of 12-13, I couldn't see that Picasso, was any closer to me than an Egyptian royal bust or a frieze by Michelangelo. I didn't find Picasso better than the Egyptians or Michelangelo, and I couldn't accept that he rendered human life in a more sincere and deeper way than his predecessors. I could not accept the inevitability of this development, and as I worked, I discovered that more and more artists didn't fit into this theory of development.

Here, in a nutshell we have the artist's situation today. On one hand we have what the artist himself feels attracted by and is into, on the other hand we have the demands of the Zeitgeist and developmental dynamics of modernism. I don't think the artist's situation has always been like this. Today we are living in a time in which the concept of visual art in a way exploded. From having circled around the depicting of the so-called exterior, visual reality - as a kind of mirror image of the world - it is as if the art of our time has taken a hammer and shattered the mirror to give us the fragments and the incoherent.

My crucifixion figure became a sort of breakthrough for me. I still regard it as a major work, even though the critics didn't give it a second glance when it hung at the Autumn Exhibition in 1971. When I made the figure on the cross, I followed the same principle as I have as a working rule since; I highlighted the contrasts in the depths of the figure. Light and shadow helped to bring out this emphasis. It was in this figure that I encountered for the first time an overexposure of this nature. When I created it, I returned to what I had started with. Since then, I have kept to this. For a period after leaving The Art Academy, I was prone to a certain degree of experimentation, I tried managing without a model. Later I have understood that I was in a cul de sac. But I think that the cul de sac was a necessary at a time when abstract art totally dominated art in Norway as in Europe and the rest of the world.

When I made this sculpture, I let the literary part of the motif lie. The same happens every time I commence a new sculpture. What I wish to express, is the human being at maximal inner tension, suffering and happiness. In the crucifixion sculpture I find that I partly succeeded and in presenting something of what I am looking for.

For me pictorial art means a depiction and a recreation of outer, visual reality. Recognizable reality is the language of pictorial art.

If an artist wishes to present a fantasy world or his dreams and his angst, in short,

heaven and hell, he is still obliged to express this by means of outer, known forms.

I attended primary school during the war. The Germans took over our school, making it necessary for us to have our tuition in a provisorium at the university downtown. One day, accompanied by some schoolmates, I wandered into the National Gallery, which was next door to our "school". "The Gallery" was a revelation to me, the visit was completely decisive for my further development. To this day i can still remember how they influenced me, the plaster castings of Greek, Roman and Egyptian statues.

I want my sculptures to say something about what it is to be a human being. What I want to arrive at, is something fundamental in human expression and in the human form. I wish to present the human being as an indestructable part of the world, I want my sculptures to express an inner organic freedom in their movements. All other demands must cede priority to this.

When I try to depict something objectively, it is coloured by my own interpretaion. The thing I believe is important for an artist, is to feel the gravitational field of reality so intensely that he doesn't cross its boundary line an disappear into the void.

The forms of the human body group themselves symmetrically around an imagined plane. This plain inverts in a spiral form and bends both backwards and forwards and sideways. All parts of the body accompany and move regularly in relation to each other - and to this imaginary plane. This is the complicated edifice which is sculpture.

There is not one point on the human body where the surface only bends in one plane. To replace the organic form with the cylinder and sphere, is a poor "academic art school solution".

To create a picture of the movement or pose which a person has when making love or dying, is neither oldfashioned nor modern. It is fundamental.

In the nineties we are beginning to lose faith in what we call modernism, we can start viewing the past with less strained eyes. I already discarded modernism when I was 15 - 16 years old. I knew that for me it was of no interest to choose anything but the realistically expressive form. If postmodernism means art created after modernism, then I have been a postmodernist all my life. I don't react against modernism, I just don't find it useful for what I wish to express.

The human body is pictorial art's infinite theme. Physiologically speaking it has been unaltered through all time. This makes Egyptian statues so alive and contemporary, even though they were fashioned five thousand years ago. The human form will always be a challenge to pictorial art.

Light means as much for me as to a painter. The decisive factor for me is the play of light and shadow on a living form. This form is anti-geometrical, it is organic. All surfaces bend. If geomerty is present in pictorial art, it must be invisible, as an underlying construction.

If I were a painter, I would paint figures, I would paint in a plastic way. Painting, drawing, graphic art, sculpture, they all have the same goal - to make something visible. I feel bound by destiny to that outer, visual reality. To my mind all experiments

in art which try to achieve something different, fail. Experiments of this nature have never moved me.

To be able to draw and keep drawing is a dececcity to me. Drawing is the foundation of everything I work with. Sculpting is like drawing in space, in depth.

It is quite untrue that sculpture lacks colour. Nuance is an essential part of sculpture, this method of expression also has a colouristic effect. The world of the sculpture is that of light and shadow as much as that of painting. It is a question of the degree of the form's curvature and the form's flatness.

The way in which modernism has dictated that art be of the times, has been a nightmare for aour artistic life. It is the opposite which is true for an artist, to raise his work out of time and place.

I experience my activity as an egoistical existance, a form of madness. All the time I go around thinking that I can achieve something fabulous. That is the driving force behind everything I try to do. The truth is that I always end up short of my objective, but at the same time I learn something new every day. I never feel that I acheive my objective, I am working with a material which I am never finished with. To regard and understand and depict some of the plasticity of life which permeates the human body, is an obsession which cannot be reproduced or explained.