

Contemporary Conduits for the Ka by Ana Bambic Kostov

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Charged with inherent monumentality regardless of their dimensions, Armen Agop's sculptures can be regarded as materializations of pure thought. His latest exhibition, "Emergence", on view at the LKFF Art & Sculpture Projects in Brussels until the end of March 2018, presented a contemplative exploration of volume, yet another one in his oeuvre.

Unburdened by any narrative or association, works in the exhibition transcend their solid shape, charged with a particular characteristic potential energy. What comes into focus is the line, a single strain that protrudes into the exterior, suspended between success and containment.

The contrast between the serenity of the powerful, rounded stone mass and the defiance of the straight, angular line creates a new level of tension, emphasizing the vital quality of the works. Each of the sculptures from the selection demands space, older as well as the new ones, while all of them echo the singular practice of the artist, invisibly woven into the matter of the stone.

Working with the immortal material from the heart of the Earth, Agop's idea of a complete synergy of mind, body, and spirit comes to life in a long, contemplative process of creation. At first physical, his method gradually gives way to the intellect, decelerating towards the final touch. Similar to praying, this meditative operation is repetitive, neverending, based on the artist's instinctive need to create. While removing all the signs of gesture and intervention using both contemporary and ancient tools, the artist completes his design, with a flawless finish. On the very verge of motion, these chiseled fragments of the monumental remain motionless, preserving an indefinable energy within. Utterly metaphysical, they mask the efforts of their creator beneath the layers of universal meaning, as they assume complete autonomy as manifestations of an idea.

Armen Agop has been honing his black granite crafting skills since 2000. Black, lustrous and immaculately executed, his sculptures testify to his remarkable mastery, while their aesthetic qualities excel beyond time and trends. Themes he delves into are as incessant as his working process. Rather than developing a single concept, Agop returns to a few timeless questions, developing a response. Describing his approach as "cerebral" and not conceptual, he emphasizes the importance of the holistic harmony while creating. Therefore, he does not envision a series of works but rather develops an idea in a single piece, often returning to it again. The result is a continuously growing body of work, populated with granite glimpses of complementary philosophical concepts.

Stylistically comparable to abstract sculptures of Concrete art or Italian minimalism, Agop's work is quintessentially different. His original impulse is not to simplify the form, but to explore the simplicity itself. Therefore, sculptures he produces are to be experienced viscerally, as iconoclastic reflections on the eternal and the human.

There is something permanent and ethereal within the "Emergence" group of works, which evokes the character of ancient Egyptian sculpture. Defying the ego, Armen Agop releases his works into the world detaching himself from them. For him, the man, it's all about the process, and for the stone, it's about endurance. Perhaps, his works can be regarded as contemporary conduits for the Ka, rare portals of communication between the incorporeal and the terrestrial realm. Created in time, they are meant to resist time, vibrating within their own frequencies as an undying ode to life.