

## THE NEW LABOUR OF SISYPHUS Presentation of "Sisyphus 2004" by Anna Chromy

Sisyphus, the most astute of mortal beings, had the insane idea to deceive even death: the inevitable limit imposed on every human being. The consequent exemplary punishment of the gods is well-known. He shall be forever obliged to push his boulder up to the top of the hill, obviously without success. Endless and absurd toil carried out in absolute loneliness. Anna Chromy has drawn her inspiration from the myth of Sisyphus. With the precise aim, however, to free it of its ancient absurdity of fate, to turn it into a generous interpreter of present reality. Hence, Anna Chromy firstly convinces Sisyphus to be no longer alone, so that his astuteness and strength may have a value not just for himself. His fatherhood represents the choice of love for the ultimate struggle against death. She induces him to accept the same burdensome condition of every other family. That's why three human beings, here, pedal together uphill towards an unknown destination.

The pain of the toil of people that love: it seems as if each is yielding the other the energy of inexhaustible youthfulness. Sisyphus-father is pushing ahead like a bird flying off. He's no longer rolling an amorphous boulder but is instead riding on the wheels of a complex civilization to take the fruit of his love to safety. In the middle, his bride is pedaling also, engrossed in thought, as if listening to the secrets of their existence. But now their conscious loving effort allows the child to follow their wake, living his childhood, hopefully returned free and innocent, growing and playing.

According to Anna Chromy's typical style, these three figures also don't have a face. There is instead only deep emptiness, almost as if they were wings, with their large headless, suggesting and magnifying the mystery each living creature carries inside. It's this very indeterminateness that reflects even better our condition. The impact, the freshness and the pathos in conveying such a truthful intuition are striking. It's therefore extremely hard to classify her work: it could be considered figural and at the same time abstract, realistic and visionary, baroque and essential, interpreter of the myth and so stunningly close to our reality. What is certain, however, is its masterly "novelty", for intensity and way it succeeds in renewing all the expressive potential of sculpture.

From this point of view, this is certainly Anna Chromy's most complex work so far: it synthesizes in perfect harmony all of the experiments in expressive techniques carried out in the last ten years by this artist from Bohemia, Vienna, Paris and Tuscany. What we have here is musical fluidity crossing the forms of her visions; the perfect anatomy of dancing bodies evoked simply by fragments; the sense of rhythm and movement; the excited game of volumes and voids; the study of materials; the chromaticism of surfaces; the combination of symbolic elements so far apart: the ideal perfection of the wheel and the very concept of "soul" here represented by fleeting, ungraspable faces.

Pascal's concordance of *esprit de geometrie* and *esprit de finesse* was made possible thanks also to a daringly ingenious technique: the entire structure rests, in fact, on just one single point. And that's where the whole weight concentrates: the weight of the stylized tricycle the *Sisyphus 2004* is riding on: the three cold-rolled steel wheels and the painted patinated bronze figures, so ethereal because of the effect of the spirit sustaining them. From this point of view also, then, Anna Chromy replaces the classical representation of Sisyphus overwhelmed by the burden of existence with one that gives quite a different meaning to his uphill toil. Despite the absurd cruelty of contemporary world, we cherish the final words of Albert Camus' best known philosophical work: "We must imagine Sisyphus happy". Anna Chromy's sculpture echoes these words: "Yes, happy; the happiness that comes from our choices for love's sake".

Pietrasanta, January 10, 2004

Giuseppe Cordoni