International Sculpture Symposiums and Impressions

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Abstract The aim of this study is to examine the similarities and differences between stone sculpture symposium events, organized today in almost all countries over the world whether by organizations or as a person, upon the researcher's self-experience. The first of these activities was held in 1959 and started with the purpose of giving the sculptors the opportunity to work on large scale stones, then later became one of sculpture art's best-known and important events, thus without interfering with any kind of socio-cultural structure, this yearly activity was organized in many countries. Beyond its former aim, sculpture symposiums turned into artistic organizations today that rendered the gathering of selected sculptors in public places and the production of sculptures in those open areas possible. Alongside the variety of raw materials and project applications in sculpture symposiums, the changeable working atmospheres caused by different weather conditions and culture mean a new experience for the artists each time and compel their ability to express themselves. The researcher's experiences gained in 30 different international symposiums made it possible to attribute a critical interpretation on the phenomenon of symposium, which became indispensable for the art of sculpture. This research project is based on the examination and comparison of examples and by providing an insight, is equally essential for both sculptors and symposium organizers.

Keywords Art of Sculpture, Sculpture Symposium, Symposium Organization

1. Introduction

Stone is one of the base materials of sculpture art and has been used for centuries. The main reason of this choice stems from its permanentness, weatherability and strong artistic value. This material has further advantages like colour and texture alternatives for instance, which improve the sculpture's design. For centuries, the sculptures installed both in open or indoor spaces, have been shaped by using stone materials. However the main disadvantage in working

with this material is largely related to its weight, which makes it hard to carry from one place to another, and the technical difficulties in dressing the stone. Albeit these disadvantages today's technology has made it easier to overcome them.

Up until the 21st century, stone has been used as a primary material in sculpture art. Colins states about stone that 'it is solid, recalcitrant material that carries associations of durability, history and monumentality. Besides being commonplace and utilitarian, it has great age, and this lends it a sense of power and mystery that contemporary sculptors have exploited to variety of ends [1].

Thus the emergence of stone sculpture symposiums, subject to this research, commence with the aim of bringing artists together, whose purpose is to work on large scale stones, in an old quarry. In 1959 Kral Prat, a sculptor, invited his colleagues to a stone quarry to work together on large stone pieces and thus this attempt has turned this event into a traditional and worldwide occasion. Thereby the sculpture symposiums which started 55 years with different intentions have become routine annual events organized in dozens of countries. The purpose of the sculpture symposiums is to provide colleagues from all over the world the chance to work together, produce genuine sculptures, exhibit them in public spaces and enable the information exchange between sculptors. On the other hand, International Sculpture Symposiums allow sculptors to travel to different countries and meet new cultures, by providing them a working atmosphere where they get into direct contact with the country's people and experience their true culture. This attempt makes a significant difference between visiting a country as a tourist or symposium invitee. As a matter of fact, tourists mainly meet people from the tourism sector, go to touristic and consumption oriented places but members of a symposium experience the real life by living and producing there. This fact is one of the reasons that makes symposiums attractive to artists. At the same time symposiums allow artists to have direct contact with the public and give people the chance to witness the process of sculpture making, from quarry to artwork. In this context these events enable public to have knowledge about sculpture art and respect for it, meet the artists and ask them questions. From the organizing

institution's aspect on the other hand, to host an international art event reflects credit upon promoting the region and possessing large scale permanent stone sculptures produced by professional artists.

The researcher participated to 30 different national and international sculpture symposiums and in 5 those events she was involved in the organization. Although having the same title, all these symposiums created entirely identic sculptures possible. Though collected under the same title, it is a remarkable truth that each and every organization has different implementation stages in itself while realizing a symposium.

To the best of our knowledge, no data are present in the extant literature about the evaluation of the national and international sculpture symposiums. Therefore, the aim of the present study is: *i)* determine the differences between the terms of application *ii)* examine creation of the final work according to the conditions and *iii)* evaluate symposiums in terms of the overall organization. This fact is going to be classified under four chapters and will be exemplified.

2. Application Design of the Symposium and Final Work

2.1. Design Oriented Symposiums

In the first phase of these kinds of symposiums, the organizing group examines the applicant's résumé, artwork design and mock-up -created particularly for that symposium. After the jury's evaluation, owners of the selected projects are invited to the symposium, in order to produce according to their selected designs. The Serbian artist Giorgie Cpajak's work realised in a symposium held in South Korea ranks among this group. As shown below, the artist proposed a mock-up (Figure 1), after evaluation this design was accepted and produced in full scale (Figure 2).

A similar application has been realised by a Turkish sculptor who along with his résumé, selected previous open space works and current project design (Figure 3), applied to a symposium in Turkey and after being selected he produced the full scale stone sculpture. (Figure 4)

Giorgie Cpajak

Proposal 5.

150x 150x 150 cm, base 100x 100 x50cm

Figure 1. Project

Figure 2. Full Scale Stone Sculpture

Proposal 1.

200x280x60cm

Figure 3. Project

2.2. Final Work Oriented Symposiums

Within the symposiums in this category, artists are required to draw proposal sculptures and the applications are processed by evaluating the designs. Following this first elimination/step, selected artists are asked to produce 1/10 scaled models of their designs by either using a permanent material or stone. The experienced Bulgarian sculptor Petre Petrov, who participated to numerous symposiums all over the world, went through similar phases as shown in Figures below, during the Wuhu Symposium held in China in 2016. Figure 5 shows the initial drawings of the intended sculpture, Figure 6 the 1/10 scaled model and Figure 7 the final work

installed in situ.

Figure 4. Full Scale Stone Sculpture

Figure 5. Project's Drawing from Different Angles

Figure 6. The Final Mock-up

Figure 7. The Sculpture in Open Space

Figure 6 shows the second stage, in which the jury selected Petrov's design and required the delivery of the 1/10 scaled mock-up by post, in order to initiate its production in a factory in China. After the production was completed (Figure 7) the artist was invited to China for the opening ceremony and to be awarded with a prize.

A similar work belongs to the Finlander artist Sakari Peltola who produced a work for the Changsha Symposium realised in China in 2016. After undergoing the same selection and evaluation process with Petrov, one of Peltola's drawings was selected (Figure 8) and he produced a 1/10 scaled model (Figure 9). The production of the full scale sculpture was again realised in a Chinese factory, however the artist claimed that the final work (Figure 10) does not fully meet his initial design.

Figure 8. Peltola's Drawing

Figure 9. Scaled Model

Figure 10. Final Work in Open Space

These examples belong to a type of symposium where final works are achieved by a three staged process, i.e. drawing, modelling and production in factories. Thus artists are indeed deemed to have completed all these three stages from the design phase, any surprise or alteration being beside the point, both the latter two stages remain merely as technical applications. These kinds of symposium practices are quite common in China and just by applying technical knowledge, the drawings of artists are produced in monumental sizes depending on the designs, artists are invited at the end of the process for the opening ceremony of their sculptures and their prizes are presented. As a matter of fact, final works fail to satisfy artist expectations from time to time and as mentioned in Peltola's work, artists might be disappointed due to failures in shaping or installation.

2.3. Artist Oriented Symposiums

In this category artists are not required to pre-design a proposal or mock-up and are invited according to their sense of art and résumés. This chapter will be exemplified by three different artist's works from India, Australia and France, which took part in the symposium held in India in 2014. This symposium was realised with ITM's support and organized by Robin David, who is also a professional sculptor. The artists are directly selected and invited by David and are kept entirely free regarding the subject of their projects. The organization provides artists the necessary technical support/material they may need and professional assistants experienced in stone sculpting provide additional support. Thus artists enjoy a free working atmosphere and have the chance to produce works in relatively larger scales. By

rendering such a freedom in a country like India, where in addition to culture, history and architecture also colours prevail, utterly different creation processes and new ideas emerge.

During the symposium in question, organized by ITM in the university's both campuses located in two different cities as consecutive events, artists worked together and students got the chance to observe all these processes. During this event, where the researcher was one of the invitees, all artists received a full facility support, raw materials in any desired size and colour, and the support of a technical crew. At the end of this symposium the researcher achieved an entirely new design by getting inspired from her experience in India, which fully satisfied both the artist and the organizing institution, following this her work was installed in the university's Baroda Campus. (Figures 11-13)

Figure 11. Working Area

Figure 12. Work in Progress

Figure 13. Final Work

Within Australia's Adelaide Symposium artists apply genuine works without any mock-up and proposal expectation. It is organized by the sculptor Silvio Appony and he gives the artists freedom about the design and the kind of stone they want to use. The Japanese artist Yoshin Ogata, an important name to conjure with –a sculptor who lives currently in Italy and has hundreds of sculptures in various countries all over the world– the sculpture he produced at this event was the focus point of this chapter. There was not much chance to find quarries or large scale stones in that area, and this fact led the artist to use the characteristic amorphous structure of the stone as an artistic element and create genuine effects on his sculpture. (Figure 14) Indeed the artist is internationally famous with his characteristic technique and similar forms he produced at different places are shown below. (Figures 15-17) These further examples prove that the design freedom given to artists does not confine the creativity or end up with a bad result, in opposite, it ensures that in order to create better and more advanced works each times, the artists will exploit all the natural sources and conditions identic to a certain area.

Figure 15. Abu Dabi

Figure 14. Australia

Figure 16. Turkey

Figure 17. China

Cerisy La Foret held in France, is the last example for the symposiums under this chapter. The invited artists are selected again according to their résumés and past experiences. The organizer of this event is Xavier Gonzales, a sculptor himself, who actively works in this field. For this event, the artists were not required to submit projects or mock-ups and were set entirely free during the process of creating. The working area at this symposium was next to a Roman church and cemetery (Figure 18-20), which inspired the Finlander artist Sakke Peltola to create the sculpture of a cute ghost, (Figures 21, 22) which actually was humorously referring to that place.

Figure 18. Symposium Area

Figure 19. The Cemetery

Figure 20. The Roman Church

Figure 21, 22. Peltola's Ghost Sculpture

Figure 23, 24. Petre Petrov's Sculpture at Belize Symposium, 2011.

2.3. Unpredictable Conditions

It is a non-negligible fact that stones offered to artists in different countries possess varying natural properties which directly affect the result of the works. Therefore, each application means a new experience and an enduring process for artists which let them push their practical skills to the limits. Besides all of these factors, the technical equipment and support of assistants play a crucial role as well. But there is one important point that involves all the symposiums; which might be exemplified with a final and idiosyncratic example: during the symposium held in Belize, a small country situated on the eastern coast of Central America, in 2011, which was the first in that country, artists were selected by a jury upon evaluating their projects and résumés. Invited artists were from Bulgaria, Romania, Germany, England, Austria, Turkey and Belize. Within a set budget all the equipment necessary for an open space workshop, including sunshades, compressors, electricity, crane etc., was provided. Though the main material, i.e. the stone, was coming from a quarry, where dynamites were used to obtain the stone pieces and as a consequence all the stones had large cracks and fractures. This problem left all artists in the lurch and some of them had to change their initial designs and meet

the stone's conditions. As a matter of fact, the final works were beyond everybody's expectations and imaginations, as shown on one of the participant's, Petre Petrov's, work. (Figures 23, 24)

3. Overview on Applications Based on Kartal Symposium

After referring to various sculpture symposium implementations, a symposium organized in Turkey by the Municipality of Kartal-Istanbul and sculptor Niyazi Dedeoğlu is selected here as an introductory example for the entire application process. In most sculpture symposiums held in Turkey basically the same procedures are followed.

The first International Sculpture Symposium of Kartal Municipality was realised in 2011 and continued in 2012, 2013 and 2015. All the necessary information about the symposium, including terms of application and the agreement, was shared online in <http://www.kartal.bel.tr/>, on Facebook's Sculpture Symposium's Group <http://www.aiesm.com/> (AIESM: International Association for Monumental Sculpture Events, promotes the sculpture and the sculptors at international level) and www.sculptor.org,

in order to reach as many sculptors as possible. In the agreement, the conditions of participation, dates of event, event program and technical facilities provided are mentioned. Also an e-mail address, to allow candidate participants to apply, is shared and all applications are duly evaluated.

After the completion of applications, the digital visuals

(jpeg files) of candidate artists's works are evaluated by a jury consisting of academics specialized in the field of sculpture. This jury selects the sculptors deemed to participate and related works to be produced during the event. Selected works and projects are eventually announced both through the Kartal Municipality's website and social media. (Figure 25)

Figure 25. Selected Works

Selected sculptors receive invitation letters by mail and participating artists's lists are completed upon approval of the invitations. The certain and final number of participants is determined by processing the permanent and substitute applications.

In **2011**, **221** artists from **65** countries applied for the symposium and **11** of them, listed below, were invited at the end of the evaluation and final registration process. (Table 1)

Table 1. Participants of Kartal Sculpture Symposium 2011

No.	Participants	Countries	Artwork Titles
1	JiangChu	China	Moving Scenery
2	Kim Bongsoo	South Korea	Inherent in Vitality
3	LaszloLugossy	Hungaria	Stricken Nature
4	Lee Zih-Cing	Taiwan	Lights and Shadow Intertwined
5	HitoshiTanaka	Japon	Moon Dance
6	Kamen Tanev	Bulgaria	Links
7	PetrePetrov	Bulgaria	Connection – Disconnection
8	Soner Özdemir	Turkey	
9	TengShang-Chi	Taiwan	Perfectly Clear
10	UgoAntinori	Italy	Architecture of Memory
11	WuMing-Sheng	Taiwan	Entrance of theParadise

In **2012**, **422** artists from **130** countries applied for the symposium and **12** of them, listed below, were invited at the end of the evaluation and final registration process. (Table 2)

Table 2. Participants of Kartal Sculpture Symposium 2012

No.	Participants	Countries	Artwork Titles
1	AgnessaIvanova	Bulgaria	Sun and Wind
2	Arsen Gushapsa	Russia	Tree of Life
3	Emine Berikalpekbyrak	Turkey	Harmony Of Cats and Fishes
4	PanaiteChifu	Romania	Ruin
5	CoTranHoang	Vietnam	Life of Tree
6	Gheorghe Filin	Italy	Mermaid
7	JhonGogaberishvili	Georgia	Sun Activity
8	Nihat Sezer Sabahat	Turkey	Dışarıyı Görmek
9	QianLiang	China	Yaya
10	TanyaPreminger	Israel	Disclosure
11	ViktarKopach	Belarus	The Water Cycle
12	RadoslavSultov	Bulgaria	Origin

In **2013**, **337** artists from **80** countries applied for the symposium and **10** of them, listed below, were invited at the end of the evaluation and final registration process. (Table 3)

Table 3. Participants of Kartal Sculpture Symposium 2013

No.	Participants	Countries	Artwork Titles
1	AntonisMyrodias	Greece	Contacts
2	Bora Şenol	Turkey	Kükreyen Boğa
3	DalgatovDalgat	Russia	Hercules and Lion
4	Emin Petrosyan	Armenia	Wind
5	Florin Strejac	Romania	Under theFriendlyTree
6	GentiTavanxhiu	Albania	Thunder
7	İrodionGvelesiani	Georgia	Theatre
8	Miguel Isla	Spain	Eclipse
9	SangHeon Lee	South Korea	Happy Memories
10	Weongeun Kim	South Korea	Mother and Son Waiting Father Left Travel Far

In **2015**, **383** artists from **100** countries applied for the symposium and **10** of them, listed below, were invited at the end of the evaluation and final registration process. (Table 4)

Table 4. Participants of Kartal Sculpture Symposium 2015

No.	Participants	Countries	Artwork Titles
1	AdrianoCiarla	Italy	LittleWaterGenius
2	Anna Teresa Rasinska	Poland	Sisifos
3	FrancoDaga	Australia	Love me Tender Love me Slowly
4	MarioTapia	Equator	Child
5	Nil Hansen	Germany	Mechanical Motion
6	Rahmi Aydın	Turkey	Galatea ve Akis
7	JhonGogaberishvili	Georgia	SrebrenicaGenogide
8	ValerianJikia	Georgia	Astral Motif
9	VytautasTallat-Kelpsa	Lithuania	Trankquility
10	Elena Saracino	Italy	Endless Symphony

Every year approximately 10 sculptors are invited to the event (if the selection committee considers appropriate and the management approves, this number may change) and due to the 3rd article of the regulation artists are not allowed to apply/participate twice. Thus every year different artists get the chance to take part in the event; hence Kartal people get the chance to meet new sculptors with each organization.

New Media has significant contributions with regard to Cultural and Artistic event's organizations. By this means Kartal Municipality is able to reach artists from all over the World, invite them to produce sculptures for the municipality, in which artistic richness and diversity emerge, and as a consequence Kartal Municipality is promoted and introduced to visitors and tourists. And most importantly, Kartal Sculpture Symposium has an incontrovertible importance by drawing the art and public together. Thanks to these biannual symposiums, the sculptors, who came to Istanbul to produce, and their sculptures exhibited at open spaces will always remembered and their artworks will be permanent memories. Thus both the artists and the organization reach positive outcomes.

4. Conclusions

This study provides a general overview on sculpture symposiums and clearly underlines that artists, in order to achieve the best results, are eagerly working before and during these events. In fact, by symposiums, where artists are asked to pre-produce mock-ups, the creative process is indeed restricted and artists are merely trying to fulfil the necessities of the design. None the less, when sculptors are set free, i.e. the production process is left flexible and creativity is allowed to emerge, both the artists and the organizing institutions may encounter results above their expectations. In this context and considering that invited artists are experienced and selected by evaluating their previous works, it possible to argue that one ought to respect the artist and trust her/him about the results. The produced works represent directly the artist in the end and are exhibited at an entirely different place of the world, by

standing there, these works bear the artist's signature and their creators are in the position to take this responsibility.

Elements like material, technical facilities, assistance, weather conditions, time limitations, nutrition, different practices and budgets of the symposiums are key variables that may directly affect the invited artists. By taking the difficulty and length of the production process into account, the organization's financial possibilities play an important role for the artists while selecting an event to participate. In this sense, the financial and artistic aspect of sculpture making is worth being emphasized.

No matter how experienced a sculptor is, any and every organization means a new experience and discovery. And in fact this experience is not limited with materials and equipment, it also includes the climate, time-difference, food, background etc. Under different conditions, even though main topics may be the same, artists have to work with different stones, which in the end play an important role in the sculptor's individual and artistic development.

Besides their contributions to personal experience, sculpture symposiums are one of the most important artistic activities which carry the sculptors/artists onto international platforms and enhance their artistic and cultural capabilities. This fact renders the sculpture symposiums, which are held since more than 50 years, more important than ever before. To share and examine these experiences from the viewpoint of a sculptor who personally attended a large number of events all around the world, may provide the sculpture art and sculptors an open view, conducive to intensify and enlarge.

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