

BIOT

An inside look at
the village of art

LIGURIA

The culinary of English
botanist Clarence Becknell

ECO

Bats: a natural solution for
combating mosquitoes?

ART & CULTURE

The Riviera life of music
icon Paul McGuinness

RIVIERA

insider

see more. do more. know more



ISSN - 0937-7491



181
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2024
4,90 €

ANNA CHROMY

More than 40 years of artistic creation

Her "Cloak of Conscience" conquers the world

Monaco-based Anna Chromy is one of the world's most accomplished living artists. In her 40 year career, she has exhibited in prestigious locations around the world, received numerous awards, and was made an Honorary Fellow of the National Sculpture Academy of China. In 2015 she was the first non-Chinese artist to have a solo exhibition at the National Museum in Beijing, and her Cloak in bronze installed in the foyer is admired by around eight million visitors a year. Anna has her works of art installed in museums and public spaces around the world (70), and she has carved the largest-ever single block of marble, making her the first woman to earn the coveted "Premio Michelangelo".

Sisyphus, Anna's figure featured on our cover, photographed during her exhibition at the Port of Saint-Tropez in 2011, is part of her series Myths of the Mediterranean: "Sculptures born of the Sea". This series of bronze sculptures are inspired by the Myths of Ancient Greece. The legends were created to help people face the power of nature. Acutely aware that we face many of the same themes today as 3000 years ago, Anna chose key figures from these myths to offer a vision for new titans, ones who could help us find solutions to our current social and environmental turmoil.

The ruthless king Sisyphus punished to an eternity of pushing a boulder up a hill is an allegory of working towards a futile goal. Anna takes the theme and transforms it, adding a woman and child to the lone man. "To what extent can the creation of a couple, a family, a home, increase or attenuate the absurdity of our existence?" She asks. "My Sisyphus has chosen a family to progress, or at least he tries. His eternal pedalling, which mirrors the boulder rolling down the hill after each ascent, measures the absurdity of our existence."

In today's financial "rat-race", Anna's piece is certainly fitting. She describes the allegory as a "rebellion against a blind and unjust destiny" and our innate search for the meaning of life which she says: "confers to us our dignity as humans."

Her most important work to date, however,

was accomplished after overcoming a major life crisis. The Bohemian-born artist survived a nearly fatal fall in 1992. She used to paint exclusively, but after her accident she found sculpture to be her most important means of expression. As she bled to return to her work, she created the Cloak of Conscience, a faceless cloak draped over a human silhouette. She first sculpted it in bronze, with a height of 1.60 metres and later in marble.

While the Cloak appears empty, for Anna it contains exactly what constitutes the human being: our soul and conscience. "What you do not see, what you cannot touch, is the most valuable thing in life," she says. "It will survive us." It is up to each one of us to meaningfully fill in the emptiness of his cloak - with good deeds and love. According to the sculptor, the Cloak is a universal symbol of peace and solidarity.

The Cloak quickly began its conquest around the world. Variations of it can be found in 19 locations, including Monaco, London and Salzburg, and as of November 2018, Jerusalem. A New York collector has just taken one of her Cloaks for his sculpture park.

EXHIBITIONS (SELECTION):

- ▶ National Archaeological Museum of Greece in Athens
- ▶ Vatican
- ▶ Place Vendôme in Paris
- ▶ National Museum of China in Beijing

AWARDS

- ▶ Michelangelo Prize
- ▶ Kafka Prize and Salvador Dali Prize
- ▶ Honorary Fellow of the National Sculpture Academy of China
- ▶ Golden Medal of the City of Prague



Anna Chromy - The Cloak of Conscience
Photo by: Aurelio Anredola

The haunting silhouette needs no explanation or language. For Anna, regardless of which nation or religion the viewer may be they are moved by the overwhelming nature of it. And she knows that this is the basis for the great success of the sculpture. "Because," Anna says tongue-in-cheek, "the subject is as relevant today as ever."

Several years ago, Anna was given the chance of a lifetime - she was provided with a 250-ton Carrara marble block, from the same Tuscan quarry where Michelangelo and Bernini procured the precious stone for their sculptures.

For four years she chiselled the mega-block on-site until she had worked out the fine cloth folds ruled by the masters of the Renaissance before her. "My masterpiece" she calls it: a five-metre-high, walk-in Cloak of Conscience which offers room to meditate inside. It is the largest marble statue ever created from a single block. Now she seeks a fitting home for it - not an easy thing for a 5 metre statue.

"Art has to be shared with people," says Frédéric Pont, owner of the Continental Art Gallery in Beaulieu-sur-Mer. He fell for the Cloak of Conscience and has been representing Anna for years. Thinking on her 40 years of work, she sounds satisfied as she reflects: "My whole life was filled with the creation of art." ▶

CONTINENTAL ART GALLERY

Frédéric Pont
Tel. +33 (0)6 88 87 52 64
frederic@continentalartgallery.com
www.annachromy.com