

## Selected Critiques

1.

### *From Shape to Content*

Géza Kovács stepped on the reverse way of self - expression - from the shape towards the contents, to the essence.

This modality is quite unusual in the artistic sphere, however it can't be considered as an "illegal" approach if we have in view the unknown artisans risen from the people, who in their creation are caught by the natural forms, color changes first, and only afterwards try to express, to give birth to their own inner world, by taking hold of these forms and colors.

In Géza Kovács himself the sculptor awoke the same way. It is the sculptor - artist who must have been living for a long time buried in him. This way he discovered the challenging forms of the technical field surrounding him.

By surpassing the sense of utilitarianism and common use, he recognized beyond these shapes The soul of The objects - representing human fantasy, the act of knowledge and creation power.

The screws, year - pairs, the strange shaped objects and miscast molds, are all brought to life by Géza Kovács's fantasy. They slowly get contents and expression. The wonder itself came with the onlooker himself, who, taken by the intention and will power of the artist rendered in the compositions, discovered similar contents in them.

Géza Kovács's wasn't going to stop at that stage. He would try to make up his own world, he would try to make up his own world, he would bring The congruent forms into an appropriate order, and possessing The material he would make it speak for itself.

Years passed on the wing of time and my suppositions, and at the same time the "human" character sculptures, are subjected to expression, a powerful artistic, sculptor talent who rules the secret symbolic speech -communication and mimicry of the human face and carriage, and is suggestively capable to give birth to his figures by his volition.

The top of his artistic career is reflected by the distorsioned human - like figures, busts looking like portrays, which often are able to fully suggest basic human position and feelings.

I think that the discovered path shall lead towards complete self accomplishment. A true artist "is born".

**Lajos Magyari** in Catalogue, 1990, Sf. Gheorghe, Romania

2.

## ***Bringing light from the Mecca of Szeklers***

... Kovács Géza, through his prize-winning small sculpture “*The Scholar*” presents to us a picture of Csoma (Alexander de Csomakőrös) absolutely devoted to spirituality. An interesting aspect of this creation is that the sculpture includes the “wanderer-motif” (Kőrösi, the Great Traveller) appearing by the motif of the road breaking near the figure’s body.

**Dr. Bálint Chikán** art historian in *Új Művészet*, 1992/9, Budapest, Hungary

3.

### ***The Works of Instants***

Géza Kovács is a Transylvanian sculptor. That can be proved not only through biographical dates, but through his sculpture with their typical Transylvanian spirit. These sculptures are mainly born out of natural things. Several times born only by accepting the sensitive spirit.

Géza Kovács treats the things once touched by him very tactful. He turns them out of their original being. Without many modifications forms them into sculptures giving them meaning or balance in form, a beaming dissonance.

The same tact can be felt on the other figurative sculptures. From beginning they look like real leaving persons, torsos, faces. The sculptors' hand coincides with the hand of the wind, water, frost working on stones or wood. Time has imagination. That's why the endless archaism and the vibrant instantaneity can be present in them.

**János Oláh** in *Catalogue*, 1994, Budapest, Hungary

4

### ***Géza Kovács` s Sculptures in Nagyatád***

In the small plastics of Géza Kovács we witness the encounter of two mentalities, of which the first tends to sum up the very age-old and most general human values, by peeling off any superfluous formal elements which might divert our attention; this option for a content here aimed at recalls the formal simplicity and purity of the prehistoric idols which retain only what is essential in form.

The other one is an attitude which belongs, by excellence, to the 20<sup>th</sup> century: an attitude that constructs new forms and compositions, new valences and qualities by juxtaposing objets trouvees, ready-made forms.

The artist casts aside what he deems to be unimportant: the hands, feet, torso, dress, hair are not elaborated. What he concentrates on is the face as often as the position of the body. Géza Kovács chooses to explore in and through art only those aspects which help him in expressing his essentialistic, concise and highly individual message.

**Dr. László Kostyál**, art historian, 2000, Nagyatád, Hungary

5.

## ***The Symbols of a Situation of Life***

The development of the chaining process in Géza Kovács, the sculptor's figurines misdirected from the figurative solutions to nonfigurative representations, from his statue-torsos with their archaic atmosphere to works of art composed out of sharp-bladed sheet-metals, bolts and pieces of cogwheels.

Seeing all these, gloomy thoughts can occur in the onlooker, in fact, are these statues, in majority torsos, the symbolic emblems of a typical of life? Or they are the representatives of a new word taste, where the artful expression is not the striving after the harmony and completeness, but the reflection of feeling of want working in his soul wrongly.

**Levente Zászlós** in *Új Magyarország*, 18.01.1994, Budapest, Hungary

6.

## ***Abstract and shaped little sculptures***

.... *Kovács Géza's* works undoubtedly try to reach back to the ancient Hungarian motifs, to the roots. This path-finding is born in two different ways. One is born from the connection of more abstract forms, while the other from small sculptures shaped in closer human forms. There is a visible contextual and spiritual connection between the two. This appears in the sculptures as if we condensed a whole historical unit into a poem.

**Géza Balogh painter-sculptor**, July 3, 1995, Nyíregyháza, Hungary

7.

## ***Inner sense***

... the sculptures of *Kovács Géza* get into shape and to life from the inside. He works his matter with noble simplicity and the ready creations radiate a sense of organic completeness even as torsos. An unbelievable energy radiates from his sculptures – sometimes down-heartedness or defenselessness, in other cases the force of starting afresh, the want to struggle on, or again some other works mirror the harmony of peacefulness. He strives to express strong inner sense in his sculptures, not getting lost in the details.

**Sándor Orliczki professor**, 24 June 2000, Miskolc, Hungary

8.

## ***Kovács Géza sculptor***

... The sculpture of Kovács Géza is characterized by the full exploitation of plastic and technical processing of metals and a grotesque pop-art tone, between representational and minimal art.

**Dr. Gábor Pogány art historian, 2000,**  
Lexicon of Contemporary Hungarian Artists, Budapest, Hungary

9.

## ***Sincere Sculptures***

The impact with The work of the sculptor Géza Kovács. has been a major experience in my professional career. There were rows of expressively carved, slightly distorted heads exhibited in the gallery, each of which enthralled the viewer. Each head held up a mirror to us a cruel one. Besides these heads, Géza Kovács 's ludic nonfigurative spatial plastics represented another orientation, which expressed the joy of being-in-space and which boldly built up complicated compositions of simple, elementary forms.

Géza Kovács is definitely an artist with a message who, in order to mediate this message, has worked out a personal language which enhances the spiritual tension necessary for the interpretation of works of art.

**Dr. László Kostyál, art historian, Zalaegerszeg, Hungary, 2001**

10.

## ***Precolumbian Mentality***

It is quite interesting to me, what *Kovács Géza* exhibits here. His other works I have seen earlier were of a different kind. These pieces here show a precolumbian worldview. The *Meditation* seems to me unmistakably an awakening Precolumbian figure. The *Annoyed* is an even stranger creation: Szekler and Precolumbian at the same time. A „góbé” (funny Szekler folk) figure turned poetically into Precolumbian garments.

After all *Kovács Géza* is a multi-faceted artist. Who has seen the „Csurgó International Ironsmith Exhibition”, will remember well his minimal art piece titled *The Scholar*. Again, I have seen this summer in Sfantu Gheorghe at the Covasna County Art Exhibition a very nice minimal art work of his, turned into a 21<sup>st</sup> century totem.

**Dr. Gábor Pogány art historian, September 2, 2001, Kaposvár, Hungary**

11.

## ***Archetypical and Iconographical***

Géza Kovács's small sculptures cannot be categorized into any trend without difficulty. His sculptures are close to the material in a way that they reveal the material and reflect on them, and in the meantime they call into play the traditions of form, form creating methods of very distinct periods.

For instance, the modeling of the *Thinker*, namely the head of the *Meditator* evokes archaic idols, some kind of "Gesamtkunstwerk", and at the same time it marks a reversed direction, as compared to the stylization from the amorphous material towards form: the break of stylized form, the way back to the amorphous is marked by *After Chernobil*, *Waiting for a Ray of Hope* and *Burned Thinker*.

Within these small sculptures there is a group which evokes, calls into play and subverts in a witty way – even against each other – different form creating traditions: in this way, the aluminium sculpture entitled *The Secret of Kings* evokes (also through its material), by creating an ironic distance between the work and the viewer, a hieratic sculpture tradition, half belonging to the realm of the sacred (see king hermas) by placing the highly stylized mask onto a bottle-like cylindrical form (alluding in this way to {post} industrial mass products), treating ironically, in a similar way, the crown – the traditional mark of kingship – as well.

Similarly witty games with the form can be discovered also on the sculptures entitled *Predetermined Fate* and *Motherhood*, which associate extremely abstract notions to extremely simple, one could say bare sculpture-objects, former industrial metal scraps. This sculpture, articulated in the space between the dissolution into the amorphous and the extremely expressive, well-structured, almost geometrical forms, presents such archetypical-iconographical forms as for instance the road and the gate on his small sculpture entitled *Scholar*.

**Erika Mihálycsa art historian, 2003, Sfântu Gheorghe**

12.

### ***The Artist Géza Kovács***

I have been entrusted to "misinterpret" these works of art. I am premising this because, if somebody speaks too much about what we can see in this exhibition today, there might occur the risk of misinterpretation indeed. As these sculptures are not to be treated as an inventory, in a literary approach, we encounter a totally different phenomenon here.

Here, indeed, we can experience a reinterpretation of found objects which reveal a world totally different from the one in which they were used for their primary purpose. These particular "found objects", which are presented here in the distinct quality of sculpture, can constitute a distinct beauty also on their own. However, when the artist *Géza Kovács* organizes these objects into compositions, then a new quality of sculpture is the result, which, as a whole, will gain a purpose different from the one that the components used to have originally and separately. Sculpture is but a mass which, inscribed into space, suggests something to the viewer.

The way the works of art make the viewers think is a sign of their aesthetic value and effect. *Géza Kovács's* works raise in us current thoughts and in many of us also nostalgia.

These works occur here as small sculptures. However, if small sculptures are properly articulated in proportion, they can also raise in us the impression of monumentality. This is the case of the works of art exhibited here, whose monumental effect may even make us imagine them as statues in public places. Although this is the first time I have met these works of art, they are familiar to me, it is easy for me to “make friends” with them. I think the viewers will also manage to do this if they resonate to the wave length on which *Géza Kovács* addresses to us with his works.

**Vince Bocskai sculptor**, 21 April 2004, Sovata

13.

### ***Géza Kovács's Vision as a Sculptor***

*Géza Kovács* has an especially interesting vision as a sculptor. My deceased master, Ion Irimescu used to say that sculpture is but the emplacement of forms in space, in the three dimensions. *Géza Kovács* does nothing more than this, but he does this with an excellent skill, with an instinctive sense.

I regard these sculptures as signs, symbols, as the symbols of space. By the forms decoratively placed in a visual balance, the work of art perfectly dominates over the space.

In *Géza Kovács's* works I see the core of sculpture, its essence devoid of any decoration and ornamentation.

**László Hunyadi sculptor**, 2004, Târgu Mureş

14.

### ***The Created New World***

*Géza Kovács's* works are the proof of an artistic talent eager to innovation. The creative traits of his personality assist him in creating a totally new, shockingly unique world out of found objects. He creates a world which seems to be friendly sometimes, sometimes symbolic and sometimes a little bit ironical. He creates a world in which a spiral can become the symbol of alienation, of our withdrawal into ourselves, and a broken pitchfork can become a warning sign of the chaotic state of the world. In this created world the motif of searching the way, the expression of critical situations of our human existence are emphatically present. At the same time, the abstract, the ideal is often present in the rough, aggressive forms of the material, in the dialogue of the forms. The forms which open up as layers speak about hope and hopelessness, about faith and about the impossibility of attaining perfection, of the absolute at the same time.

It is for sure that we can experience one of the most interesting exhibitions of the past years. Such works are exhibited here which were born out of the subtle motions of the artist's soul, which become art treasures in a natural way, while they ask the basic questions of our existence.

Géza Kovács's works also respond to the challenges of European sculpture. This response is formulated with faith and is undeniably personal. The artist believes in the power of sculpture, in that his works will leave an imperishable imprint in this changing world. This is why I believe that we can experience not only an exhibition of sculptures here, but also a project, which is the expression of the ars poetica of today's middle generation.

**Dr. Alexandra Rus art historian, 13 May 2004, Cluj**

15.

### ***Iron and Bronze***

Although in the second half of the nineties, Kovács Géza achieved some monumental wood compositions - among these "Through the Millenniums", exposed at Nagyatád Sculpture Park, Hungary is the best-known - his artwork is better represented by the small metal sculptures.

Born at Tg. Mures, he lives and works in Transylvania, Romania. Having given up his job as an engineer, at the middle of the eighties, in the last fifteen years he has presented to the Hungarian and Transylvanian public a series of traditional small sculpture collection, exhibited in various towns and villages.

The artist's early works - his artistical preparation gained far from schools, workshops or teaching masters - are a mixture of natural with abstract, blending the concrete with the imaginative, show a parallel duality of traditional and avant-garde. These characteristics are still noticeable in his creative period of 2003-2004. Often inspired by the progressive masters, or by the pop-art creators his imagination given birth to human figures and anthropomorphic shapes.

The bridle, the pitchfork, the horseshoe, the spade or hack, elements of an archaic world, welded into iron sculptures become messengers of new meanings, bridges between the Past and Present. Concrete identification blended with abstract, original contents transplanted into new contexts bring about exciting changes of meaning, explode in a new world of symbols. These compositions live through their irregular, unusual forms, transmit their anxiety, sensitivity, revolt almost cutting the space around them.

Beside the constructed structures and object sculptures, an other face of Kovács Géza's creativity are the bronze compositions. In this case rising from the specific characteristics of the basic material the artist expresses new intentions. Some of his works still keep the restlessness and vibration of the object-trouve, but at the same time, new blocklike shapes are exposed. However, even in this case the geometrical elements, composition at random reflect anxiety. The tension and restlessness are art-feeding elements expressed by the forces hidden under the surface.

In all, the artist Kovács Géza is strongly linked to tradition, tradition which is mixed with the conflicts of today, the ironic and grotesque vision maximizing the dramatics of life experiences, pushing the viewer to reflection and meditation.

**Tibor Wehner, historian of art, 2004, Budapest, Hungary**

16.

## ***Cheerful Sculptures***

I have noticed these sunny artworks exhibited here by *Kovács Géza*, already years before. I have not known the artist, but I have known his works in turn. I knew that he has been partaking abroad in significant camps and exhibitions and that he has become a remarkable sculptor, as you can see today, when he brought us here this genuine forest of artifacts. These are works thought with great attention. At first sight we can see that they make use of found, ready-made objects. This practice, however is less important with him than with any other artists. I have in mind for instance Picasso, who turned upside down a bicycle handle-bar and a saddle, turning them into a bull.

Here we have another situation. The sculptor *Kovács Géza* incorporates these objects, these rustic set of instruments, but they gain a secondary connotation and gradually turn into a mysterious material, becoming something new. They get ennobled, they become humanized, turning somehow into signs of the social space, retaining of course a certain degree of the freshness of these elements. They do conserve something of their initial quality and functionality too, which they transform, generating something else. The artist takes them out of the domain of reality and turns them into a symbolical sphere, into a sphere of the significances.

Through this procedure, in my opinion, these objects gain artifact qualities. We find here two types of craftworks. Some of them are made of bronze, being self-standing artworks, the others of iron: "assamblages" to name them with the term of the classical avantgarde. The artist transformed the objects he has found during his wanderings into assamblages. The dialogue with these artworks reserve us many surprises. They drive us to meditate and to make an intellectual effort to decipher their message.

We will never make out integrally these messages however, a certain mystery does remain, that constitutes in fact an element of art.

I would recommend to the attention of today's aediles such works that could be magnified becoming real contemporary monuments.

**Gheorghe Vida, art criticist**, March 1, 2005, ARTIS Gallery, Bucharest, Romania

17.

## ***Physical Gestures***

### ***The Plastic World of Kovács Géza***

This set of small sculptures by *Kovács Géza* sculptor show the conceptual line. Our artist belongs to those who regularly exhibit. In the past year he has organized individual exhibitions in Odorheiu Secuiesc, Cernat, Tg. Secuiesc, Kőszeg, Baia Mare, Oradea, Cluj, in Rum from Vas county (Hungary), Sovata,

Tg. Mures and Miercurea Nirajului. This year he has been invited to Bucharest to install an individual exposition. This year too, he has already partaken in a number of significant group-exhibitions: the "Artcard" international plastic arts exhibition in the United Arab

Emirates, an exhibition in the “Duna” Gallery in Budapest, the “Brancusi” National Sculpture Saloon in Târgu Jiu, respectively in the “Tonitza” Exhibition in Bârlad. He participated in a total of 154 group exhibitions. This is his 50<sup>th</sup> individual exhibition. Considering his professional diplomas and scholarships, creation-camp partakings, adherence to various organizations, his works included in public collections and his monumental creations, we may observe an impressive carrier.

These information show the processes of a stubborn, persevering work, thus drawing up before us a road leading from figural sculptures to the abstract forms investigating the liaisons between the closed and the open, the motionless and the mobile; from the small sculptures through successful projects to the monumental works.

At first glance, the abstraction and a kind of ready-found figurality mix in his works as a styling principle. Whether one or the other aspect predominates in one or the other work, both aspects immediately are paired by a certain plastic peculiarity or an exquisite decorativeness. The work titled “Convergence” or the one named “Outglance” impress us with their interesting meandering forms. The “Secret-bearers” might signify the unknown treasures of a heavily locked chamber. Some compositions evoke anthropomorphic formations. All these characteristics greatly empower the plastic effect of his works, sometimes surrounding them with an aura of surrealism melting into phantasy. Their uniqueness and speciality however, may be pictured not through detailing their style, but rather by emphasizing their ingenious plastic buildup.

The compositional ways of *Kovács Géza* show affinity with the solutions of surrealism. He works with a welder torch, using it as shaping tool when he welds together different elements, junk iron pieces, wires, pipes, screws, objects, pieces, tools into sculptures. Because – these object-montages form up finally genuine sculptures, through their plastic exigence, expressive power, using the lessons of combining the ready-made, found objects of the already classic way of assemblage.

The shaping attention of the artist, his improvizative safety focus onto the expressive power and this is what makes an impression on the public too. The character, the origin of certain elements sometimes is obvious, sometimes may be determined through painstaking investigations, in other cases it may be only guessed. The composed welded objects, metal pieces become one not only from the aspect of their technical shaping, but also considering the spiritual act of turning characteristic gestures and poses into plastic signs. These plastic signs are genuinely appropriate confessions about man and his face(t)s covered by conventions and etiquette. The welded, assembled, joint up object-compositions might be even moveable in certain parts of them.

Thei main genre-defining particularity however is not their possible mobility, but the inseparability of the parts fit together against all their possible mobility - or at least the sensation of it -, the tight coherence in spite of the changeability in dimensions of these works reached through the positioning of their certain elements. The patterns of the connecting elements may remind us of different variations of the so-called “devil's lock”: folk devices, locking mechanisms serving both practical purposes and as toys; or they may wake in us the memory of unknown archetypes, altogether, neither the genuineness, nor the diversity of visual and tactile sensations could be denied of these sculptures combined of joint up elements.

The art of *Kovács Géza* is graceful and disciplined, sensitive, emotive and almost engineeringly rational at the same time. His sculptures yarn of the man, but rather of the general questions of the human existence instead of the individual. His sculptures are symbols of univocal things, symbols of such things, feelings that can be seen as the “eternal human”. And we must not forget of the dramatic power characterizing his object-assemblages, neither of the playfulness, of the cheer of “making” that can be read from some of his tapped, joint sculptures.

These creations cover a wide brange of spiritual palette. Beside their drama and playfulness, one cannot deny certain nostalgic, lyrical aspect, or even a mode seeming prosaically objective. The majority of his works are characterized by an intimate mood, a special harmony that only partially tells of what is in reality. They rather tell of what should be.

It is no small task to show the possibility of community existence for an alienated human society. It is similarly hard task to point the importance of keeping and conserving the spiritual and emotional values in our secular world oriented towards material values only, and to show new qualities lying in the organic relationship between man and creative process in a time of dumping of things without any real aesthetical value, or to call the attention to the unity of past, present, future in a time focusing only to the moment.

According to the promise of these metal constructions the future offers a real harmony for the artist and possibly to his public too, a univers that is both infinite and transparent in its details, a universe in which the natural organic forms and the man-created geometrical shapes, the spiritual, emotional contents and rules that claim us constitute an organic whole.

This is painstakingly elaborated world in its every detail, it is not monotonous nonetheless, because the order materializing in it is not rigid, but it is continually changing – not chaining down the phantasy but calling it to ever new adventures.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us wish to our artist a lot of persistence, a little good fortune, but first of all, great appretiation in his thrilling spiritual excursions in the realm of shapes.

**László Szatmári** in *Művelődés*, January, 2006, Cluj Napoca, Romania

18.

### **Kovács Géza's Exhibition in Aiud**

#### ***From Shape Towards the Essence***

An exhibition of small metal sculptures of the artist *Géza Kovács* was opened in the „Dr. Szász Pál” Gallery on December 16, 2005 with the occasion of the Áprily-evenings. The roots of the Targu-Mures – born artist reach back to the Niraj-region. The childhood experiences gained there determine his world vision and artistic expression. He studied in Targu Mures, then at the Art Academy of Cluj, later settling down in Sfantu Gheorghe. He made his debut there in 1988, on which exhibition he has already presented himself as an artist with an original, strong and particular formal expression. This aspect was emphasized

on the opening of his exhibition by the poet Magyar Lajos: “Géza Kovács stepped on the reverse way of self-expression - from the shape towards the contents, to the essence..., the unknown artisans risen from the people, who in their creation are caught by the natural forms, color changes first, and only afterwards try to express, to give birth to their own inner world, by taking hold of these forms and colors.”

Since this debut until today he has been presenting his works in more than 53 individual exhibitions, has been participating in 174 collective exhibits in 13 countries, has been taking part in major international contests, such as Nizza, Peking, the United Arab Emirates, Hungary, Brussels, Tokyo, Ravenna, Stockholm. Besides he was present in many group-exhibitions in almost every corner of the world. His highest prize yet was the Honorary Award won in 2004 with the occasion of the International Plastic Arts Exhibition in Nizza.

He is member of the National Union of Hungarian Plastic Artists, the Hungarian Sculptor's Society, the Romanian Art Federation, the „Barabás Miklós” Guild.

The 17 small sculptures exhibited here composed of findings or frappant abstract shapes (Hungarian Deer, My Horse Goes to Heaven, Honour, Sun-Chariot) impress the viewer with their particular symbolic, joyful Szekler humour, being bound at the same time to the European sculpture through the seriousness of substantial thinking. The visitor of the exhibition steps into a kind of „personalized 21 century Iron Age”, determined by the individual experiences and subjective moods of the artist. (...)

**Miklós Józsa** in Nyugati Jelen, December 19, 2005, Arad, Romania

19.

### ***A Modern Hephaistos***

..., *the artist Kovács Géza* owns an impressive collection of artistic awards, where his partakings at various national and international reference exhibitions along with the creation of some monuments in different cities of Hungary assure him a remarkable statute. I mention here as exceptional his participations at the prestigious Ravenna-meetings, where the famous Dantesca-exhibitions are organized, requiring the artists to elaborate their creations in accordance with the “Divina Commedia” of the great poet of Florence.

The preliminary preparations of the early years draw only an elliptic line of the trajectory of a carrier and vaguely pictures the artistic identity that has reached by now its maturity, and to which are open all the ways. Practically, his option for sculpture with a ready made impression, exercised with success by Marcel Duchamps and even Picasso, continues the fructification of the relationship between the practical object and its potential artistic expression, generating new perceptive contexts and identifying symbols resulted from a veritable culture of the fragmentary put into absolutely new relationships. Similarly, well-inspired and with an obvious sense of humour, he finds a new reality and gives a new sense to objects which in their other, utilitary existence haven't even dreamt of their artistic potential. By extension, I may state that the sculptor intends even a sacralization through art and sign of the anodine object, taken from the modest domains of functionality. Exactly this loss of domestic practicality permits him to pass from particular to the social, and

further on in aesthetical. The sculptor's imaginative verve goes hand in hand with a manual talent exercised in such a way that the different objects re-associate in new structures, where their recently gained sense may often reach the standards of the satiric pamphlet. The themes of justice, of lager and liberation, of democratic rightness and aspirations, of the civic identity and spirit are debated with no ostentation, but at the same time with no cautions too. He seems determined by his identity-limitations, however he uses a plastic language common to artists coming from the most various cultural contexts, aiming primarily the aesthetic impact. We have to admit, that everyone has the right to manage his/her artistic destiny as he or she considers best, but if we dream anyway a united Europe, the paradigm of multicultural dialogue and the reciprocal tolerance between majority and minority seems more preferable. Returning to the substance of the artwork, I call the attention upon the inventivity of the seemingly impossible associations, inasmuch as the metaphorically imagined chymaeras show that such hybrids were crafted already at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Dimitrie Cantemir. We cheerfully salute the presence in Iași of the sculptor *Kovács Géza*, who has a talent to transform screws, bearings, cranks and handles, remnants of ideological hammers and sickles into plain, angular or voluptuously bowing surfaces with inciting geometry, where the volumes are defined in relation to the space and air filling the voids of these concavities. The light is absorbed into the core of the rough substance and generates internal tensions resolved by negative energy exhausts

**Valentin Ciucă** in ZIARUL de IAȘI, April 18, 2006, Iași, Romania

20.

### ***Géza Kovács's Sculpture Exhibition***

From today on, here in the Art Museum from Brașov we are the hosts of the exhibition of a sculptor whose art seems to be a real challenge. Géza Kovács urges us to reconsider our attitude towards artworks so far. The challenge lies already in the material, with the help of which he creates his small sculptures.

The iron, which is a less noble metal, is generally not brought in connection with works of art. The sculptures get assembled out of objects withdrawn from usage. These deteriorated and depreciated objects exiled to scrap sites get transformed as a result of the artist's contribution.

The banal becomes special, the metal becomes noble. The exhibited works testify that art does not depend on the value of the material, which, even if it is ordinary, can be filled with life by the artist. A work of art can be born out of almost any kind of material. Even if the artist resorts to old, recognizable, rural utensils, our attention is turned to the whole artwork, to its message, to the search of a supreme meaning in each composition.

As Géza Kovács confessed, he accidentally came across this artistic solution, because of the constraint of difficulties not alien from our artists. It is his merit that he used the adverse circumstances for creating valuable artworks. Although this procedure is unusual in our region, in other places, especially in the west, it is really successful.

He explores the possibilities offered by the other material in a similarly stimulating way. When he works with bronze, the expressive power of the creative skill remains equally strong. His bronze statues reflect a more uniform structural configuration in accordance with the characteristic of the material, proving that he absolutely controls the skill of moulding.

Géza Kovács's synthesis of artistic expression withdraws itself from under every well-determined category of classification, such as the abstraction or the figurative. Although the tendency towards the abstract is preponderant, the allusion to the real does not fully disappear, and the figurative appears only as a conjecture.

What is permanent is the rejection of categorization into any artistic trend or style.

Each statue is based on an ingenious idea and an enigma at the same time, which, even if it seems to be revealed, always outwits the one who thinks he/she got to know it to the full. Even if we start to feel its sense, even if we discover its meaning, something always remains impossible to explore, something always remains mysterious. The message implied in it is not direct, it urges us to look for the key of interpretation.

It is the specificity of true art that it does not offer ready-made responses. Its role is to urge us, to stimulate us, to make us meditate.

**Radu Popică**, Art Museum, 7 March 2007, Braşov

21.

### ***Three-Dimensional Calligraphy***

By virtue of a unique way of expression Géza Kovács sculptor populates the exhibition hall with his artworks that he presents for the public from Braşov in an elegantly stylized way. His works of art, which represent some kind of three-dimensional calligraphy, convey a maximum of visual information by making use of simple, synthesized forms. His sculptures permanently form a bridge with the fantastic. We may have the feeling as if they were stopped for a moment in the process of evolution, in the course of inner motion coming from the material.

The essence of the exhibited work relies on the dialogue of the absent masses, it is a manifestation that points in a direction opposed to the development of traditional sculpture, that is, from the form towards the content.

Géza Kovács's sculptures convey the vision of monumentality without memorials, and although they have been made of a material that resists time, they do not have the impression of durability. It seems as if they had been stopped in a certain stage of evolution, from some ancient, unformed and unarticulated stage to the expression of the spirit of the material, as if they were quotations from a coherent text.

The artist strives for creating a different type of relation in the current endeavours, which turns the ideal static state of sculpture into the temporal and material direction.

Géza Kovács, similarly to a draughtsman, lines up rhythmic axles and streamlines.

The surrounding space encloses, pervades and intersects and paradoxically shapes, models his three-dimensional objects. Still, we can feel the strict control of the artist in the imaginary forms, and the viewer also gets infected by this, it does not let us remain calm

because in every moment and permanently they are exposed to the attack of a maximal symbolic content.

We, the readers are amazed by the great number of possible interpretations and by the effect of the power, firmness and security of artistic expression.

**Veronica Bodea Tatulea**, in Gazeta de Transilvania, 10 March 2007, Braşov

22.

### ***Recommandation***

The work of sculptor Kovács Géza, impresses each specialist involved in commenting contemporary visual art. The simple consulting of his creation file proves the rich creativity and fertile vitality of an artist who considers art life's essential aim, and who has dedicated his talent and power of work to this goal.

Since 1988, the year of his first personal exhibition, he has had 65 others, throughout Romania and foreign countries.

Tens of critics have underlined the originality and the symbolic dimensions of his creations. Monumental works placed in public forums, as well as interior sculpture, have brought him international recognition, winning different awards and have become part of prestigious collections.

I consider Kovács Géza an expert in sculpture, a professionalist in evaluating the artistic value of other creators.

Therefore I am strongly in favour of giving Kovács Géza the statute of expert in arts, considering that, this way, we also consolidate the position of an artist who beholds the professionalism and culture of his expressing domain.

**Valentin Ciucă**, art criticist, 2007, Iasi, Romania

23.

### ***The "Self-Built" Career of an Artist***

Géza Kovács is a very interesting man. He alone, without anybody's support, has built for himself the career of an artist which is no longer of local interest, but of national and international one. Many people may deny this, there are probably many people who turn with antipathy against the rising career of an artist. However, this artist, who has reached far by self-education, has proved that he alone can accomplish what others will never do even if they dispose of a university degree in arts. I do not want to offend anybody with this statement, I would just express the truth that there still exist erudite artists among us, who realize something – indeed without money and applause.

Such an artist is Géza Kovács. Whether people like or not what he accomplishes, it does not change the fact that he, on his own, has trained himself to become an artist of European rank. This is essential: he trained *himself*.

He did not have anybody to learn from, he did not have what to learn. In this region it was him who created and accomplished the genre, in such a unique and individual form that nobody had done before. He created a metal sculpture, which does not resemble any usual, known kind of sculpture. According to his concept, the objects offer themselves to become sculptures, they do not need to be cast, they do not need to be moulded. He only has to find their meanings, the dead material has to be assembled, he has to make the discarded material speak and express its message about our past, present and future life. He conveys dreadful messages with these compositions: the material can be more than the man who has created them, the material can defeat the man. Or isn't that so?

Géza Kovács finds the message of the dead material, still: man is more powerful and still, everything that he has created somehow expresses him.

This organizing skill, this capacity of creating a new world out of nothing is sometimes stupefying. This is Géza Kovács's secret. For this everything can be used, discarded materials, beautiful forms discovered among waste materials; the methods of assembling such as weld, soldering can be accepted, however, the essence remains the same: a new art was born. It is hallmarked by Géza Kovács's name. Whether at home, in Europe or all over the world ...

The metal sculptor Géza Kovács was working as an engineer in a factory from Sfântu Gheorghe, he was working with metal objects, when he realized that these lifeless objects, these pieces considered as waste materials – if they are properly assembled – can tell us something about ourselves.

Géza Kovács started his career as an artist in 1988, and in this year he already organized two exhibitions, one in Târgu Secuiesc and one in Sfântu Gheorghe, in the club of the machine factory. So he started his career modestly, but ever since 65 individual exhibitions have marked his artistic career, he took part in 216 group exhibitions, some of them abroad; he had been awarded series of prizes and scholarships when he was considered as Merited Artist at home, in Hungary, in Spain and in France.

The most beautiful symbolic recognition of his career so far is the Pro Cultura Hungarica certificate of merit, which he was awarded not long ago.

In spite of this striking productivity and rich activity we can say that the artist, born in 1958 in Târgu Mureș, is still at the beginning of his career, as this kind of art, this genre created by him still has a lot of pleasant experiences to offer for those interested, contributing in this way to the enrichment of Hungarian sculpture from Transylvania.

He started late, with a big detour, just like the great forerunner, Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka, however, similarly to him, he tries to conquer and address the whole world.

Have a nice journey!

**Lajos Magyar**, 2007, Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania

## ***The Past of our Present, the Present of our Past in Metal Sculptures***

Géza Kovács's welded metal sculptures, individual in tone, having a special atmosphere, are typically modern, 21st-century works of art. In spite of this, they also evoke the atmosphere of a past age, however, not at the level of sweet-bitter nostalgia that is being revived in our days, but rather at the level of pragmatism, of individual artistic construction.

This is a special turn towards the past, a special way of saving values, as the sculptor does not support generally known and recognized relics, but rather old utensils, which have lost their function, which have been thrown away; he turns towards pieces of ready-made objects, industrial waste materials damaged by nature and time and discovers in them the artistic value, the possibility of rebirth, of turning them into works of art. To paraphrase the poet: he is capable of discovering the wonder in them, as he bears the wonder in himself. By admiring the work of art versions of this wonder within himself we can follow the special procedure which leads to the artistic reincarnation of rusty metal pieces, nails, awls, bent metal bars, pieces of gears and locks, pincers, horseshoes and other pieces of tools showing different degrees of decay. The combinatory skill, sense of proportion and artistic imagination of their discoverer and user create a new quality, namely works of art out of these remains of utensils which nobody needs any longer, which have been thrown away. It is as a result of this radical change of function that his metal sculptures, rooted in the past but addressing the present, are born.

The assemblages bearing the marks of pop art and transavantgarde allude at a specific part of object culture, being in the course of disappearance, in a way that they also touch upon current issues, they reflect on the problems of the present. It depends on each of us what we see in and decipher from these compositions. One thing is for sure: it is worth seeing the exhibition. The three-dimensional speech, based on artistic imagination and free associations, combining signs and symbols, may offer a lot of surprises.

With the structuring procedure spreading from simple details to complicated constructions, the artist creates his own special artistic world playfully, but also by instinctually perceiving the seriousness of artistic creation: the witty combination of space compositions is based on the priority of the spectacle, however, it is not devoid of meditative character either. The desire of escape from confinement, from the prevailing constraints (*Wish to Escape*), the attitude of pride not tolerating humiliation, formulated in the language of metals (*Pride*), the proper shaping into form of the *Hurtling* and *Bending forwards* or the image of *Bad dream* illustrated with the help of a trident pitchfork alternate with the form rhythms, bending into each other, of *Virtual harmony* and *Surrounded*, or even with the gracefully easy, bent metal bars of *Winding*.

The past of our present, the present of our past is revived in the works of the artist. It is a kind of modern, 21st-century Iron Age, whose rules are laid down by Géza Kovács not according to the technique of working the material, known for its endurance and determining the formation of human civilization from the beginning to our days, but rather according to his personal experiences, his subjective state of being. He thinks in iron, he feels in iron, and he turns his artistic ideas into iron. In a witty, spectacular and proper way.

**Júlia Németh**, Korunk, 12, III. Folyam, December 2007, Cluj, Romania

## ***Figurative sculptures and objects***

Several kinds of endeavours can be observed in Géza Kovács's art. The most important and the most characteristic is when he juxtaposes found objects and constructs objects of a figurative intention in a new sense, or bearing figurative associations. The rusty hack, the horseshoe, the spanner, the bearing, the gear, the chain, the propeller, the pitchfork, the spade are all revived. The pitchfork may become a crown, the gear may turn into sunrays, they are reinterpreted, they become subtle symbols and find their place in a new system of connections, becoming component parts of a new, artistic world.

This artistic trend is called art trouvé, which is built upon found objects, and I would still mention a French-sounding word, the assemblage, which, likewise, constructs a new artistic quality by reshaping the found objects.

Another part of Géza Kovács's works is expressedly figurative. Within, we can find several approaches. In one case we can see torsos. These are mostly small figures with a powerful mass effect, often without limbs. It is the posture that is important.

The series of big-headed caricature figures are also connected to this group, just in another way, in the case of these it is but the emphasized big head that matters.

In other sculptures he picks apart and restructures the mass in a cubist way. By juxtaposing part masses he offers a totally new interpretation of mass and space for the viewer, and in this way he recreates the natural forms.

I think that Géza Kovács is an experimenting artist in search of the artistic form of expression which is the most suitable for his momentary thoughts.

**Dr. László Kostyál, art historian, 9 May, 2008, Zalaegerszeg, Hungary**

26.

## ***Art Rooted in Technology***

Géza Kovács sculptor is predestined to pursue the mythological craft of smithery already by his name. I got to know the artist in his creative environment in Sfântu Gheorghe. His modesty is not at all justified by his biographical data: his successful participation in large-scale international and national group and individual exhibitions can be enviable by anybody.

He comes from Târgu Mureş, he pursued his technical university studies in Cluj. These studies have an observable influence upon his works of fine arts.

Géza Kovács is introducing himself as an artist in his home town for the second time. He is presenting fifty iron small sculptures, which amaze the viewers by their originality, by their associative mode and by their technical execution.

The attraction towards the iron as a basic material can be derived from its characteristics. It gets cleaned from what is idyllic, it looks at the viewer in a provocative

way, it raises questions referring to an artistic world, which is so different from the usual one.

We can categorize his works of art either in the line of the “ready made” objects started by Picasso and the Dadaist Marcel Duchamp (1915) or by Julio Gonzales from Barcelona at the beginning of the twentieth century, who lifted the utensils out of the field of everyday life and transferred them into the sphere of art, with the purpose of shocking us in an aesthetic way, or within the trend of the so-called “object trouvé” found objects. The difference between the two is that the latter can be the concomitant of nature as well. The artist who is standing in front of us primarily makes use of the utensils made by old craftsmen. Géza Kovács takes these pieces of objects out of the environment corresponding to their original function and through his personal intervention he transposes them into the world of art. He does not do this in order to shock us, on the contrary, he does this to offer another version instead of the traditional expression. In this way these objects get a new identity, one which they would never have dreamed of.

By means of the seemingly accidental and the well determined workmanship – forging, welding and filing – the ordinary world is transposed into the realm of art. The sculptor knows and feels to what extent he should interfere so that the multitude of symbols and signs should not spoil the overall effect of the work of art. The assembling of the metal pieces results in such structures which combine anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and technomorphic intimations. These works of art do not have natural identities, they only have plastic forms. His ideas acquire bodily and space features. The artist passionately rummages among garbage, chooses seemingly unusable objects which he assembles in an endeavour of achieving surprising expressions, with the help of careful observation and playful drive. It is contradictory that these works of art are archaic and modern at the same time. The mythological echo of his works melts with the morphology used by modern technologies.

Pieces of pitchforks, hoes, ploughs, chains and pipes, locks, all kinds of utensils, some of them seem as if they were coming from the ancient Hephaistos’ workshop, convey profound symbolic messages. Taken out of their sphere of usage the old pieces get transformed as the result of artistic intervention and by becoming more noble because of patina they reach the final purpose, the aesthetic spectacle.

Tongs, cogwheels, nails, and hooks, and as recurrent motifs, horseshoes constitute the most often used repertoire of the artist, aiming at assembling new works of art.

Human presence is drawn into each and every sculpture, without being evident, the traces of human “touches” found on the surface of objects get emphasized as “patina”.

The small sculptures are dynamic, still, they suggest stability. The iron – which is colder and more difficult to work than the bronze (which the artist uses in the case of other works of his) –, its surface is dry, it does not let light slip freely on it. The presence of the light and shadow effect in the sculptures is ensured by the alternation of empty and full forms, which provides the rhythm of the work of art at the same time. The treatment of the game of volume contrasts – the surface-mass effect – equally contributes to the “warmth” of the iron.

The patina obtained through various chemical procedures endows the works of art with personality and individuality.

It is the artist's merit that also his small and middle-sized works have a monumental effect; in his works of art the intersected planes, the curves breaking up, the perforated and subtly worked surfaces alternate with uneven elements evoking the past.

Although the artist is convinced that the titles "*kill the joy of discovery*", I still enlist a few of them so that we can get to know the world that the artist is preoccupied by, a world which always alludes to the presence of the human factor: "*Fate*", "*Leaning forward*", "*Expectation*", "*Sunrise*", "*Together*".

Marcel Duchamp said that "*the reception of the work of art is a a spiritual adventure*".

Géza Kovács's artworks, similarly to his predecessor, are revived through the viewer's glance and each and every part of them gets reinterpreted before our very eyes.

**Cora Fodor, art historian, Cultural Palace, Târgu Mureș, 23 September 2008**

27.

### ***Austria is always a step behind...***

Inspired by the Austrian tales, an exhibition opened in Potzneusiedl on the National Holiday.

Géza Kovács sculptor from Romania has brought his artworks and exhibited them here. His metal sculptures dynamically express the message of the artist with the help of used materials. The specific order in his sculptures rule the space and emanate a good influence over the viewer. His artworks awake pleasant feelings in their public, dissolving the stress at the same time.

By their ripen expressivity, the artworks of Géza Kovács univocally testify the creativity and ripeness of the artist. Beside these, one can discover in his creations the presence of the human, of the sensual world.

This very interesting exposition may be visited in the Potzneusiedl Castle.

**Jopie den Dulk:** Burgenlandische Volks Zeitung, BVZ, 2008. 44. week, Eisenstadt, Austria, page 38.

28.

### ***The Exhibition of Géza Kovács Sculptor***

The artistic initiatives of the twentieth century have shattered the classical artistic ideals from their very basis: the avant-garde creators and their creations questioned all multimillennial conventions of sculpting, of artistic shaping; and under the constellation of a new practice and spirituality, they created an artistic universe founded on new values. The object of sculpture has changed, and similarly its technique and matter, just as has changed the vision of artistic creation, thus the status of the artwork as well. The greatest change was to render the earlier exclusively valid anthropomorphic and zoomorphic shaping principles to the waste pit: in the boiling fervor of the various isms, in the

consecutive waves of artistic schools anything could become a sculpture, and the previously noble materials – bronze, marble, wood – could be replaced by any trivial materials. The crafty, artistic shaping of the artworks has lost its imperiousness as well: beginning from the works of Duchamp and Picasso can be erected on pedestal or placed in recipients as sculpture any found object, may it be any scrubby, everyday shoddy: that is, it was enough the pointing gesture, the setting out of the original context, the act of transforming a piece into artwork. In the process of declaring a found object, a ready-made ware as artwork, the methodology of creating object-collages has grown into a distinct domain, which generates new constructions from various elements synthesized into requisites by the passing time, from objects often originally not interrelated or not even connectable. Such collages, objects are constructed by the Transylvanian sculptor Géza Kovács from Sfântu Gheorghe (Romania), who works in the spirit of the classical avant-garde ideas. In this exposition installed in Pesterzsébet appears however a bronze composition executed in classical modeling – showing that the artist works in the traditional branches of sculpture as well – but the creative periods of the nineties and the artworks of this first decade of the new millennium, from which he compiled the collection of this exhibition, all attest his strong affinity to the object-collage.

We may consider the carrier of Géza Kovácsan unusual one: the artist born in Targu Mures (Romania) had initially graduated from technical, engineering college studies, and on the turn of the eighties and nineties was gradually developing into a sculptor beside practicing his engineer profession. From the nineties on he has been a regular participant of sculptors' creation workshop-camps in Hungary and in the same time he has been consecutively organizing his individual expositions in Transylvanian and Hungarian cities. While against, or maybe as a consequence of the storms of history and political unrests, many of his contemporary fellow artists have decided to stay in their motherland, or by not an easy process, to resettle in Hungary (younger and older Transylvanian artists had been immigrating in more waves into Hungary in the last two-three decades of the last century) – Géza Kovács has kept his loyalty towards his birthplace. At the same time, he has developed a kind of multi-presence: he sometime appears in one place, at other time in another, his artworks or assemblages – living an almost autonomous life – continually wander as exhibition collections in the whole Carpathian-basin, or lately even in the western parts of Europe, while he sometimes follows his expositions, and sometimes returns to his home in Sfântu Gheorghe.

This assemblage presented here – except one – may be considered object-collages composed of iron elements joint and welded together. Surveying these artworks, one can easily discover that the components of the sculptures earlier were elements of smaller machines, devices, mechanisms: cogs, dials, circles, rings, bands, fasteners; which – torn away from their original function, but keeping somehow their functional, content-related aspects – appear in brand new contexts, relieving their industrially formed or manufactured special beauties, now represent exclusively their decorative aesthetical aspects. It is the essential characteristic of these works that they loose their original interrelations and embody new, extraordinary connections, ruled some kind of formal logic: the creations generally do not have bodies, rather there are construed according to a certain skeletal order. Every component is highlighted by its contours: thus are created the intriguingly running lines, space crossings, spatial interferences, and all this generates a thrilling atmosphere of motion even in immobility. This is a plastic abstract world, oriented very

much towards the past, inducing strange associations: in the era of computers, digitalization, virtuality these creations awake the illusion of palpable objects, tangible materials, the feeling of old time functionality and practicality. But all these can stand in front of us only as fragments, only as memento-like reflections of ancient perfection, as miniaturized monuments with intimate atmosphere. This is what also the writer Lajos Magyari referred to when writing about the works of Géza Kovács: „We could imagine almost all of these small sculptures in monumental enlargement, maybe they would gain then even more shocking significances.”

The object-sculpture of Géza Kovács, pertaining the promise of shocking significance blends tradition and innovation, the spirit of international artistic initiatives and the intentions rooted in the deepest folk-art, ancient and newer crafts in a special way. The artist, collecting the components of his creations, cleans meticulously away the rust from the iron surface, then through a complicated patina-generating procedures creates a new brownish-grey rustic surface, a layer of artificial rust, protecting the artwork, resembling and exactly characterizing the original. His procedure purports symbolic aspects too: for preserving, declaring the essence of things we need manipulations that alter their essence making use of appearances. Consequently, by the iron-statuettes of Géza Kovács constructed from former accessories we can wander in the sophisticated interpenetrating fields of reality, art, artistic reality.

**Tibor Wehner**, “Gaál Imre” Fine Art Galleries, February 11, 2009, Budapest, Hungary

29.

### ***Always Something Else ...***

*The only truth is an individual truth, which in the case of a work of art needs to be carefully preserved* – Virginia Dressler American art historian wrote.

Thus, the only truth is the individual truth. The individual truth of works of fine arts provides the possibility of discovery and re-discovery in each case. This is especially so in the case of works of art which have been “made”, partly or entirely, to serve for something else. This is the case with the majority of the sculptures of Géza Kovács.

If you looked around in the exhibition hall of the Végh-mansion before the opening, you could easily discover that the majority of the sculptures were created to serve for something else. As most of the sculptures used to be simple articles for use, utensils, tools. Pitchfork, industrial tools, bearings and axles, wrought iron metal fragments ... Fragments from the iron culture of a civilization – we could say.

These metal objects were not only made with another purpose, but they also became something else, when Géza Kovács took them in his hands and paired them in an unprecedented way. He adjusted them and took care to give them useless, unexpected and interesting new forms, new meanings. They are object sculptures. They used to be objects, and they have become sculptures now.

We know the term recycling primarily from the industry. However, besides industrial recycling there also exists an artistic, cultural recycling. We have a means which we recycle in every moment, which we reshape according to the rules of the intellect and the creating

force in every moment. This means is the language, the words which we continually provide with new and new meaning nuances by forming new and new sentences. This is exactly what I am doing in this moment. And what you are thinking about discreetly now, without uttering it, also belongs to this civilizational process of enriching meanings. Thus, the commonplace-like conclusion is at hand: everybody is creative in every moment. If somebody is much less talented than the average, if he/she has never had any original idea, if no original deed can be attached to his/her name, even in this case the person is continuously compelled to permanently and endlessly shape into form his/her words, ideas and deeds in creative ways and in this way to express his/her feelings, thoughts and intentions.

Yes, my ladies and gentlemen. Creativity is a wonderful involuntary path of our culture. Creativity is a creating force which forces new and newer forms of objects, feelings, thoughts and deeds upon us. Always something else, always something new, different from what was earlier. Well, the arts carry out exactly this shaping into form, the activity of inventing newer and newer forms. In the case of plastic forms this activity is called sculpture, and the resulting works of art are statues or statuettes.

The urge of reshaping is thus not the pastime of some kind of a stupid, queer and whacky artist, but one of the most ancient and basic rules of human culture. It is like air, like bread and water. It is like the most simple things hardly deserving attention, but without which there is no life. It is exactly the series of these very reshaping thoughts and deeds without which there is no culture, no human civilization.

Géza Kovács's sculptures turn up from this deep layer. These works of art represent less an elaborated style, but rather a creative force emerging from more original and ancient layers.

Always something else ... this is how I started my presentation. The intention of the artist was always something else when he created these statues. And it also requires from the viewer something different from the usual.

Géza Kovács's statues require from the viewer to transgress the comfortable and usual points of view. This is what the viewer has to do in order to experience the message of the statuette, of the statue (the beauty and meaning of the statue, with older, different expressions). The viewer has to do something different from the usual. He/she has to strive for roaming freely and unprejudiced in the forest of objects, and for choosing his/her points of view in a free and unprejudiced way. The sculptor tried to assist you in such a roaming and adventure without prejudices, when by using the facilities of the place he practically built up a forest of statues from his statuettes. This forest of statues is democratic like the jungle. All the ways are equal in it, and they are suitable for an infinite number of adventure tours. It is the decision of the viewer to what an extent he/she takes part in this game, and which route he/she chooses.

I would turn back to the term recycling. The life of metals and forms gets into a new stage, once we forget the role in utilization of the scrap-iron thrown out, of the junk thrown aside, and we turn our attention to the form and the material. Instead of function it is the natural processes that are pushed into the foreground, represented by patina, rust, corrosion and discoloration. Similarly, the place of the transient function is taken over by the crystallized form involving the thousands of years of experience of civilization.

In these statues we can witness the transient character of the statues in a simultaneous way. We can still see the pitchfork, the gear, but we can also notice their transformation,

when the trident pitchfork of the statue entitled *Bad dream* becomes a symbol giving a prickly impression, raising unpleasant feelings.

The transforming beauty of nature turns up on the rust-eaten surfaces, similarly to the preservation and highlighting of the rough and unfiled mould defects. Instead of the function it is natural forces that dominate, just as the function, the useful objects are replaced by the ancient forms and form creating basic elements. The circle first becomes a gear, the gear becomes the shiny sun. This game is as colourful and natural as the simple and instinctual solutions of children's drawings. The rusty gear becomes the shiny sun, the often seen pitchfork becomes a *Bad dream*, in the case of another statue the spanner brandished upwards becomes the symbol of *Breaking out*, while the horseshoe becomes the celestial crescent moon of the *Liberator*.

However, we can also see forms breaking out of the material, and human figures as well, which come out of the shapeless mass and assume the mask hardly delineated from the shape. Among these we can find the aluminium mould entitled András Sütő's eye, as well as two sculptures which are my favourite ones, entitled *Vexed* and *Messenger of our Ancestors*. These compositions are no longer works welded together from objects, but similarly to these, the forms and materials are elemental, with other words childlike or ancient, archaic compositions.

To sum up my speech about Géza Kovács's sculptures, I can say that they return to the ancient sources of sculpture and creative force. They return to the state when form is created out of nothing, then when meaning is born out of the form. This process is called art. That is, a basic case which lets us know that it is good to create works of art, it is useful and what is more, it is meaningful. Not to mention the fact that there are people who like it.

If you have seen Géza Kovács's statues, I hope many of you will get into the state of creative vision today, and in half an hour's time, in an hour's time you will say that it was worth seeing this exhibition. We like these things and they have shown something different, a little bit different from what we are used to.

**Károly Szűcs, art historian**, Halas Gallery, 11 June 2009, Kiskunhalas, Hungary

30.

### ***A contemporary sanctuary***

Géza Kovács sculptor's thought is rich with a live imagination.

If we may ascertain that his talent springs from the same crucible as that of Julio Gonzales (1876-1954) or of the Galatz artist Constantin Emil Aramescu (1914-1966), then we may consider that his art tends towards the sign, a kind of writing with universal roots, respectively.

His reliquary is the depository of profound philosophical significances determined by the breakout of internal forces from within the new forms born from the skilful combining of objects.

Some forms remind us of certain sacred objects made by the Dogon and the Bambara (Mali), the Senoufo (Cote d'Ivoire) and Ba-Kuba (Congo). These craftsman artists had worked the metal of various dimensions, and from among their creations one that arrived in Paris in 1894, named *The Warrior God* could be viewed as a world masterpiece of

sculpture. Jean Laude: History of Arts in Black Africa. This piece was made from iron of European origin (rails, iron bars, beaten and combined screws). Dogon and Bambara blacksmiths have been using iron to build ritual totems which they hanged up in the sanctuary or over the altar. Some materials were beaten, hammered without welding and riveting.

The blacksmith of old Africa is an artist and a craftsman that makes weaponry, household instruments, objects of art and cult. He held a privileged place in society and religious life. The African artist played the role of peacemaker, mediator between the members of society, but similarly between the world of the living and the dead.

Mr. Kovács is an intelligent artist, peacemaker and universal mediator whose art incorporates a kind of magic that transcends ritual incantations, a kind of magic that conquers us through its centrifugal, constraining force with significances of great visual impact.

**Ibrahima Keita**, Tulcea Art Museum, September 27, 2009, Romania

31.

### ***The "Tamer of Iron"***

We all, who are present here, know what sculpture means and we know its history. At the same time, we are also convinced that Géza Kovács's name can be listed within the history of sculpture which looks back to a little bit more than 100 years, but which contains the names of famous artists, sculptors who on certain occasions or in certain periods used existing objects as the material for their works.

I think that we can regard Géza Kovács as an example as concerns the adaptation to the environment. I am saying this because he has chosen iron as the main material of his works and weld as the technique of their preparation. We can also mention the power of destiny regarding the name that the artist was given at his birth. Besides, by consulting Géza Kovács's effective bibliography I found 52 titles for the last year. In 2009, with the material of four sculpture exhibitions, which moved in parallel, he organized 11 individual statuette exhibitions in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. This exhibition here in the Art Gallery from Brăila that we are just opening, arrived here after having been exhibited in the Art Museums from Tulcea and Constanța.

What is my attitude to what I can see here?

It is absolutely clear for me that these forms are the signs of a hidden alphabet, which we do not know, and not even Géza Kovács disposes of their meaning in full measure, however, in each case they still manage to transmit the artist's message to us.

What exactly does he do, or in other words, how do these works of art get shape?

The sculptor uses the products of industrial civilization. He seeks and ferrets out the expressive force of forms and then he matches them. The artist sends the drawn thought, in which the objet trouvé can be found, from the paper to the space. He adjusts these forms through a ritual process by weld, and they will finally contain motion, rhythm and a lot of imagination. The finished works of art get accomplished and occupy their place in space. They resemble weird living creatures or we can regard them as revived mechanisms, their

sharp edges turn upwards and we have the impression that hands stretch upwards, or on the contrary, some subtle silhouettes bend down.

How does Géza Kovács manage to achieve these?

Here I have discovered something extraordinary, this is why I felt that I had to call him as “the tamer of the iron”. The cold iron pieces, which are the harder the more work condensed into them they contain, turn into contours at Géza Kovács. These contours can have any form according to the artist’s will. I think that this is the greatest achievement of the one who dares to tame the iron.

I am very glad that Géza Kovács exhibits here in Brăila. I see the real, born “smith” in the sculptor’s person. His sculptures give the possibility for everybody to discover what they have already known for a long time, in another cultural medium, from other experiences.

**Maria Stoica, art critic**, Art Gallery, 4 February, 2010, Brăila, Romania

32.

### ***Found Objects Evoking Fate***

*Works of a sculptor from Sfântu Gheorghe on the Cellar Exhibition from Ferencváros*

Géza Kovács, sculptor from Sfântu Gheorghe, often takes part with his works in exhibitions organized not only in Transylvania, but also in Hungary as well as in international exhibitions. In these days he is taking part with several works in the 41st spring exhibition from Pesterzsébet, his individual exhibition can be seen in the Cellar Exhibition from Ferencváros.

Few people know better than him the material culture and layer of tradition created by Transylvanian history, by its landscape and people, including not only the bygone, but also the past decades, when also Transylvania got totally transformed. In his exhibition you can see not the usual works created from brass with lost-wax casting or with other related procedures, but works of art constructed from found objects, which undergo a change during the process of artistic creation, and disposed of their original function they convey the artistic message. His works unambiguously transmit what human-historical values inspire and exemplify the world of the artist, who originally graduated the university from Cluj as an engineer. The Kőrösi Csoma Sándor competition in 1992 constituted the impetus for him to advance from an amateur to a professional artist: he won this competition against eighteen professional artists – he adds that the jury was not local.

His works well illustrate the fact that even today Transylvania is simultaneously characterized by peasant tradition, the survival of traditional values and by the formation, not devoid of contradictions, of industrial society.

He connects these two kinds of layers in almost all of his works. The most diverse materials belonging to activities carried out by peasants in villages, parts of tools and metal scraps that can still be found around desolate industrial factories of Transylvanian cities are presented side by side. He assembles them and gives them further distinct shapes, partly with the structuring view of the engineer, partly with the playfulness and light-heartedness which characterize him and maybe as a combination of the two, with the craft of a kind of

Szekler jack-of-all-trades. Sometimes he formulates a feeling, a trait. Other times human fates, encounters and conflicts are presented in his works. Politics is also present in his sculptures, of course, in form of allusions.

The found, searched pieces of metal, those offered to him or discovered at friends' places are related to one another by weld in a way determined by visual logic. Sometimes, assisted by the burner, he gives a new shape to the objet trouvé, which melts and gets transformed. Besides welding and assembling, he treats the surface with acid. On some of his works this treatment with acid constitutes expressedly subtle transitions. Some of his works are also formed with the help of painting, however, for the time being he tends to preserve the natural effect of the metal, or the corrosive effect of surfaces treated with acid.

Of course the way we interpret his sculptures also depends on the viewer, however, the titles may provide a certain impulse, a start for the series of associations, they indicate that Géza Kovács has been living and working in the same society in which we also live in Eastern-Central Europe. *Dignity and Machination*, the title of a work says, the other one is entitled *Backbone-evener*, the third one is called *The Chances of Survival*.

**Ernő P. Szabó**, in Magyar Nemzet, 18 May, 2010, Budapest, Hungary

33.

### ***The Challenge of Iron***

The exhibiting artist, Géza Kovács, who offered on the first day of August 2010, the exhibition of sculpture at the Art Galleries of Museum "Ion Irimescu" from Fălticeni opened on Sunday, 1 August, brought a new challenge, that of the iron, in front of the public from Fălticeni.

Being used to works of art made of plaster, bronze and marble, the few culture-enthusiasts present at the exhibition could admire, for the first time in the case of many of them, works of art created in patinated metal, with fine signs of rust. Due to his ingeniousness and creative freedom, the artist turned towards thrown-away iron objects destined to become rusty, towards abandoned tools or various pieces no longer used, and then turned them into new shapes, gave them new names, each work of art disposing of a message. 35 metaphors have been transposed into iron, provided with a poetic substance by their creator under various names such as *Winding, Among Them, Ease, Flight, Harmony, Pride, The Secret-Keepers, Late Blossom, The Liberator, The Thief of Time, Prescribed Fate, Joy* etc. The sculptor Géza Kovács gives proof of a serious inventive propensity. The creative essence of his personality provides the force for him to create a totally new, surprising world out of banal everyday objects, like a broken pitchfork, a spade, a padlock, a screw, a cogwheel, a tap, a horseshoe or a simple nail.

At the opening the art critic Gh. A. M. Ciobanu spoke about the value of the exhibition and of the presented works; he said that "the works of art represent a vision characteristic of the art of sculpture, and master Kovács offers it to us as well, under this form of iron sonnets, or under the form of works of art of large dimensions which are not in front of us".

"The artist presents a whole literature of the forms welded in iron. If we copied the 35 titles of the works of art present in this room, it would sound like the contents of a volume of symbolist poems. By contemplating these works of art, we can notice a characteristic of the

artist, namely the existence of a multitude of nervures. This nervure that Géza Kovács uses characterizes him and distinguishes him from many artists who work in metals. The nervure is the axis onto which the rest of the universe is added”, Gh. A.M. Ciobanu said.

The author spoke modestly about what he had exhibited at Fălticeni. “There are 35 pieces of work exhibited here. The sculptures are made by weld. I collect the old pieces of various forms and I place them in my workshop, and when an idea crosses my mind and I want to materialize it, I know what pieces I have in the workshop and I start to search for them. Then I assemble them. The sculpture created by weld is different from the one created in stone, in wood or in marble, where the raw material, the piece of wood or stone is given, in which you have to scoop. Here I have to construct and it is very important for me to assemble the objects in a way that they should fit. On the other hand, they have to be in equilibrium, not to fall, and further on, they have to reflect what you, the artist, wanted to express. The most difficult thing in this sculpture is to realize the moment when you have to stop adding another piece lest it should become a Christmas tree”, Géza Kovács said.

Most of the metal scraps which have become parts of various works of art were brought from the native village, from friends, from scrap-iron, even from the road. Surely, we can witness one of the most interesting exhibitions that could be seen at Fălticeni in the past years.

**Stelian BORHAN**, in Monitorul de Suceava, 3 August, 2010, Suceava, Romania

34.

### **On the Opening of the Exhibition of Géza Kovács Sculptor**

Everything seems to be against the Kossuth recruiting festivity: the weather spoils the open-air programmes; Marcell Jankovics was supposed to deliver his speech here but he is being engaged with public matters. If only more interested people would come to the Gallery of the Cultural House because of the rain – I am trying to consider the positive side of the situation, however, I am terribly sorry that the cartoon specialist and ethnographer cannot be here. As one of the directions in which these small sculptures can be approached is the world of folk symbols; he is one of the most popular and most professional knower of them.

Such a work, which seems to be an odd one out is the *Red Cart*. In the suggested motion of the cart of feelings its fence parts painted in red also show the obstacles, the boundaries of love. However, most of the works are more undisciplined, more playful than the code system of folk carvings or needlework. The artist relies more on the decisions of the momentary states, of the unconscious, we could say that he has the force of creating signs. As he juxtaposes such (metal) elements which reveal their secrets only for the minds open towards associations. The scrap metals shaped into human antropomorphic forms convey various messages depending on from which direction we contemplate Them. So it is worth walking round the sculptures, as we usually do that with buildings before forming an opinion. The angles of the small sculptures assembled from metal pieces much resemble the space formation of architecture. Their division can be single-storeyed or storeyed as that of a wooden grave-post. Their statics is determined, as the aim is not the

creation of a mobile sculpture, the feeling that these forms are impossible to move raises in us the impression of atavistic, simplified character. It has been formulated in several earlier critiques that these works of art remind us of space calligraphy, and their silhouettes suggest characters. The more the “signs” appearing in monochrome white background radiate the complicatedness and mysticism of Far-Eastern writings, the more quiet and deserted this space is. The more transcendental it is.

It may be scary if the artist rises into heights from which there is no way back to the public. I can assure the dear public that this is not the case with Géza Kovács; while interviewing him about his works I asked him about the above mentioned artistic effects (symbols, concept, sacredness, philosophical depths). He informed me in a modest and direct way. He is interested in the beauty of the rusty metal more than in the creation of modelled and moulded sculptures. After collecting the wreckage, after cleaning and cutting them into the proper sizes he “dots”, welds, grinds, then re-patinates the parts glittering with a metallic shine. When placing these works of art I was afraid that they might fall down. In response to this, he quoted Michelangelo’s thought: the good statue is the one which, rolling down from the mountain – getting rid of its unnecessary parts – arrives in the valley. I do not suggest that you should push down the sculptures, however, the artist also attaches a role to the Accidental. This reminds me of a fragment of a poem by the Transylvanian poet Sándor Kányádi. I respectfully recommend you to watch the exhibition of small sculptures by Géza Kovács!

**Gábor Rónai artist teacher**, 17 September 2010, Cegléd, Hungary

35.

### ***Time Contemplator in the Museum from Cernat***

#### **Statue Inauguration**

In our narrower homeland, in Háromszék it is usually classical, easily intelligible statues, memorials that have been placed to public squares, however, the Szekler people have also been capable of becoming familiar with less realistic sculptures, with more abstract forms. The statue composition that is now being inaugurated can be ranked among the latter ones.

It is in the period of the past one hundred years that we can speak of modern sculpture in today’s sense of the world. Picasso’s form-breaking innovations, displaying geometrical forms, Marchel Duchamp’s Dadaist, shocking, often scandalous sculptures assembled from found objects, Naum Gabo’s constructivism consisting of audacious forms contributed to the change of the world of sculpture. In the past decades the sculpture has passed through several phases of experimentation. The series of iron and steel works of art created from found metal objects (ready made), released from their former functions, can be ranked among them. Such sculptures do not only assume aesthetic functions, reminding of certain events, but they also remind of the problems of the modern age, or relieve us with the help of the power of art. Among the artists using this language of sculpture we can mention the

name of Alexander Calder, David Smith, Julio Gonzales, Seymour Lipton, or that of George Tobolowsky, who still creates works of art.

Géza Kovács is the Transylvanian, Szekler representative of the sculptures welded together out of found metal objects; this is not his first work of art that finds its place in a public square, however, this may be the first place, in the space of a museum, which is surrounded by values, by an environment and objects breathing the air of history.

Géza Kovács condenses into this work everything that this ethnographical, local history collection and its lofty spirit, which surrounds us here, means to him. He also urges the contemplator of his work in the same direction, even if we witness a modern work of art, breaking with tradition. This work of art conveys the message that in the mechanized world abounding in information, restricted to the magic circle of the "on line" the traditional values also have their force, their form, their word in determining social functions.

The sculptor has created a work of art which has wished to emanate from himself and which displays his inner values dating back to decades, even to centuries ago. The former functions of the forged objects come to our mind, some tools soldered into the compositions evokes memories in us; but the tranquil, cleaned elements of the "time contemplator" appear in front of our eyes and turn into thoughts pointing toward the future.

Géza Kovács's work brings new air into the living museum yard, which has been serving, as usual, as an ethnographical and historical memorial for more than thirty years. It is a warning, however, it does not try to shock, to frighten away with the cold iron, on the contrary, it attracts with its distinct form, with its power of stirring curiosity, with its warm colours. No matter from which side we look at this statue, it always raises different associations, different ideas, different aesthetic experiences in the viewer. The game of the forms, metal lines, curves, strong nails and the empty, but not meaningless space between them offers a determined, vivid combination. The objects selected from the often sweaty reality of the everyday life present themselves as having a chaotic effect at first glance – this effect is one characteristic of modern sculpture –, however, the clear system of plastic forms dependent on one another in spite of all their divergence manifests itself in this work of art. Such a modern work of art always has more or less hidden meanings, which is the individual product of artistic conduct, however, this becomes more easily intelligible for us if we approach them with an open mind, with a festive ease, if we orientate our wishes to the inconceivable truths stuck in the time frame, behind the objective world.

**Imre Géza Sántha**, 25 September 2010, Haszmann Pál Museum, Cernat

36.

## **Metal Sculpture Exhibition in the Outdoor Museum**

### **Géza Kovács's *Time Contemplator* in Cernat**

There is no better place for the metal sculpture exhibition by Géza Kovács entitled *Time Contemplator* than the park yard of the Haszmann Pál Museum from Cernat. The basic material his works of art are made of is the metal. In the almost twenty years in the outdoor

museum from Cernat the Haszmann family and their supporters have shaped the richest and most various collection of agricultural machines and tools of Middle-Eastern Europe. Since the mid-nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century the basic material of these tools has been the metal, the iron. In his own way Géza Kovács is also a diligent collector of museum values, of antiquities. The exhibition differs from the nature of museum collections in that the collections of antiquities strive to present the collected objects and tools in their original state and in their original environment.

If Géza Kovács discovers a few metal pieces, metal tools which lost their original functions during the ups and downs, a tread, a machine wheel, a few spokes, anything, thanks to the fact that he is an artist with an excellent skill of combination, he adjusts-welds these metal bodies in a way that they should raise thoughts and feelings in the contemplators.

The power of his art lies in the fact that the associative thought lines in the contemplators can be far-reaching, of many kinds. It is similar to when the child creates a castle, a flock or anything else out of cornhusk, corn cob and a few sticks, pine-cones, and with the help of imagination he transfigures these objects, he brings them to life. And if the lambs of the pine-cone flock do not bleat, then he pretends as if he could hear the sound of the imaginary flock. He can light into the world of imaginary creatures with the help of a pumpkin lantern.

This is the most atavistic practice of creating works of art. Géza Kovács's modernity lies in the fact that he enlarges the spectrum of the materials usually used in arts. Instead of using the wood, the stone, the canvas, the plaster, the clay, the plasticine, he forges, welds and combines the iron almost uniquely in our region, with an unparalleled intensity, and the thought is born out of these metal combinations, as also in the case of the *Time Contemplator* from Cernat.

The *Time Contemplator* from Cernat is a metal tower built from disintegrated metal pieces, separated from one another. Its circles, rings, the heavy thresher wheel serving as a basis and the cart wheel tread lifted into the height of the tower and the other circle-shaped metal forms, rings attach motion to the stationary tower and associate the passing of time. The easier metal objects, the spokes, the treads attach playfulness, motion and dynamism to the massive main elements of metal sculptures. The painting in vivid colours, which is quite unusual in the case of metal sculptures, does not only serve for conservation, but, in the case of the museum from Cernat, it makes the works of art prominent in the black metal mass of machines and tools, indicating that here we can witness something different. It is also the function of colouring to form a contrast with the rich green vegetation of the museum park.

Géza Kovács has often been the guest of the Haszmann Pál Museum. He has been following the time measurement of this institution for almost two decades, he is also part of it. His metal sculpture work placed in the park of the museum formulates the continuity of the passing of time and the eternity of this institution.

**Lajos Sylvester**, 30 September 2010, in Háromszék, Sf. Gheorghe, Romania

## THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST, THE PAST OF THE PRESENCE

### About Géza Kovács's Sculpture

Besides the Hungarian sculptors carrying out their activity in Transylvania, the Hungarian sculptors living and working in Hungary and the Hungarian sculptors who moved from Transylvania to Hungary (and in exceptional cases from Hungary back to Transylvania), there is a type of sculptor, existing in a weird artist's position, living under the conditions of the strange state of being of the artist, embodied by Géza Kovács: the sculptor roaming in the Carpathian basin, commuting between Transylvania and the Hungarian regions confined by Trianon borders which have become symbolic by now. He is both there and here – depending on from where we consider and judge our situation as well as his situation and being aware of the fact that we are both those who judge others and those who are judged by others –, regardless of which side of the border he is on, here and there, and also there and here, and always on the road, because he would somehow like to catch up with his collections wandering about in this territory divided by more and more unsecure borders; he would like to catch up with his works sent here and there and left here and there, as many of them probably already live a totally individual life. These work collections and works of art have turned up in the most various Middle-European settlements ever since the turn of the eighties and nineties of the last century; for a short while they can be admired in the capital, in county towns, in small towns and villages, in museums, exhibition halls or galleries and they soon move further. The number of exhibitions registered in the register of individual exhibitions, presenting Géza Kovács's works is soon close to the hundred: the artist born in 1958 in Târgu Mureș, who studied at the Technological University from Cluj at the end of the seventies and at the beginning of the nineties, and who worked as a mechanical engineer in Sfântu Gheorghe for long years, presented his first works in front of the public in the second half of the 1980s, then he devoted all his time and energy to sculpture. An extraordinarily active and intense, three-decade-long career, linking distant spaces, is behind Géza Kovács sculptor: besides the exhibition forums from Transylvania and Hungary, his works reached the exhibition halls from Germany, France, Sweden and Japan, since 1990 the sculptor has taken part in the activity of several artist-sites from Hungary – like that from Mezőtúr, Vaja, Nagyatád, Csereszegtomaj, Vigántpetend –, where he has had the opportunity to create some monumental compositions as well, and all throughout his artistic adventures he has been awarded several exhibition and competition prizes. In the series of these prizes the first one, giving him tremendous impetus, was the recognition of the Sándor Kőrösi Csoma competition from Covasna in 1992. It is a further important element of his biography, of his career that Géza Kovács works as member of several artistic-professional organizations, and his works have become by now part of several prestigious public collections. So, it can be concluded that the Géza Kovács-oeuvre has become an unavoidable aspect of the Middle-European Hungarian art of the decades before and after the turn of the century.

The artistic initiatives of the twentieth century shook the foundations of the classic artistic ideals: the artists of avantgarde trends and their works of art questioned every convention used earlier for thousands of years in the field of sculpture and artistic object formation and they created an artistic universe based on new values, in terms of a new spirit and a new practice. The subject of sculpture, its technique and material, the concept of the work of art all changed, and as a consequence, the

status of the work of art also changed. The biggest change was the fact that the earlier exclusive principle of representing humans and animals was exiled to the aesthetic rubbish heap: in the turmoil of the avantgarde trends, in the succession of different styles it was possible for everything to become a sculpture, and the materials of the sculptures, carefully selected earlier – the bronze, the marble, the wood – were replaced by any material occurring in everyday life. The sophisticated rendering of the works of art was no longer a requirement: since the activity of Duchamp and Picasso it had become possible that a found object got on the pedestal or in the display cabinet, this found object could be a junk, an everyday cheap stuff; that is, the gesture of pointing at the object, of removing it from its original environment, of its being considered a work of art was enough. In the process of declaring the found object, the finished product a work of art, the method of creating object collages has become an independent area; it creates new constructs out of different elements synthesised as requisites by the passing of time, often independent of one another, originally not belonging to one another. The artist from Sfântu Gheorghe, Géza Kovács, working in the spirit of classical avantgarde endeavours, creates such objects, object collages. Although from time to time among his works of art there appear bronze or aluminium compositions created by modelling and moulding or there appear works of art carved out of wood – indicating that the artist also pursues activity in the traditional branches of sculpture –, the periods of creation before the turn of the millenium and the works created in the first decade of the new millenium prove that he is primarily and basically attracted towards the iron and steel object collages. Of course the use of material, mass formation, space organization as well as the way of expression of the modelled-moulded bronze sculptures and those of the requisite-objects assembled as collages are so radically different – among the bronze and aluminium sculptures there appears the concrete figure, the human shape as well, and on these works the surfaces, the superficies gain emphasis –, however, the sameness and mnemonic character of evocation still creates a consonance between the two distinct parts of sculpture.

As we have already mentioned, although a few monumental compositions were also born in Géza Kovács's workshop – like the wooden *Through Millenia* (2000) from Nagyatád, of overriding importance in this collection, and the bronze *Bird* (2006) from *Reghin* –, this sculptor primarily creates in the traditional form of small sculpture; he creates sculptures of relatively small size, which can be contemplated from close: the works of art are presented for the public in the usual context of exhibition halls, on pedestals. While contemplating the small sculptures it can also be stated that the art of this sculptor is not broken by great changes, major turns: the series of his works conveys a relatively uniform, homogeneous concept, which, in spite of the traditional genre of small sculpture, does not bear the spirit of the classic, on the contrary, it is pervaded by the spirit of modernity. The selection of the material, the way of processing it, the method of creation and of course the concept of creation are no longer related to the classic tradition of sculpture. Instead of the elegant marble and the cold bronze, modern sculpture has discovered and applied several new materials, and among these a prominent part has been played by some of the most important materials of the twentieth century: iron and steel respectively. Instead of the glittering, smooth, elegant and sophisticatedly elaborated materials the rough, coarse iron sculptures, bearing the tracks of the ravages of time, suggest by their material that here serious tensions, problems, trials, hardships, tragedies rather than easy, bombastic things or unclouded beauties are brought into discussion. However, the iron is present only in its secondary materiality and subordinated character on these compositions: the former cogwheels, spanners, bicycle pedals, horseshoes, scissors, cramps, hoops, bearings, screws and chains can be well recognized: machine parts, tool-components, object-fragments, which are linked to the technology, to the world of objects, to the coldly practical functionalism of an age that

is now history. They are related to the handycraft, to manufacture, to a still antropomorphic, transparent, clearly structured technical civilization. In other words, Géza Kovács's works, belonging to the present, are built from the object heritage of the past, in this way they convey messages, they create exciting tensions between the different ages, between the past and the present. However, these fragments are not untouched, they do not occur in their original form, not in their former logical system of connections, and of course, not in accordance with their former functions, but rather in a new, unusual set of connections, forming strange constructions and structures. The artist treats the requisites freely, sometimes he respects the given form elements, sometimes he modifies them a little, and by establishing new relations, connections, form orders and especially by the new aesthetics he assigns new meanings to the old elements. These welded works of art generally do not have a body, they are rather constructed according to the order of schemes, and every component is highlighted through the contour: in this way interestingly formed space lines, space crossings, space interferences are created, the restless, exciting atmosphere, pervaded by motion even in its motionlessness, of the works of art is created. This is the abstract world of sculpture, oriented towards the past, generating weird associations: in the age of computers, of digitalization, of virtualities they primarily raise the old feelings, the illusions of feelings of objects fitting into the human hand, of palpable materials, of practical and transparent functions. However, these fragments, as mementos, echoes of past perfections, can stand in front of us only as miniature, intimate memorials of remembering and reminding of a past age. This is what also Lajos Magyari hinted at when analysing Géza Kovács's works: "We could imagine almost all of these small sculptures in a monumental size as well, maybe in this way they would convey even more shocking meanings." As his constructions are objects placed in space in an extraordinarily dynamic way, rather organized in space, emanating restlessness; they are emphasized by extensions, branches, crossings, interferences, and which are so to say crowned by some calmer wheels or rings. The sculpture collages by Géza Kovács are always ethereal, they never form a closed block, their mass is always generously dissolved, spread in space. The object or structure sculptures built from elements taken out of the former world of real objects never allude concretely to reality: no human figures, no new, concrete objects occur, not even at the level of empathy, as these works of art raise inspirations at the level of the thoughts and the senses instead of substitution or evocation: they open up associative conceptual headwaters for the public. In the works of art the feelings of outbursts, outbreaks, despairs, fears, revolts and outcries get shape, the focus is on the feelings and gestures of collisions, unfinished motions, coming to a standstill, on the world of thoughts organized from scraps. Géza Kovács's object sculpture, promising shocking meanings, blends in a unique way tradition and innovation, the spirit of international artistic initiatives and the most profound, ancient and newer impulses rooting in craft, in folk art. His works are sensitive, profound confrontations with time-segments, involved in the material bearing the tracks of the ravages of time: they display the way the past gets synthetised in the present, the way the present is dissolved in the past.

Géza Kovács's works have the aura, reminding of the past, of a grey world doomed to rusty destruction, to slow decay. However, the layer of rust itself is not real: when Géza Kovács finds the objects, the tools and the components which are rusty indeed, existing in the state of decay, he carefully cleans them, he sort of re-creates them as a scrupulous restorer, then, after the not at all simple phases of assembling and constructing, he creates, with a determined creative intent of aesthetic significance, an artificial layer of rust on the surface of his works of art, which no longer belongs to the old components, but conveys the message, serves the preservation of constructs transformed into works of art. In this way we can witness and experience the strange interwovenness

of the real and the artificial: reality and art, the element of reality and the work of art get replaced by each other unnoticed and one hides itself in the other's disguise. There is no need for us to explain and justify the rightfulness, the genuineness and the reason for the artist's method: we only have to step out of the door of exhibition halls and the phenomena, the things of the world called reality reflect this very absurd phenomenon, the reversed order controlling everything, the replacement of values with worthless things, of realities with artificialities as well as the essence with the appearance, the fact that they are tragically confused.

**Tibor Wehner**, 2010, Budapest, Hungary

38.

### **Open, Continuable Thoughts on Géza Kovács's Exhibition**

I have known Géza Kovács ever since he became a regular participant in the Contemporary Christian Iconographic Biennials organized by myself in the neighbouring building (Cifrapalota in Kecskemét). What is more, he has proved to be the most distant participant several times, as he has sent his works to us from the margin of the Carpathian basin, from Sf. Gheorghe in Transylvania. He took part in the biennial with works similar to those that can be seen here, however, their effect was less surprising among the great number of artworks representing totally different directions than this time, when he "risked" a sole exhibition. We can regard him as one of the representatives of innovative endeavours in today's Christian art. If we disregard the topic, as this exhibition is not about it either, then he can be considered as belonging to the progressive artists within the genre of sculpture. "Modernism" has its history also within this genre; within it, the greatest changes took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, within the framework of the most varied trends of the classical avantgarde, which attempted at dissolving the canon of sculpture regarded until then as traditional. The struggle still holds between the more open and the more traditional conception, as sculpture is maybe one of the most conservative genres. The direction followed by him still requires certain courage, as the canon got reinforced again and again since the ancient Greeks; the generic principles, the aesthetic concept were still strongly present even in the twentieth century, together with Neo-Renaissance and Neo-Baroque elements. We can speak of a basically down-to-earth genre, in this way we cannot even be surprised by the fact that its topics were quite limited, restricted to the human body.

Géza Kovács steps over certain sculptural traditions with an apparent ease, while he does not deny the laws suggested by nature either. He shapes his works with a self-evident naturalness and immediacy, so each and every viewer plays a role in the creative process, in the spiritual completion of the artwork. This is the very reason why we cannot be surprised by the fact that some speak about figurative sculpture, others about nonfigurative one in connection with him. In his works there opens up a world which is present inside everyone of us, but the formulation of it, which also implies the activation of the recipient, requires talent too. Thus, Géza Kovács's sculptures are incomplete in a certain sense, what is more, in a way that he offers every viewer the possibility of joint image formation together

with the artist. Today we already know that seeing actually takes place in the brain, it is a spiritual process. This is why the artist does not finish, does not keep polishing his sculptures until the infinite. His works are open, continuable thoughts.

In Géza Kovács's case his interpreters and critics sometimes maybe overemphasize his Transylvanianness. The homeland is surely important, just as the fact that he found the old, often already rusty objects constituting the elements of his sculptures there. In spite of this, it seems that it is not our ethnographic knowledge that decides whether we can interpret the small sculptures, which can also be regarded as object collages, as installations. Many times it is up to our subjective vision stemming from our previous experiences what we can do with Géza Kovács's compositions. Accordingly, we can see utensils whose forms remind us of animals or humans. This zoomorphic, respectively, anthropomorphic attitude has been part of art for thousands of years; what is more, it influences our imagination without any kind of direct formal intervention, for example, even when we see a simple peasant tool. (In the contemporary collection of the Gallery of Kecskemét *Simon Blaise's Monks* can be mentioned as parallels in this sense, on which French hoes turn into human faces.) Of course, the good artist does not only find these effects, but besides the spontaneous, instinctive creative processes, partly consciously, he also fosters it. The extraordinary formal freedom and airiness of Géza Kovács's works, the play of negative and positive forms all serve the flexible associations of forms and ideas, "compelling" us to discover the world, together with the artist, in God's creative activity.

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