

IGOR GRECHANYK

Interview for Fantasy Art Magazine (China)
January 2011

PART 1

1. Please first introduce yourself

I am Igor Grechanyk, an artist. As an artist I see my mission in penetration to the mysteries of Universe by means of art, in liberation of spiritual energy of a man, in opening of eyes of his spirit. The artist spreads his feelings as his wings broadening his perception and getting an opportunity to touch the hidden parts of the world, where we have no access. Formerly people traveled far away to other countries over the skyline and brought some wonders from there. An artist can perceive and open new worlds by his spiritual vision. He brings to the people gifts from far lands: beautiful images, which could not exist if an artist would not open them by his spiritual eyes.

I am based in my creative work on spiritual search of thousand-year civilizations for going out to other dimensions, other worlds, opening spiritual potential of modern man.

2. How did you find your way to becoming an artist?

I was born and raised in an artistic family, my father was a sculptor. Artistic environment was habitual for me from early years. I have not been looking for the way to becoming an artist, I was staying on it from my birth. I had an inner need of the world perception, its visible and invisible part, through art. I understood this need in early childhood, and it was always clear for me that my fate is to be an artist. From early years I attended art lessons, then art school, and later on was graduated from Art Academy in Kiev.

3. How did you get your first art job? What is the story of that?

I Received my first commission when I was 24 years old. This was a sculpture-relief of Muse 4 meter high and 8 meter long. Had it symbolic sense that I made Muse with attributes as my first commission? My future task as an artist was concentrated in that first commissioned work. This fate I continue to realize now.

4. How did you find your artistic style?

I never thought wittingly about choice of my style. What you see is natural realization of my vision of art. I have classic art education and I use known styles as subsidiary means. Style never determined the scope of my creative work. I concentrate all my attention on spirit of image. As a consequence of that my unique individual style appeared without my deliberate efforts.

5. Which artist has influenced you the most?

I can not mention just one artist, There are several names of artists who inspired me first of all by

their strong spirit, by their art and by their devotion to art. These are Arnold Boecklin, Franz von Stuck, Van Gogh, Ernst Fuchs, Alexander Archipenko, Kazimir Malevich, and of course Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. And many others.

6. How long does a new image generally take you to create?

It depends on immaculacy of my intention to implement an image. And sometimes it is dictated by external circumstances. On average it takes from half of a year till one year. But there are cases when I created sculpture in a few weeks and sometimes the process of creation lasts years.

7. What kind of training you did in the usual to keep your skill grow up?

The best training of skills in art is constant (continues) creation of art works. It is also study of works of artists who lived hundreds and thousands years before us. Through contemplation of their art works you have a live dialogue with those artists, with their spirit, that is present in this world through their art.

8. When starting a new work, what is the first thing you think about? Can you describe your work flow and process?

The most important is to feel the spirit of the image you want to create. The image comes as a far melody which you hear. You have to turn yourself emotionally on the image. It intrigues you, pulls you in its world, lures you. You goes on that call. And here you can use music which is in harmony with that image. Music creates a space where the conciseness can move easier.

First the image is not concrete, indistinct, but gradually it becomes visible, its outline appears. Then it intensifies and you realize it in this world. And it is very important not to be in a hurry, not to try to speed up the process, not to attract spirit and form by force. Everything must go naturally.

9. Do you listen to music while working? What kind of music is your favorite? How does the music affect your artwork?

Music creates an aura, cocoon inside which the artist works. It helps developing creative condition and flexibility of perception. With the help of the emotional push of music I change my consciousness from ordinary state.

Music contains subtle energy vibrations, which helps to tune up the spirit of artist. Sound vibrations helps to feel ephemerality of our material world and to feel materially the spiritual world. That's why the music is the bridge between the world known to us and world of ideas. And that's why you need to select the music thoroughly for the creative process. Although with the time it is not so necessary for the master.

I listen many kind of music: from sound of rustling leaves and running water to organ baroque music of Bach and hard rock (like Deep Purple). The music I listen depends on a task I am trying to realize.

Music often brings in it the image, which I want to implement. I hear it as a delicate voice. I

transfer the image brought by music to the three-dimensional implementation. Many of my images are the melodies embodied in material form.

I set myself a task of visualization of sound images. This is embodiment of pure spirit in three-dimensional space by means of hard material. I try not to do the photo of a certain moment, but to build 3-D temple of spirit, where the spirit lives.

10. How do you usually find inspiration?

This is not easy question. It is difficult to say. Sometimes inspiration falls on (flows) as a waterfall of images. I try to catch them, to make sketches, drawings. Then I select which of them I will implement. When inspiration makes a pause I take my drawings, choose the most interesting, in process of selection new thoughts and ideas come. And I understand that I will never realize all those beautiful images. As a human being I am limited by physical facilities and time. During my life I can implement not more than 10% of those ideas, may be just 1 or 2 percents. And images understand it as well and this knowledge put them into grief. And this is main source of my creative sorrow.

11. What is your most difficult challenge when making art? How do you overcome it?

I would say it is giving up from unnecessary details which prevent to perceive the idea of the art work and bear too much information not helping to the image.

12. How many companies have you worked for? What the peculiarity of each company your feel? Please simple introduce.

For the moment I work with the following art galleries:

Galerie Alexander E. Raeber (Zurich, Switzerland)

P&C Art (Washington, DC, USA)

ArtClub Gallery (Paris, France)

Gallery of Surrealism (Prague, Czech Republic)

Mimesis Contemporary Art (Geneva, Switzerland)

Galerie Princess de Kiev (Nice, France)

Gallery Fantasmus-Art (Copenhagen, Denmark)

Walentowski Galerien (Berlin, Germany)

Gallery Fortuna (Kiev, Ukraine)

Art-Usadba Gallery (Yalta, Ukraine)

The results of my inspiration I present at the exhibitions and art fairs in many countries of the world. They are published in well-known editions of Imaginary and fantastic art such as Spectrum, Dreamscape, Imaginaire. My sculptures are in private and museum collections in Ukraine and widely abroad. As well I have commissions from government, private companies and persons.

I am a member of Artist Union of Ukraine, Society for Art of Imagination (London) and leader of the Creative Association "Golden Gate" (Kiev).

PART 2

1. As an artist, why you chose use the sculpture to describe your mind or not use the drawing?

If in drawing you can give only one line, one silhouette, in sculpture you can give several transitions from one silhouette to another, from one line to another. You can see how the line turns (converts) to the volume. Looking at the sculpture from certain distance you see the line, when you come near, you see how the line turns to volume. In view of that you understand that there is drawing, subtle line in three-dimensional sculpture. Many of my sculptures are published in various books, and the onlooker perceives them first of all as a line, as a drawing.

And I like drawing a lot. I have classic education: first I learned drawing, then water-colours, gouache, tempera and oil painting. As well I learned many kind of sculpture: relief, 3-dimensional sculpture in stone and metal and wood. And I returned time by time to drawing, painting and different kind of sculpture to improve my skills. Unfortunately there is no time for everything, and 90% I work with 3-dimensional sculpture in bronze. Now I am preparing exhibition in Switzerland where I am going to present my painting and drawing, three-dimensional sculptures and reliefs. So those aspects of my creative work will become more known.

2. Why you chose the bronze as a main stuff of your sculpture? Why not use other stuff?

Bronze is the most compliant from all traditional materials, it can better implement the idea. Stone has resistance of the material and limited possibilities. But stone better shows big whole volumes, primary geometrical forms (cube, sphere, pyramid). Sometimes when I find fragment of natural stone, I see that it is finished sculpture; that just a few blows of chisel is enough and you can put your signature.

I worked during my carrier also with plastic, black metal, stone, used not only casting, but also electric welding.

Work with bronze sculpture – with molten bronze – is peculiar alchemical act of search of philosophers' stone of art. For me bronze for my sculpture is not only the alloy of certain components in certain proportion, this is joining of metal with intention of the artist, this is supernatural (or superartistic) act of birth of Galatea.

3. Why your female sculpture all finespun?

There is a lot of various things in the Universe. But I as an individual have my own preferences and taste. And in accordance with them I select what I will embody, and even what I want to perceive.

Each line is like a melody. Straight line is a straight tone. Horizontal line is one tone, vertical line is another one. And refined line of women's body is a melody with tonalities. But straight lines I like as well.

4. How do you think about the female images symbolic significance in your created?

Mainly these are images that come from far space and bring the model of the primordial Universe and fragments of ancient civilization which I find in the Universe like a researcher. Partly those images are my vision of a woman of our days and partly they take up those creative energy flows which cross the Universe. May be this is the point of new Universe birth: new ideal world in our reality, which implement ideal aspiration of man's soul. Woman has a special role in this world as woman's essence is magic. She is Goddess or she is standing at the origins of world perception as Eva that was the first one who tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And through those ideal images I approach to the understanding of magic spirit known as woman.

5. What kind of sculpture is a good artwork?

True art is a creating, opening of a new world of spirit, or when spirit comes to our world through art works (masterpieces).

It is general affirmation that concerns human activity: painting, sculpture and almost anything else that people create in their life.

6. How do you think the best view angle of the sculpture? I mean ever sculpture is a three-dimensional artwork, the viewer can see it at various angle. When we see the same thing in different angle we will get different feeling. So do we need to design a best view angle of sculpture? Or just show what we got from the inspiration?

Sculpture must have a silhouette. Practically you can not make this silhouette visible from all points of view. The viewing angle of the silhouette is rather narrow – 90 degrees from one side and 90 degrees from the opposite side. And lateral side must have another silhouette. Ideally you should see new silhouette from each point of view (each 90 degrees).

I try to reach it in my sculptures. I am looking for angles of viewing for the sculpture wittingly, forming up my intention to bring to this world part of the harmony.

When the picture of sculpture is to be published it is possible to choose one or two points which reflect this image in the best way. But usually I feel that there are more good points, and I must refuse from most of them though it is rather difficult.

7. Someone said, ever artist was took part of soul when he create some thing, but only the best artwork has their own soul. How do you think about this word? Do you think your artwork has own soul?

The energy of an artist goes into its art works in the process of work on them. And if an artist is strong enough energy-wise, then he puts enough energy, enough spirit into art work for creation of critical mass of energy in it. As a result the soul of an art work is born, and it starts to live by its own life.

I understood it working on my art works. In the morning approaching to the sculpture I work on I see that it changed for the night, it lives by its life. I try to help its coming into being. But on certain stage an independent development starts and sometimes it seems to me that some

sculptures do not want me to continue working on them. They consider themselves complete and perfect enough for independent life.

8. If the sculpture is something carry your mind, your soul, your inspiration. So when you show your sculpture, you also show your mind, your soul, your inspiration. When you show them, what you want to get back?

I expect perception and understanding. But I do not concentrate on that. It is important to deceive your own expectations. I accustomed myself to work not expecting any immediate return, I am just trying to work irreproachable bringing to this world new images. Eternity has its own plans regarding civilizations, life development and each person, and any artist can only hope that eternity has plans regarding his art. But anyway created art works are a reward for an artist. And of course moments of communication with those who understand my ideas and appreciate my art are always interesting and pleasant.

Concentrating attention on art people have a possibility to turn their attention on spiritual search and see that the world is bigger than everyday routine affairs and troubles. I hope that perception of my art contribute to that.

9. Could you introduce the sculpture industry in the Ukraine?

Sculpture in Ukraine has ancient traditions, starting from 5-7 centuries before Christ. Sculptures in stone known as "Scythian idols" and one of the most ancient plastic in ceramics Trypillia plastic (figures of people and animals) becomes more and more known in the world. You can admire in Kiev's museum by masterpiece of antic art "Golden pectoral" which does not have analogues in the world and which was created on the territory of Ukraine in Scythian period.

One of the greatest world sculptors Master Johann Pinzel lived and worked in Ukraine in 18-th century. His sacral sculptures combine the elements of spiritual and passionate; nearly photographic reality, images similar to Michelangelo's with modern elements of expressionism and cubism. He is a fantastic artist. I know no one like him.

Name of Alexander Archipenko is well-known. He is a great master, who found new form in sculpture. And he learned art and started his way in art in the capital of Ukraine – Kiev, where I live and work.

My father sculptor Victor Grechanyk began the realistic dramatic style combined with plastic minimalism and strictly selected form.

10. Do you have some advices to younger sculptor?

First of all you should not expect fast recognition. And secondly it is very important to understand yourself, your inclinations.

Art which is created by the artist is a reflection of his personality, if his art exists as a continuation of his soul. He must understand that he works on himself, and what he creates is a manifestation of his inner world. Laozi wrote very good about that in his work Daodejing.

Generally art is a way as long as life of artist. All the time you must look for and find. There are pleasant stops of triumph and recognition on this way, but first they are very short and second

you must go farther ahead.

In principle there is no special advice for art. These are general advice for the way of a man, including way in art. And I would advice to read testament to young sculptors by Auguste Rodin where he wrote about that very capaciously from the altitude of his experience.

11. What you plan for the future?

I would like to finish series of works "Butterflies' Garden" and present this project next year to the public in Kiev. As is well known a butterfly in its cycle can be caterpillar and chrysalis as well. If we extrapolate those stages on our world we will see that last almost 100 years visual art concentrated on reflection and interpretation of caterpillar and chrysalis, forgetting completely about butterfly existence. Understanding necessity of caterpillar existence I would like to move attention of people in art from contemplation of caterpillar that gobbles up leaves to the image of beautiful butterfly that takes nectar from flower.

As well I work on several big projects of monuments.

Next year big exhibition of my sculpture, painting and drawing is planned in Switzerland. In 2012 I will have an exhibition in Monaco. Of course I would like to show my art in China, country with extremely rich artistic and spiritual-philosophic heritage. I hope it will be realized in near future.

Thanks for your answer.

Thank you.