

Sculpturesite's owner and curator Brigitte Micmacker (B.M.) interviewed Josef Marek recently about his body of work in the current show: Infinity Trapped.

B.M: Glass sculptures that use transparency have an ethereal quality not generally associated with fine art sculpture. How do you feel they are perceived by viewers and collectors today?

Josef Marek (J.M.): I am afraid the majority of art lovers or collectors do not recognize glass as a medium for the creation of an object of fine art. I can only speculate about the reasons, but I guess that the main reason might be that they have not yet seen fine art sculpture made out of glass. When it is standing in front of them, usually they appreciate it, but still, they have their doubts - could this be fine art? Or is it some kind of trick?

Glass is just material. It has many applications as do other materials.

Still, in many ways it is very special - it can be anything you want. Transparent, translucent, opaque, mat, polished with billions of colors and pattern variations. This gives to an ARTIST an endless number of opportunities how to use it to suit their art intention. It looks like that there is an infinite number of applications and discoveries in glass processes.

In my case, I am often focused on the spiritual symbolics of a transparent glass mass and the transformation of penetrating light. There is definitely something divine there, something important, which we can only feel. Almost there. Almost to touch it.

Of course, this certainly depends on each artist's approach. In the end, the art is done by artists. If they are artists, it does not matter which material they are working with.



B.M: Your sculptures are all one of a kind. What does this mean in terms of the work involved for each piece?

J.M: First of all, I truly enjoy creating something different each time.

The best part of my work is creating a new maquette. The rest is a necessary job.

It would be certainly much more productive to make from one shape more castings than one, but not so interesting.

Even if this is going to make me work much harder as I have to create a sculpture for each casting alone. I do not see it as “time-consuming. Time-consuming is fabrication itself. Making molds, castings, hundreds of hours of grinding and polishing, sandblasting, acid etching, etc.



B.M: Each of your sculptures emanates a mysterious essence. Yet there are very physical tasks that you must undertake to reach this result. Can you describe your process from the very beginning to the end of creating a sculpture (mold-making to final polishing)?

J.M: I guess I have partly answered already. The mystery of glass objects is in the penetrating light. I am just, according to my experience, creating forms that calculate with the light and shapes which area the penetrating light will later highlight. What I am truly interested in is also the illusion of space that looking through the glass may create. This sometimes-colored illusive space feels like an “ideal space” as described by Greek philosopher Plato. This is a mystery!



The process of fabrication is a nice, interesting craft, but not my major focus. Briefly, the process itself goes from drawing, creating models, making molds, kiln casting, grinding, polishing, acid etching, sandblasting, glue chipping, and other techniques.



Often something goes wrong so regardless of the high cost of materials and labor, I have to start over again from the beginning. The time of fabrication is from one to 4 months depending on the scale and processes involved.

B.M: Can you share which artists you especially admire and have possibly been an influence for your work?

J.M: I do not know, I like Henry Moore, I like Tony Cragg, I love Brancusi, I certainly like Alexander Calder mobiles, I admire the work of the architects Kaplicky, Ieoh Ming Pei, or Oscar Niemeyer.....Each of us grew on someone's shoulders, so I would not mind appointing the artist I am influenced by. Still, I cannot say that this or that artist is the major influence. Rather I think it is the society which I am living in and watching every day. This is a major influence. Certainly, you can see an almost minimalist or purist approach in my work, I guess it is just because it is still the best contemporary art form of these days, for me of course!

B.M: Many of your sculptures have a geometric central void or negative space, often an oval or a square or triangle. Do you see a significance here?

J.M: There is a reason. The transparent medium allows me not only to work with the front and back of a sculpture at the same time but also to find contrast and balance between the inner and outer form, amplified by the light.

B.M: Your friend, the Greek physicist, ontologist, and philosopher Antonios Sophocleus Evangelinos writes about your work: "Freed from gravity and opacity, the mind ... enter(s) into this silent, nonverbal visual lab and ponder(s) on the eternal non-individualistic truths about our hidden Oneness, our one and only essence as responsive and experiencing beings." Is the expression of

this Oneness he describes in your work an intentional endeavor, or the result of another conscious or unconscious process?

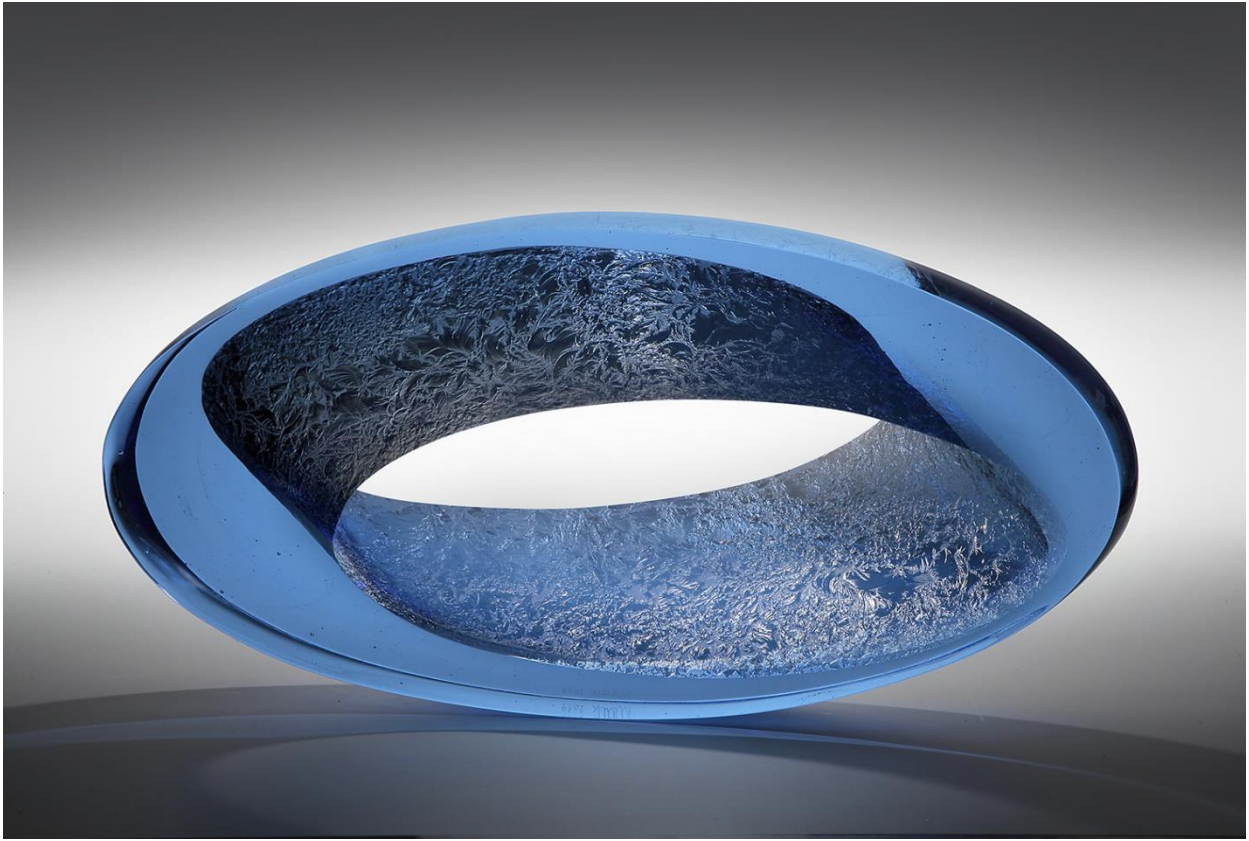
J.M: This is an impression which Antonios can get from my sculptures. Even if it might be an unintended result. Still, it expresses well the most mysterious part of my sculptures which I have answered: There is definitely something divine there, something important, which we can only feel. It is almost there. Almost to touch it.



Please see below the comment of Antonios Sophocleus Evangelinos about my work:

“The path to the light is a mystery by itself. The path to the mystery is also mysterious. Yes, we intentionally try to throw away everything futile, everything dragging down: the struggle is intentional, the battle against gravity, against crude passions, is square and definite. What is miraculous is the emergence! This passage, this shift to a new reality of being and sensing. An ethereal reality that emerges as an absolutely unexpected by-product of this battle. This by-product, this marvelous side effect, was completely out of any expectation or calculation. And yet it is real! And yet it does happen! No further description of the miracle is available. It just happens! And it is so enthusiastic! In the same way that Josef’s objects, when revolving, they visually inverse their own revolution. They are imbued with a specific form of life. They are alive in their own intrinsic way. Something qualitatively new happens here. And you know that it happens because you see it behave in ways that surprise even yourself! Immersing yourself in these pieces of Josef’s art, yes, you immerse yourself deliberately. However, the vision, the sense, the admiration, the journey takes you or leads you away: to something that you had not even the faintest idea that you could ever

watch... This is methexis, this is the platonic rapture of the mind, the nous (νοῦς, in greek). And this is art! So real so evasive. And yet, so... possible! So subtle, so powerful."



J.M: Brigitte, thank you for your questions, which certainly have raised my attention and respect, and also for giving me this unique opportunity to exhibit my humble works in a respected sculpture gallery such as Sculpturesite.

B.M: And thank you, Josef! I am delighted to be able to present your work to our collectors.