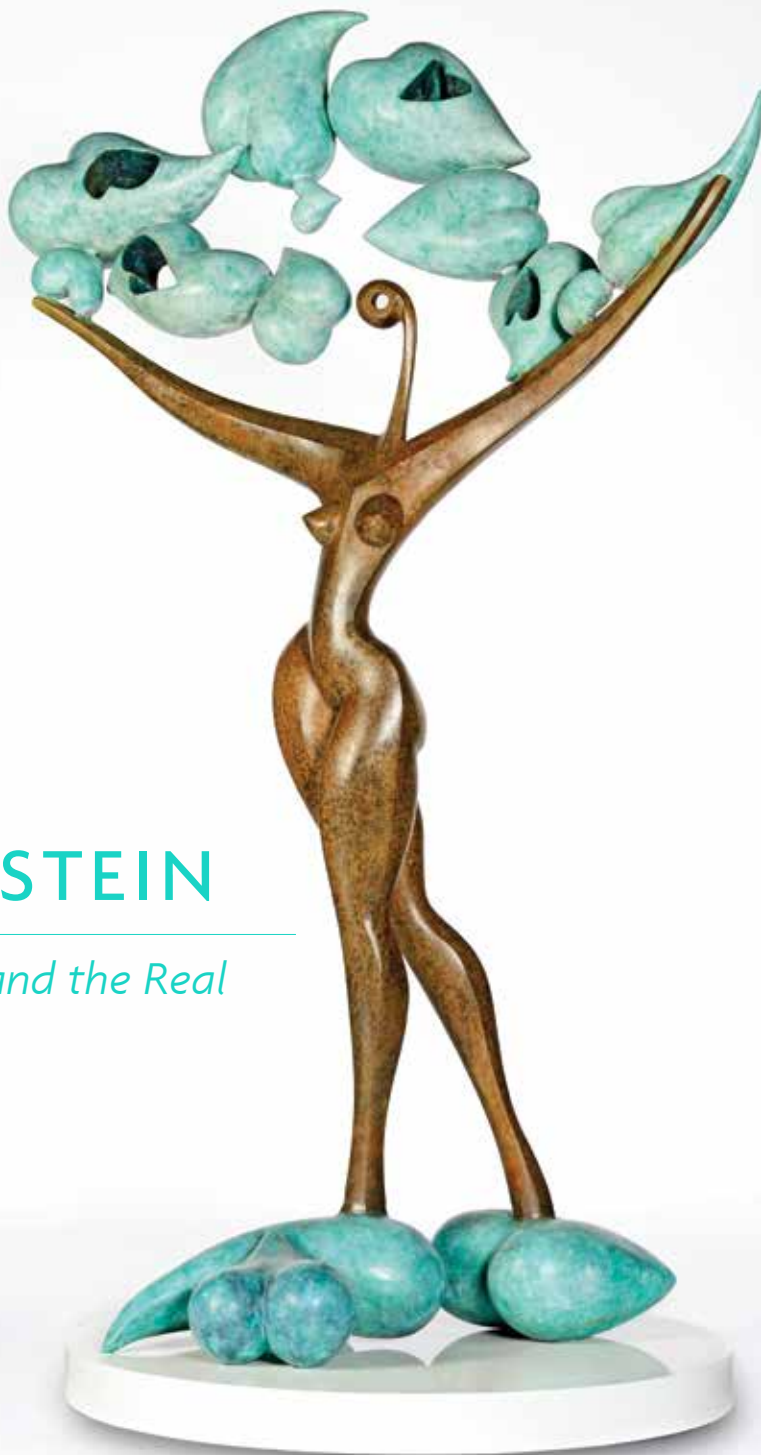


LEON BRONSTEIN

Between the Fantastic and the Real

MARCH 6 — MAY 31, 2020



LEON BRONSTEIN

Between the Fantastic and the Real

Presented by The Winter Family Collection

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART
March 6, 2020 – May 31, 2020

Leon Bronstein: Between the Fantastic and the Real

Presented by The Winter Family Collection

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at the Saint Louis University Museum of Art
March 6, 2020 – May 31, 2020

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Love is
the gateway
to a lifetime
of friendship
and beauty.

GATE B

Edition of 5, 1994, Bronze, Green Patina, 67" x 27" x 37"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By Richard L. Winter

Usually, at the beginning of a relationship, first-time meetings create opportunities to get to know each other.

In 1993, I attended the Chicago Art Expo to become better acquainted with the art industry. I wanted to open an art gallery in St. Louis and needed to develop relationships with artists interested in representation at the gallery. While viewing art works at the Expo, I came across a booth that presented various, very interesting sculptures. It was the work of Leon Bronstein.

After introducing myself to Leon, we spent some time discussing his works and his focus regarding his creations. During that time, I purchased a few of his works that were on display as initial items for the gallery. In doing so, Leon was “okay” with receiving a check for payment. As I was writing the check, Leon noticed the sterling silver Waterman pen that I was using. He thought that the pen was beautiful.

After I left Leon’s booth, I thought about how he really liked the pen. Well, since I was planning to return to the Expo the next day, I thought I should see if I could find a pen like mine to give to Leon as a gift. I started walking down Michigan Avenue looking for a “pen store.” It was a very cold day, and the “wind chill” was unbelievable. As I kept walking, I asked myself, “How far do I need to walk on this very cold and windy street to find a store that sells pens?”

Finally, after many blocks, I found a store that sold pens. I hoped they had the Waterman products and a pen like mine. I had my pen with me and showed it to the salesperson. The store had one in inventory. So, I purchased it, and since it was a gift, I asked for gift wrapping.

The next day, I returned to the Expo and immediately went to Leon’s booth. I pulled the wrapped package from my coat and told Leon that he could take it back to Israel as a gift from me. Leon took the gift and placed it on a shelf in a storage cabinet within his booth without opening it. I assumed the cabinet contained items for him to take back home. Quickly, I said to Leon, “You can open the gift first.” Leon took the gift out of the cabinet and opened it to find the pen. There was a great smile on his face and a gracious thank you on his lips.

I guess you could say our relationship began with a meeting, a purchase, and, of course, the “pen.” What a fabulous way to start a lifelong relationship and a fabulous friendship that still exists today. Later, I discovered that he took the pen to all his future art exhibits for “good luck.”

Kathie, my wife, arrived in Chicago for the Expo, and I wanted her to meet Leon. My young son, George, was with her, and we all went to the Expo to see him again. Leon is such a super, kind person. He welcomed them with such a graciousness that showed us he is a fabulous person.

As time passed, Leon held many exhibitions at our Caitlyn Gallery in St. Louis. Kathie and I visited Leon and his family several times in Israel, and Leon and his family have shared our home in St. Louis as well. Our daughters, Leigh and Jessica, traveled to Israel years ago to visit Leon and his family. When Leon had another exhibit in Chicago, our daughter, Jamie, and her husband, Eric, visited with Leon and his son, Danny. Kathie and I were invited and attended Danny’s wedding. Just a couple of years ago, we visited Leon and his family in their beautiful new home in Ein Hod. Our son, Jason, and his wife, Michelle, went with us. No matter where we met or visited, we always had a wonderful time with Leon and his family. To enumerate all the visits, where we were and what we did, would take pages. Our whole family and his family have enjoyed all the experiences.

Leon also honored me in 2014, when he and his wife, Betty, traveled from Israel to attend the opening night of Saint Louis University Museum of Art’s *The Dream* exhibit, which featured a selection of my art collection, including a number of his sculptures. That was a fabulous gift for me. During *The Dream* exhibit, our granddaughter, Rosie, visited with Leon for most of the evening. She was thrilled with the experience.

Through our foundation, The Winter Family Collection, Kathie and I are so very excited about working with Saint Louis University Museum of Art to present a retrospective of Leon’s 40 years of creating beautiful works. Thanks to Leon, Petruta Lipan, Michael Zolman, Amy Freeman, Lilyann Rice, and all others that worked so diligently to make this a fabulous event.

Dear Leon, thank you so very much for being my “lifelong very special friend.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert", is written above a silver and gold ballpoint pen. The pen is positioned horizontally below the signature.

Dear Leon,
thank you so
very much
for being my
“lifelong very
special friend.”



GATE A

Edition of 5, 1994, Bronze, Green Patina, 68" x 39" x 28"



Leon Bronstein carving olivewood in Old City Caesarea, 1981

DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

By Petruta Lipan

LEON BRONSTEIN, was born in 1951, in the Russian republic of Moldavia. He grew up in an era of intense state control, a time when artists that embraced Western influences were accused of committing acts of treason. The period between 1953 and 1962, known as Khrushchev's "thaw," marks the beginning of nonconformist art in Russia, when artists explored forbidden Western styles and trends. After 1962, despite a return to state controlled art, the punishments the nonconformist artists received were less severe and did not include execution.

Bronstein, who always loved making art, had no option but to follow the state's directive and train as an engineer and watchmaker. In 1979, he took his family to Israel to escape the oppression. There he was unable to get a job as an engineer or watchmaker for which he was trained.

In 1980 his life took an unplanned turn when the small figure he carved from a piece of olive wood was an instant success. He carved more than 1,000 pieces while experimenting with form and the properties of the material. After several years, he felt the need to work with a material that would allow him to expand his visual vocabulary. He turned to bronze, which required a totally different approach as the casting process was very different from carving.

Bronze challenged Bronstein's way of thinking technically and aesthetically. It allowed him to bring a sense of flow and dynamic weightlessness into his work and to charge his works with inner energy. His living in two different cultures allowed him to develop a style in which he reconciled the fantastic and the real. His work addresses universal themes of harmony, beauty, peace, and love in a personal style that is uniquely his.

Bronstein stated, "My sculptures are meant to illustrate an existence that is bound up with a physical reality that transcends both the fantastic and the spiritual craving for both the absolute and the infinite."

Bronstein's works are in corporate and private collections all around the world, from Argentina to United States, South Africa, Italy, and Japan. Saint Louis University Museum of Art is proud to present the work of Leon Bronstein, whose work crosses cultural, political, and geographical boundaries.

LEON BRONSTEIN



Hidden from view, in an old building with sand-soaked walls and curved arches, Leon Bronstein works daily in his studio in Ein Hod, Israel, a small artists' village that sits on a hillside overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Here he finds the necessary solitude and peace to bring his latest inspirations to life. Most days, the only sounds heard are those produced by Bronstein: the cutting of iron with a disc, the steady buzz of welding, the sanding of plaster, the ringing of a hammer hitting a metal surface. Occasionally, he will play music to lighten the silence. "It's interesting how lack of sound sometimes has a weight you can feel with your mind," he says. Though, when talking with Bronstein about his life experiences and artistic inspirations, his attitude and demeanor are the opposite of weighted down. He has a true love for life, keen insight into emotions, sharp perception of his surroundings, strong work ethic, deep passion for his creations, and sincere appreciation for the finest details and simplest moments. All qualities shaped by his life experiences and channeled into his art.

Throughout his life, he has worked in many spaces and honed his artistic craft through formal and informal education and related experiences. Bronstein was born on July 20, 1951, six years after the conclusion of World War II. His upbringing was typical of a child born into a working-class family in Tiraspol, Moldavia of the former Soviet Union. Like his three older siblings and other children from working-class families, he was expected to contribute to the family income. At ten years of age, Bronstein began working with his father, a tinsmith, on a weekly basis.

Yet, from an early age, Bronstein had artistic inclinations. Like many children, he enjoyed drawing, but his true sense of bliss and freedom came from creations he conceived in nature. While exploring the nearby woods, his imagination and innate artistic talent blossomed. "I believe that my artistic education began right there on the forest floor surrounded by the most elementary materials where I was free to create as I pleased," explained Bronstein. He would collect fragments of wood, search for curious looking rocks, dig up roots, and gather branches that resembled strange animals or charmed creatures, which he used to create figurines. "I didn't realize it at the time, but I was already a sculptor. My arsenal of tools was simple. I used old knives and files to carve and create figures from the materials I collected in the forest," Bronstein continued. Years later, a similar practice would produce an opportunity for him to use his artistic talents as a profession.

“In that moment, I officially became a sculptor.”

Prior to working as an artist, Bronstein was formally educated as a civil engineer, but never used his degree. Due to a severe leg injury, he needed a profession that would allow him to sit for extended periods of time. As a result, he studied to become a watchmaker, which was a surprisingly creative outlet. “I was free to let my mind creatively wander while simultaneously attuning it and my hands to accurately and precisely work with the finest details,” said Bronstein. He was particularly fascinated by the art of repairing a mechanism designed to measure time. “These watches were designed and built to count seconds, which merge into minutes, which turn into hours, become days, and grow into years. Mechanisms that measure lifetimes,” Bronstein concluded. He was wholeheartedly committed to this profession for seven years.

In 1979, Bronstein, his wife Betty, and two older children immigrated to Israel in pursuit of a different kind of life. His third child was born in Israel in 1985. He describes the move as a character-building experience, which created a rare opportunity for him to grow in wisdom and creativity. “It’s hard to explain the shock of uprooting your family and starting your life over in an entirely new place with a new language, a new climate, a new country, a new culture, a new smell, new air, new soil, new sounds; so much was new. My determination to thrive in these new surroundings swept over me like a giant wave,” he explained.

Not only did Bronstein ultimately thrive, but he used this opportunity to capitalize on his artistic talents. Upon arriving in Israel, Bronstein immediately began searching for employment to support his family. A week later, he was introduced to the owner of a factory that manufactured souvenirs for tourists. The owner wanted to hire someone who knew how to work with wood. Recalling the figurines that he carved from wood as a child, Bronstein implored the owner to give him a chance.





The owner instructed Bronstein to select a piece of wood and demonstrate his skills. Three hours later, Bronstein produced his first olive wood sculpture. The owner immediately put the sculpture on display, and it sold for \$800. “In that moment, I officially became a sculptor,” he declared.

During the two years that Bronstein worked in the factory, all his sculptures sold. In 1981, he left the factory to become an independent sculptor. Four years later, he attended his first Art-Expo exhibition in New York, and all 40 of his exhibited sculptures sold. Selling all his sculptures combined with receiving offers from multiple galleries marked a turning point in Bronstein’s career.

Since then, Bronstein has participated in more than 130 international exhibitions as an independent artist and held approximately 40 personal international exhibits as a solo artist throughout his 40-year career. His work is displayed in galleries in the United States, Europe, and Israel.

As with anyone who has embraced their true calling, Bronstein simply loves life. “Is there anything better than life?” he asks. He sums up some of life’s greatest joys, “I enjoy traveling, observing nature, listening to the sound of breaking waves, visiting museums and galleries, reading books, listening to music, walking on the beach, watching the ever-changing colors of the sunrise and sunset, gathering around the table with my family, tasting fine wine, discovering new flavors, playing with my grandchildren, watching my children succeed. I love to live.”

“I love to live.”

BRONSTEIN'S ARTISTIC PROCESS

Feeling the Pulse of Life



“This artistic process produces continuous joy and satisfaction, while simultaneously inflicting immense mental and emotional pain. There are so many moments when an artist laughs and cries at the same time, moments of intense inner discussion where the artist almost violently argues with his vision, and contrary moments when the artist embraces his vision with passion and acknowledgment. Art without struggle is not art.”

– Leon Bronstein

For Bronstein, creating art is more than a way of life, it is feeling the pulse of life in one of its rawest and truest forms. He simply explains that an artist creates a cycle of symbiosis with the substance and materials used for his creation. He breathes life into material, and in return the material infuses him back with energy. “It’s a form of interdependence many artists describe in their process,” Bronstein explained. “An almost spiritual connection between an artist and his chosen medium, a cycle of life and energy – of creation.” When Bronstein introduces life into materials such as brass, iron, and bronze, he is filled with creative energy. This energy continues to fuel the cycle he describes as a hypothetical perpetual motion engine of imagination and creativity.

Similarly, he also believes that there is a cyclical thirst for knowledge and inspiration, which are both constant states for him. “I feel it’s company at all times,” he says. Research, obsessive curiosity, intuition, and a keen perception of his surroundings fuel Bronstein’s perpetual inspiration. “Those who don’t ask questions are usually uninspired,” he explains. Bronstein retains a mental repository of moments and settings that inspire him, and from this source, he draws inspiration for his next work of art.

Throughout his career, Bronstein has purposefully experimented with different styles for artistic evolution. Though, he consistently chooses to work with hard mediums. “I enjoy the sense of resistance that hard materials provide. The sensation of accomplishment is far greater when I work with mediums that are considered tough,” he said.

While his choice of hard mediums has remained relatively consistent, his artistic process has evolved throughout the years. Today, his process is a blend of imagination and precision. Every piece of art starts with an idea followed by a detailed sketch from various angles. This step enables him to meticulously and accurately visualize the final product and plan his approach to working with different materials and mediums.

After completing the initial stages of planning, he determines the dimensions and size of the future sculpture, and the physical work begins. Bronstein jokingly refers to this as the “sweat and labor” phase, which is his preferred stage in the process. During this phase, he creates a maquette or model reflecting the original sketch finished to scale. An armature in the gestural form of the composition is fashioned by welding metal rods to a supporting base. The dimensional volume of shape and form is then sculpted using modeling material such as Styrofoam, clay or plaster. The result is a “master” for the final sculpture. Molds are made from the master to use in the casting process. Depending on the size of the sculpture, this step in the process can take anywhere from three weeks to three months.



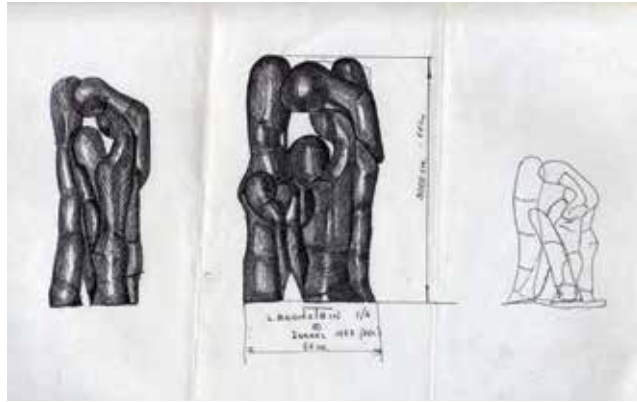


Once the master is complete, Bronstein moves it to the foundry to produce the molds for casting. A mold is made from the model using plaster or a flexible rubber medium. For large or intricate compositions, Bronstein may create several molds. The entire composition is cast in parts, which are assembled by welding them together. The assembled bronze casting is finished by chasing the welds so that the surface is seamless where the pieces connect. Additional burnishing and refining of the entire surface is done before the final finish is applied. The finish or patina on the bronze may be as simple as polishing and waxing the natural cast bronze or may be more complex with the use of chemical processes to affect the coloration of the surface. In his most recent works Bronstein creates a bright high-tech look through commercialized finishing methods like those used in the automotive or commercial appliance industry.

The creation of an original bronze sculpture can take up to four months to fully complete. He usually creates two to five sculptures each year. Bronstein's least favorite part of the process is the intermission between each piece.

An ongoing part of the process is remaining truthful to himself as an artist. He describes it as the simplest, but most difficult task to accomplish at times. He believes this is the only way to produce art that is truly unique. "Art is the purest form of the artist's soul, and a brave artist exposes his soul completely. A veil that conceals the soul will be viewed as a form of deceit by the observer," said Bronstein. Part of that truth is being honest with himself about when to declare a sculpture complete. He describes it as a decision of colossal importance because any sculpture could be subject to an infinite number of revisions. Before deciding a sculpture is complete, Bronstein must feel that he has given life to a work that is worthy. He has destroyed sculptures that he felt were infected with a vision that was not truthful, and thus produced a sense of inner disharmony.

Bronstein's process demonstrates that his sculptures are not aimlessly created on an artistic whim or creative impulse, but thoughtfully and intentionally crafted. Though his talent is innate, Bronstein's success as an artist can be attributed to a combination of hard work and dedication as a way of life. He also believes that he has lucked into good timing. He concludes by defining luck. "Persistence and positivity are what make 'luck' possible. Turning failure into success; transforming sadness into joy; creating something out of nothing; those are moments when I feel 'lucky' because those are the moments when my work has made a difference. 'Luck' doesn't just happen; you must work for it. Those who work are the lucky ones."



During the early years of Bronstein's career as an artist, he had opportunities to not only explore his craft by experimenting with different mediums, styles and themes, but also to grow and explore as an individual through life experiences in a new country with a new culture, new profession, new friends, and a growing family. Bronstein notes that many of his past experiences are reference points or influencers of his creative choices. His style of drawing and 3D renderings show connections to his early training in mechanical engineering and watchmaking. Undoubtedly, these experiences influenced him and manifested themselves in his sculptures.

When he first began sculpting, he had no formal training as an artist and limited time, resources and tools to bring his vision to fruition. These circumstances produced more minimal and abstract work. Bronstein's earliest sculptures were created from the wood of olive trees and portrayed themes of love, family and motherhood. In 1984, when Bronstein's wife, Betty, was pregnant with their third child, he created *Pregnant Woman*. The details are minimal, but the subject matter is obvious. The sculpture took the natural shape of the wood to feature the beautiful round curves of an expecting mother in the signature pose of her looking down at her growing child.

Bronstein carved hundreds of olive wood sculptures for the tourists in Caesarea, but began to despise the method due to its constraints. The demand for his sculptures was great, but he could only create a limited number using this labor-intensive method. Also, the nature of the wood limited his ability to experiment, and he lost the joy that comes from creative expression. As a solution, Bronstein turned to casting in bronze where he could edition his works and use the process to create multiples of each design.

Bronstein decided that
his present work could
make the future that he
imagined possible.

Bronstein's prior works in bronze show the transfer of his earlier experience of creating abstract minimal composition from wood to the replication of these same design concepts in bronze. When Bronstein began to transition to bronze, he cast two works that had previously been created with olive wood. One was *Symbol of Motherhood*, and the other was *Bonding*.

Throughout the next ten years, his work became more abstract. Bronstein vividly remembers wrestling with thoughts about the past, present and future when he began working on *Spiritual Reckoning* in 1995. "I tried to test my thoughts and convey all that I felt in a shape made of metal and plaster," he said. The hunched over figure is clearly deep in thought. The large hollow space in the place of his head may indicate an expanding of the mind. During this time, Bronstein decided that his present work could make the future that he imagined possible.

In some of his more abstract work such as *Mother, Child and Bird*, he wanted to express the feelings he experienced when creating the sketches of the work. "These shapes were in my imagination as both organic and geometric," he explained. "I set myself the task of combining geometry of shapes and organic planes."



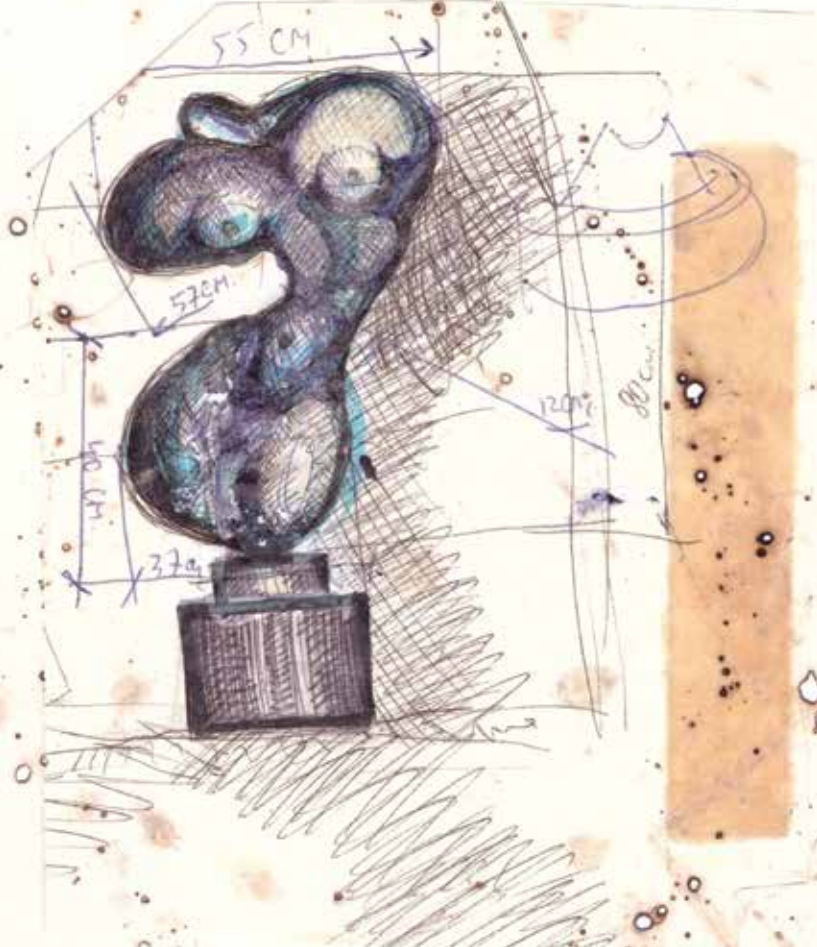
PREGNANT WOMAN

1984, Olive Wood, 3" x 4" x 21"



1999 г.

Позерство, изобразительность, референсы, композиция и углубление.

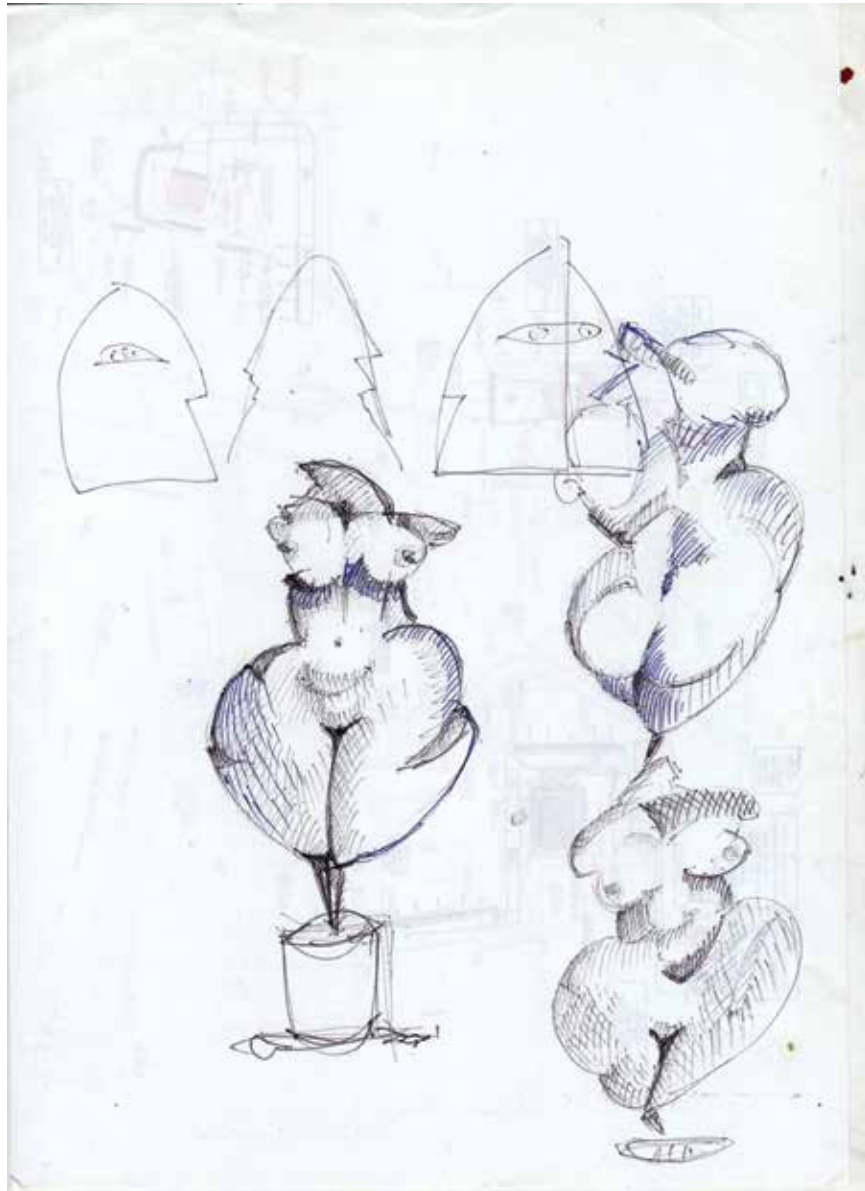


Бронза - материал работы.
в руке, где материал
на воле.



MY BEAUTY

Edition of 9, 1994, Bronze, Patina, 20" x 10" x 32"



UNTITLED

Drawing, Ink on Paper, 8.5" x 11"

TORSO

Edition of 25, 1985, Bronze, 5" x 3" x 9"



BONDING

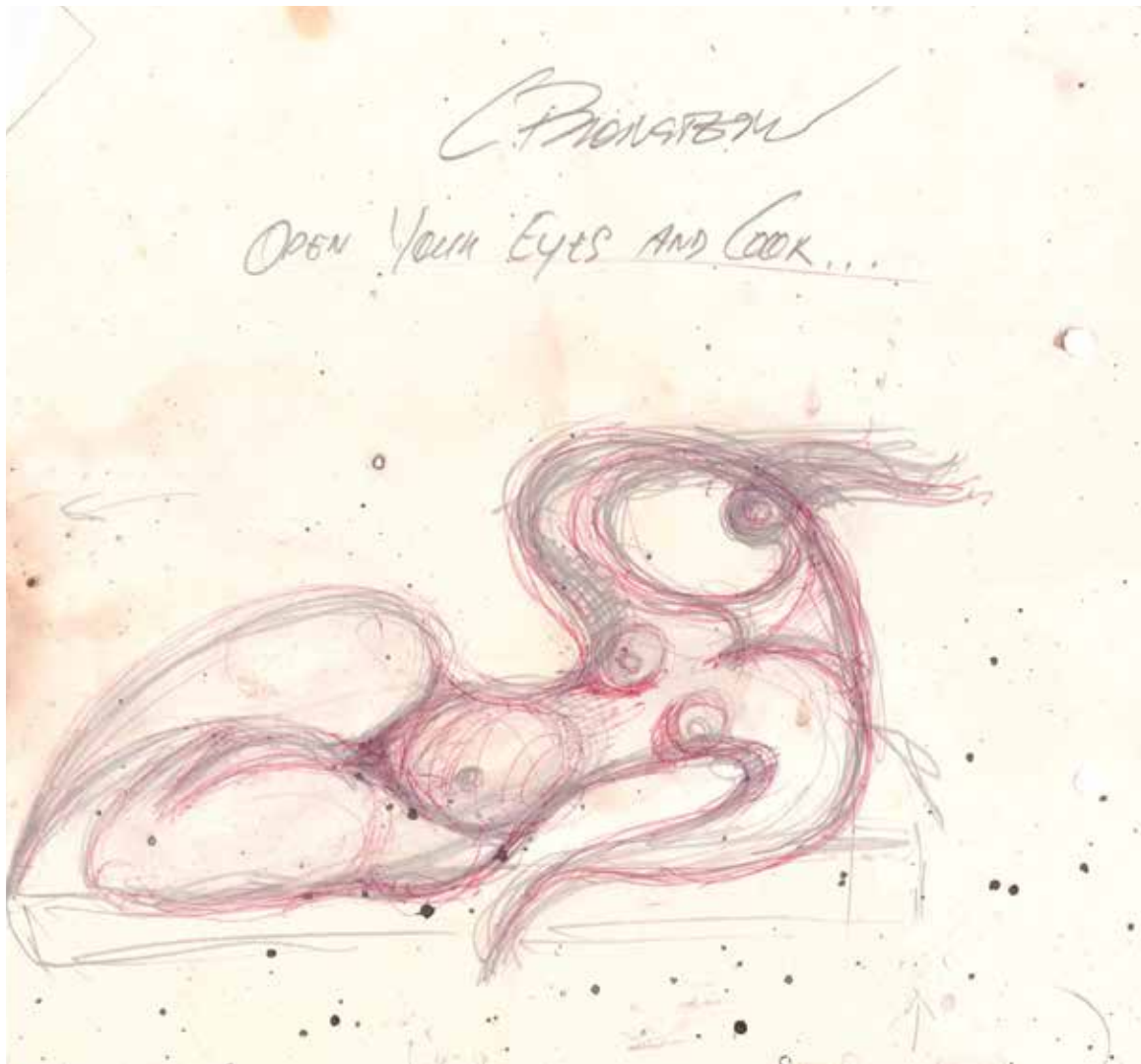
Edition of 50, 1985, Bronze, 6" x 6" x 17"





SPIRITUAL RECKONING

Edition of 10, 1995, Bronze, 42" x 20" x 22"



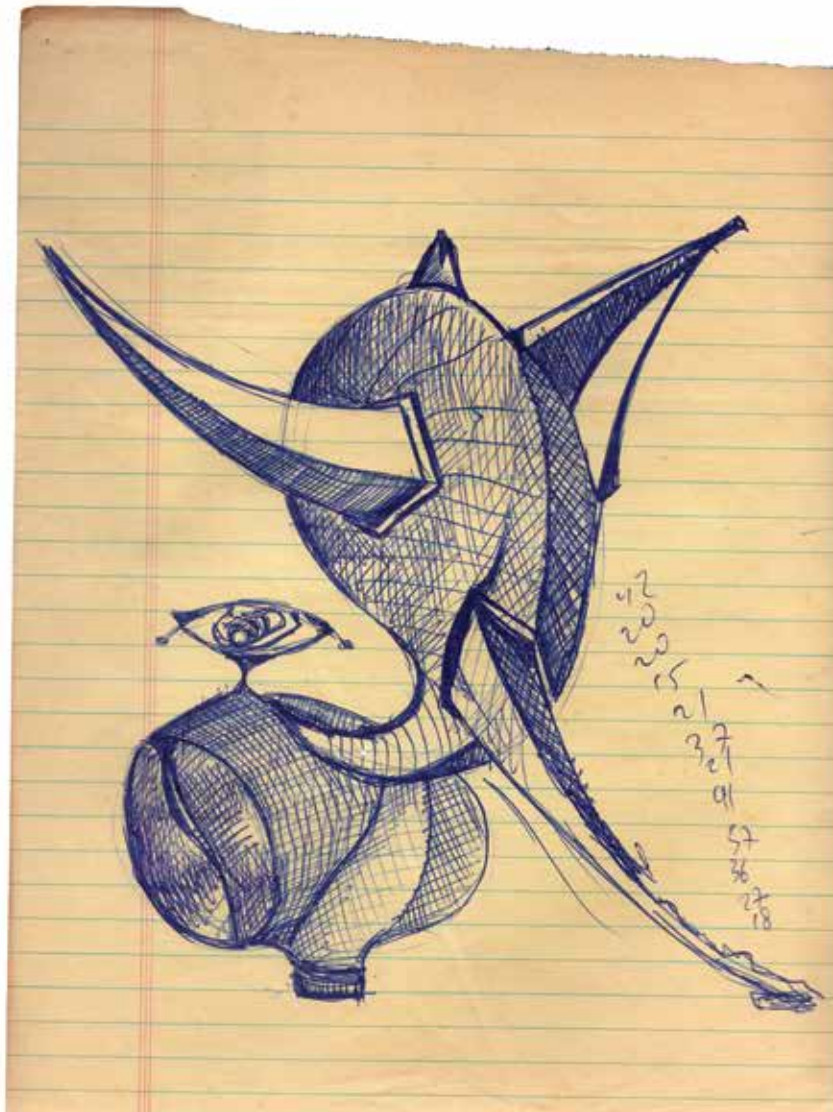
OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK...

Drawing, Ink on Paper, 8.5" x 11"



OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK...

Edition of 9, 1996, Bronze, Patina, 23" x 38" x 19"



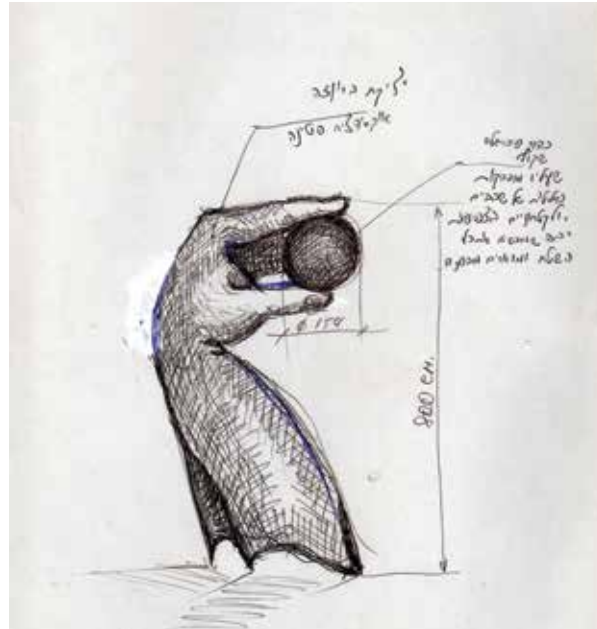
UNTITLED

Drawing, Ink on Paper, 8.5" x 11"



MOTHER, CHILD AND BIRD

Edition of 9, 1992, Bronze, Black Patina, 15" x 16" x 32"



Over time, Bronstein's materials, working methods, and the concepts communicated through his work transitioned and changed. His early works are abstract and minimal, dictated by the constraints of working with olive wood. When he decided to move away from olive wood and began experimenting with new mediums, methods and processes, he had fewer limitations. The transition to bronze provided Bronstein with creative freedom. As a result, his new ideas became originally fabricated as opposed to organically revealed. His sculptures transitioned from organic shapes with a real-life association to iconic symbols that represented an abstract idea. For example, in *Susanna* and *Temptation*, the nature of the message is essentially clear in the iconic sculptures.

Many of the sculptures in this theme are hands. When most communication is nonverbal, sculpting hands as a symbol is a strong method for delivering a message. In these instances, they signify peace, caring, and simply "okay."



CARING HANDS

The Caring Hands sculpture at Garden View Care Center in St. Louis, Missouri



CARING HANDS

Edition of 9, 2001, Bronze, 6" x 12" x 14"

A HAND TO PEACE

Edition of 12, 1998, Bronze, 13" x 6" x 31"





O.K. HAND

Edition of 9, 1998, Bronze, 9" x 8" x 30"

TEMPTATION

Edition of 25, 2011, Bronze, 10" x 5" x 15"





SUSANNA

Edition of 25, 2009, Bronze, 11.5" x 5.5" x 8.5"



Following the maturation of Bronstein's skills from abstract and minimal to symbolic, he begins to communicate ideas of human interactions through model making and casting in bronze. All his works have some relevance to real life experiences learned through day-to-day life. At this point in his career, when the works are directly related to relationships, Bronstein was fathering a growing family and a successful and challenging international art career. Interacting with family and loved ones, meeting new people, and engaging with others in the art community provided a plethora of interactions to illustrate the complexity of human nature in his sculptures.

Nearly 15 years before Dave Matthews wrote the lyrics "When the kids are old enough, we're going to teach them to fly" for the hit song *You and Me*, Bronstein sculpted *First Flight*, which shows three small figures soaring to new heights in the safe embrace of two grown figures. Like all the sculptures in this theme, it is quietly powerful because it shows the intimate interactions and relationships between people. The emotions depicted in these sculptures are relatable from the gap between the two figures facing away from each other in *To the Opposite Directions* to the intertwined figures in *Be Fruitful and Multiply*. Bronstein's keen perception of people is apparent in these accurate, but abstract depictions of human interaction.



THERE IS ALSO A PLACE FOR YOU

Edition of 9, 2013, Bronze, Patina, 70" x 36" x 25"



GETTING CLOSER

Edition of 50, 2000, Bronze, Green Patina, 18" x 8" x 27.5"



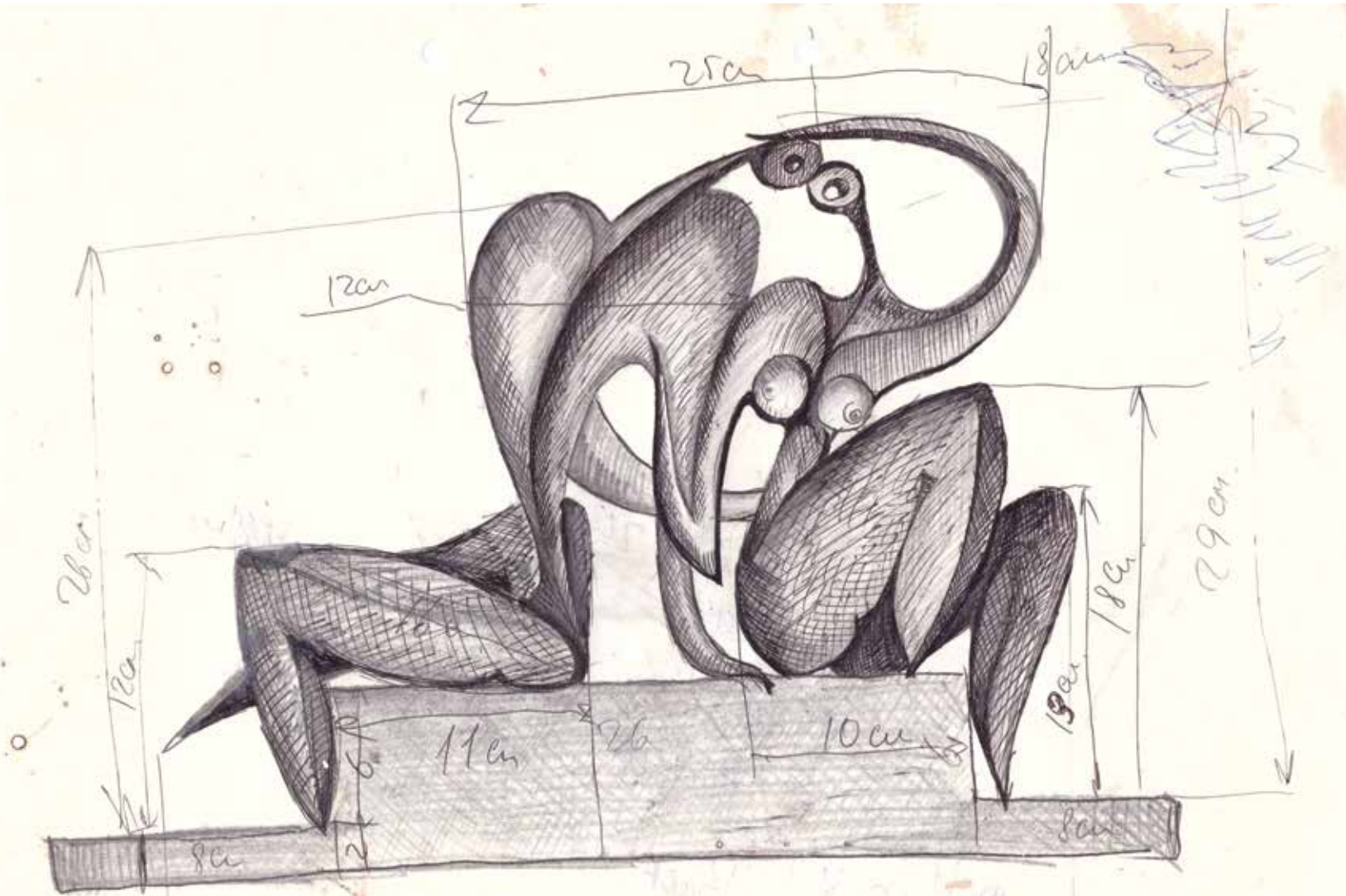
BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY

Edition of 5, 1995, Bronze, 42" x 20" x 22"

I AM SO PROUD TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE MINE

Edition of 9, 2011, Bronze, 9" x 8" x 30"





COME AND BE MY LOVE

Drawing, Ink on Paper, 8.5" x 11"



COME AND BE MY LOVE

Edition of 9, 1994, Bronze, Green Patina, 38" x 34" x 53"

LOOKING FOR DEEP WATER

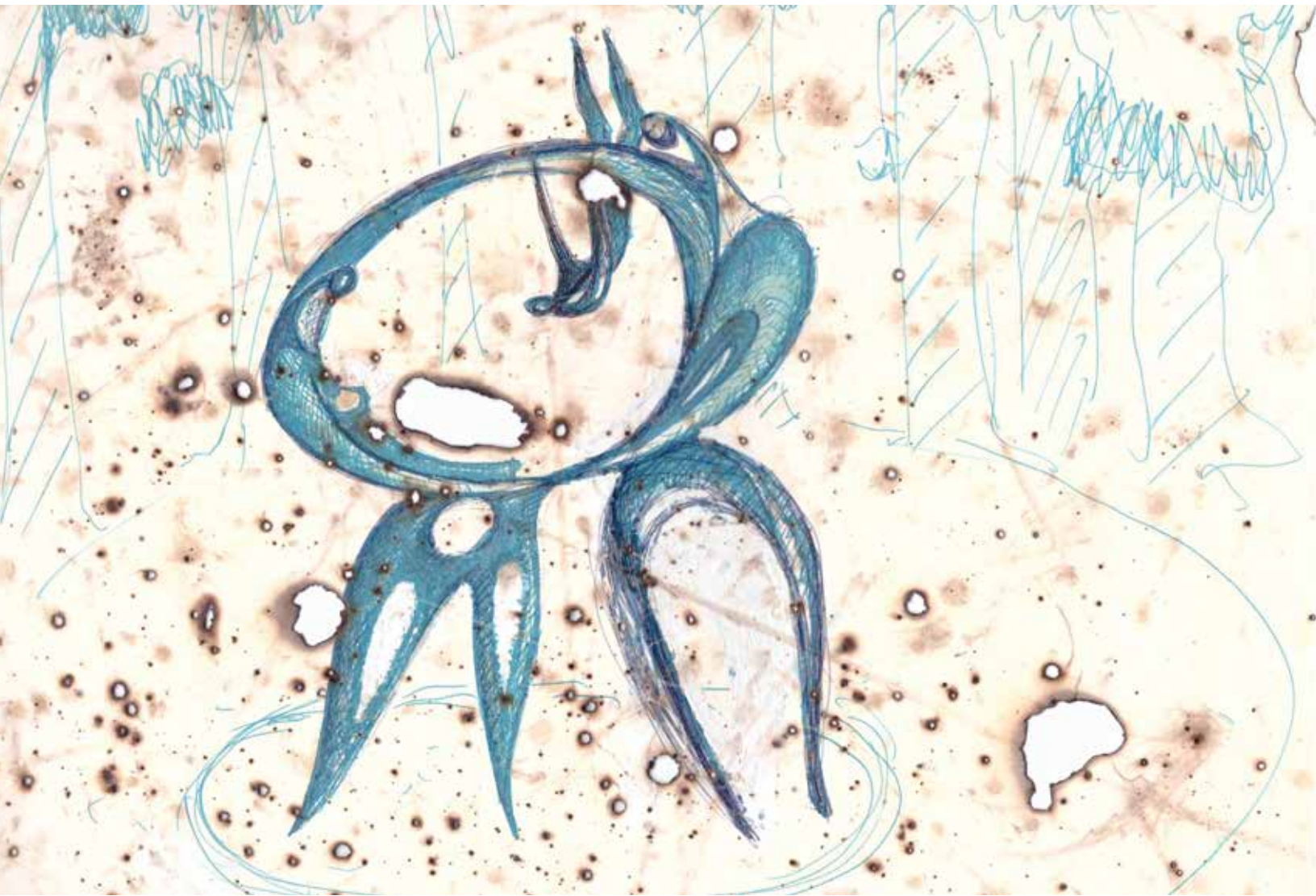
Edition of 8, 2002, Bronze, 30" x 12" x 28"





TO THE OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS

Edition of 5, 2002, Aluminum, Blue Paint, Gold Leaf, 33" x 12" x 26"



FIRST FLIGHT

Drawing, Ink on Paper, 8.5" x 11"



FIRST FLIGHT

Edition of 9, 1995, Bronze, Gray Patina, 37" x 29" x 56"



JUMPING INTO THE WATER

Edition of 3, 1995, Bronze, Green Patina, 31" x 57" x 70"



OCEAN'S MAJESTY

Edition of 10, 1987, Bronze, Green Patina, 45" x 18" x 89"



EXERCISES WITH SERPENTINE

Edition of 25, 2019, Bronze, Patina, 14" x 12" x 27"



A NON BITER

Edition of 25, 2014, Bronze, Patina, 38" x 17" x 27"



CENTRAL FORWARD

Edition of 25, 2005, Bronze, Patina, 20" x 77" x 48"



BICYCLE - UP - II

Edition of 25, 2010, Bronze, Black Patina, 28" x 9" x 20"



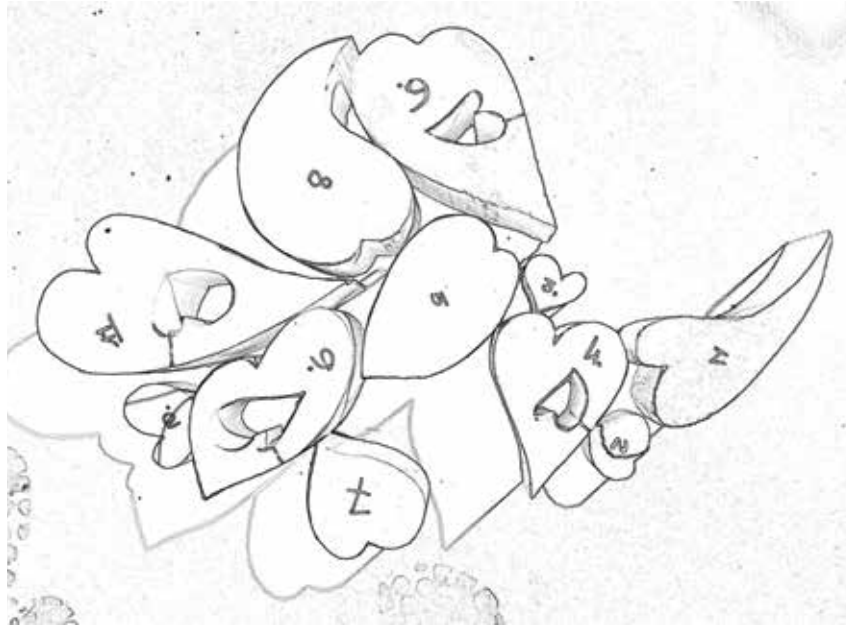
TO THE SKY

Edition of 25, 1994, Bronze, Green Patina, 30" x 13" x 16.5"



MAKE A WISH

Edition of 25, 2019, Bronze, Green Patina, 22" x 16" x 40"



The complex construction and communication of conceptual ideas in later works illustrate Bronstein's mastery of his process and methods. This mastery allows for more involved feats of engineering and collaged construction. His creations are a treasure chest of valuable assets that can be drawn upon and combined to share newer and more complicated ideas. Bronstein's sculptures encompass much more than the expression of a single feeling, sentiment or message. The majority are an amalgam, a mixture of different elements.

Bronstein usually gives his sculptures a double meaning with a mandatory sense of humor. Throughout his 40-year career, "hearts" are a frequently used symbol. Bronstein describes it as "obsessive use." One such sculpture is *When I Fall in Love It Will be Forever*. In this piece, a figure bears on its shoulders a heart of incredible size in the form of a heavy load. It illustrates a famous Ukrainian proverb, which when translated to English, describes love as "hard to carry, but impossible to quit." Ironically, in the sculpture, the heart is hard for the figure to carry; impossible to put down; and seemingly impossible for Bronstein to quit sculpting.

“Once I dreamed that I was playing LEGOs not only with the famous plastic parts of this game, but with the various forms that I had invented.”

In some respects, Bronstein has also made sculpting into a game, like LEGO® bricks. One of the most enjoyable aspects of LEGOs is applying the imagination in an infinite number of ways to constantly construct a new creation. “Once I dreamed that I was playing LEGOs not only with the famous plastic parts of this game, but with the various forms that I had invented,” explained Bronstein. He used the variety of invented forms to assemble different sculptures. Ultimately, he made 20 figures of different sizes and shapes, which he later cast in bronze in multiple copies. Using argon welding, he assembled the parts into various shapes and compositions. One of the works is *Sharing the Same Thoughts*. “I like to play these games,” says Bronstein.

Few things are more complex than communication, and several of Bronstein’s sculptures focus on this topic, such as *Dialog; Twittering and Chattering*; and *So, Come On and Let Me Know – Should I Stay or Should I Go?* He describes an impatient interlocutor who is ready to dispense an answer before the conversation is through, the closing arguments delivered, and the appropriate questions asked. Conversations can vary greatly depending upon the parties involved: spouses, parents and children, clients or competitors, and his sculptures touch on these complexities.



UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Edition of 25, 2000, Bronze, Patina, 22" x 96" x 20"



STARRY, STARRY NIGHT...

Edition of 9, 2012, Bronze, Patina, 40" x 19" x 60"



PLAYING LOVE

Edition of 25, 2013, Bronze, Patina, 20" x 15" x 38"



HEARTS IN PASSION

Edition of 25, 2008, Bronze, Green Patina, 20" x 10" x 12"



WHEN I FALL IN LOVE IT WILL BE FOREVER

Edition of 50, 2007, Bronze, Patina, 17" x 7" x 9"



WE ARE STILL TOGETHER CHEEK TO CHEEK

Edition of 9, 2017, Bronze, Patina, 12" x 22" x 46"



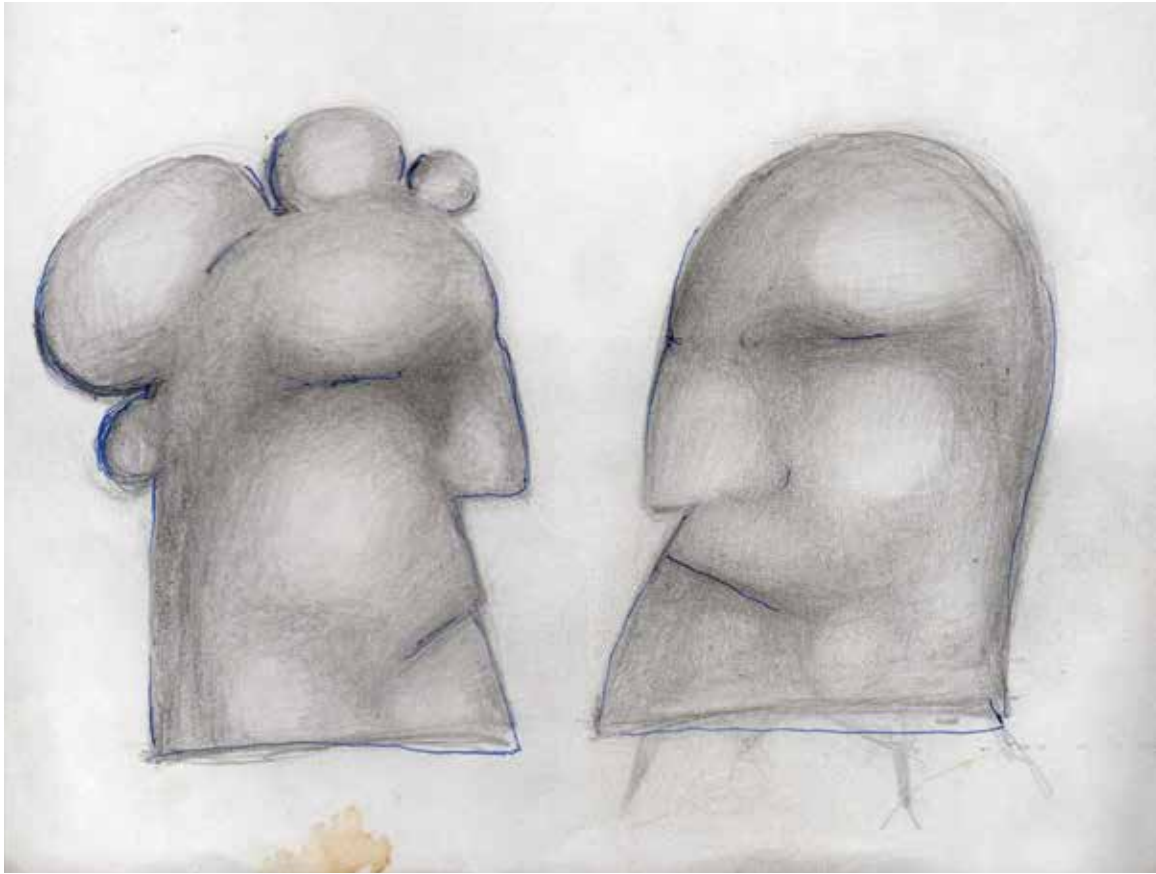
DECEPTION

Edition of 5, 1994, Bronze, Patina, 30" x 16" x 61"



K & Q OF HEARTS

Edition of 8, 2004, Bronze, Patina, 30" x 4" x 19"



UNTITLED

Drawing, Ink and Graphite on Paper, 8.5" x 11"



TWITTERING AND CHATTERING

Edition of 25, 2016, Bronze, Patina, 36" x 5" x 23"



DIALOG

Edition of 9, 2003, Bronze, Patina, 66" x 9" x 41"



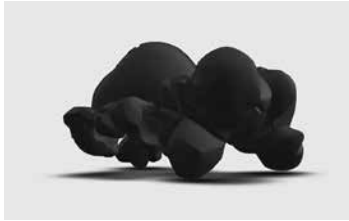
NEW WINTER COLLECTION

Edition of 8, 2004, Bronze, Patina, 8" x 7" x 15"



SHARING THE SAME THOUGHTS

Edition of 5, 2002, Bronze, Patina, 79" x 39" x 102"



Bronstein's current works relate to yet another transition in his career and working methods related to changes in technology. As technology and creative tools change, an artist will continually adapt, seek new challenges, and experiment to maintain or renew the creative spirit. For example, a tool used to carve wood is traded for a tool used to carve plaster or Styrofoam. Casting in bronze is replaced by casting with aluminum or printing with plastics.

As seen in Bronstein's work, the material or medium can influence the design concept and outcome. Modern materials such as cast aluminum or commercialized finishing methods like those used in the automotive or commercial appliance industry create works that have a more commercial or technical feel.

In recent years, Bronstein's sculptures have aligned with his love for cinema, going to the movies and popcorn. Once while looking at popcorn, he was impressed by the uniqueness of the geometry of the exploding kernel. During the explosion, the grain creates a unique and unnatural form. Like a snowflake, from a distance, popcorn all appears the same, but up close each has a unique shape. "Only in one place on top of the grain is the law of conservation observed," explained Bronstein. "The explosion occurs from the top to base."

After observing popcorn, Bronstein decided to enlarge them and create this explosive shape with other materials. "I ate a lot of popcorn before selecting the ten most beautiful pieces," he shared. The representation of a popcorn kernel becomes an abstraction rendered with highly-technical calculated precision and presented with a high-gloss factory-coated finish. He cast the works from aluminum and then painted them. The finished piece pops in the viewer's face a garish objectification of commercialized consumption.

This was an interesting and fun project for him. He shared a couple facts that he discovered upon completion. When looking at his popcorn sculptures, 70% of children under six years of age immediately recognized the sculpture as popcorn. Only one in ten adults immediately came to the same realization. "Obviously, the knowledge and experience gained in life overshadows the natural vision of the world that exists in children," he said.



POPcorn #8

Edition of 8, 2017, Aluminum, Yellow Paint, 25" x 19" x 17"



POPcorn #2

Edition of 8, 2017, Aluminum, Blue Paint, 22" x 17" x 16"



POPcorn #10

Edition of 8, 2017, Aluminum, Pink Paint, 26" x 21" x 21"



POPcorn #10

Edition of 8, 2017, Aluminum, Pink Paint, 26" x 21" x 21"



POPcorn #1

Edition of 8, 2017, Aluminum, Pearl Paint, 22" x 16" x 15"



BRUCE LEE

Edition of 9, 2013, Bronze, Black Paint, 9" x 6" x 12"



POWER HAND

Edition of 9, 1998, Aluminum, 10.5" x 10.5" x 30"



HUSH, HUSH

Edition of 25, 2013, Bronze, 39" x 18" x 20"



Through his installation of bronze sculpture in public spaces Bronstein has brought his art and message into the world for viewers to see with their eyes, touch with their hands and feel with their heart. With his exhibition at Saint Louis University Museum of Art, Bronstein can share with the public the process of how a monumental public art piece comes to fruition. One way would be to present archival documentation and research on previous projects completed by the artist. With Bronstein's vast career, there are many projects from which to choose. His largest, an ultra fantastic and seemingly impossible installation of a monumental 50-foot tall *Bird of Paradise* inside a luxury liner cruise ship, *To The Sky*, soaring gracefully from the ground of the Ben Gurion International Airport, and *Starry, Starry Night* depicting the glory and wonder of humans and nature at the Denver Botanical Gardens are a few that come to mind at once for Bronstein.

However, for the public to come to understand completely and make a direct connection to the art and the process of its creation and placement in public, Bronstein felt the best way would be to relate the conceptual creation of a new work of art in a time and place that is both meaningful and recognized by the local community.



*Popcorn Kernel-Orange, 2018,
Cast Aluminum, painted finish*



The Angad Arts Hotel as bag of popcorn

ANGAD ARTS HOTEL

Located in The Grand Center Arts District, the Angad Arts Hotel is in the center of a vital and developing destination for arts and culture in St. Louis. One effect of the placement of landmark monumental art in public space is the attraction, notability and reflective nature of the environment it generates.

The artist seeks to challenge the ways in which beauty is seen and make the connections that communicate the literal meanings of life related directly to time, place, and an emotional or psychological connection to the world.

This exhibition demonstrates the “process” that the artist goes through in the creation of the art and educates on how site-specific public art is conceived, presented, approved, and delivered for installation in a public space. The demonstration of the process, includes the proposed site-specific location of the Angad Arts Hotel, a mock proposal showing the chosen site and plans rendering the installation with a medium-size example maquette on display inside the museum, along with the reasons for the chosen site and the aesthetic decisions made by the artist to integrate the work into the selected public space.

This concept for the proposal was created by surveying potential locations on site with the artist and talking about the idea with local stakeholders, the curator of Saint Louis University Museum of Art, property owners and those in the community that support the arts.

In relation to a site-specific location at the Angad Arts Hotel, consideration for visual impact and public interaction are key. International trends that have placed monumental works in unconventional spaces and utilized new materials and concepts that are compelling or in some cases shocking to the senses were reviewed.

Parameters that control the final destination of any proposal are the physical constraints, environmental restrictions, government regulations, and potential financial or budgetary restraints. Through communication of the public art concept with the stakeholders, insightful information is gained, which helps determine project limitations and allows for the revelation of present possibilities that are created during the sharing of information. This ebb and flow between the stakeholders and the content creators helps contribute to community expression and in one sense allows a shared ownership of the public art idea. This is a key component to getting a proposal accepted and for its potential successful completion.



*Leon Bronstein's All You Need is Love, 2019
Original preparatory drawings on paper*

During this process, it was determined that a desirable location for a monumental sculpture on site at the Angad Arts Hotel would be the middle of the turnabout at the main entrance. This publicly open space is an active focal point for guests coming and going and acts as a welcoming backdrop, which sets the stage for the visitors first experience in hospitality as they meet the valet and the welcoming hotel staff.

Part of the process of bringing to life the concept in the artist's mind is to sketch it out on paper. The first step for Bronstein is to visually render concepts or design ideas on paper. Bronstein uses drawing as an integral part of his conceptual design process, and through many years as a working artist, has made thousands of drawings. He never kept journals or sketch books but instead would use any and all note-making material on hand in the moment.

Where might the artist be at the AH HA moment, when the creative observation is made, when inspiration strikes, in a crowd at an exhibition, in a concert hall, in the rain...an idea that was captured in a dream is perhaps noted on hotel stationery by the bed as the idea is quickly recorded in the middle of the night.





The challenge of the artist when creating site-specific work is to connect to the surrounding area with sense and purpose and create original artwork that is aesthetically integrated both visual and conceptually. *With All You Need is Love*, Bronstein creates a connection and association for guests that are coming to stay at the hotel with a figure with open arms presenting a welcoming bouquet of love. It subtly suggests spending time in luxury with a loved one or lover. It is very appealing and represents a universally recognized symbol that is presented by the artist as a welcoming gift and delight to guests as well as creating a smart direct promotional tie to the hotel's theme of an artistic and emotional experience in hospitality.

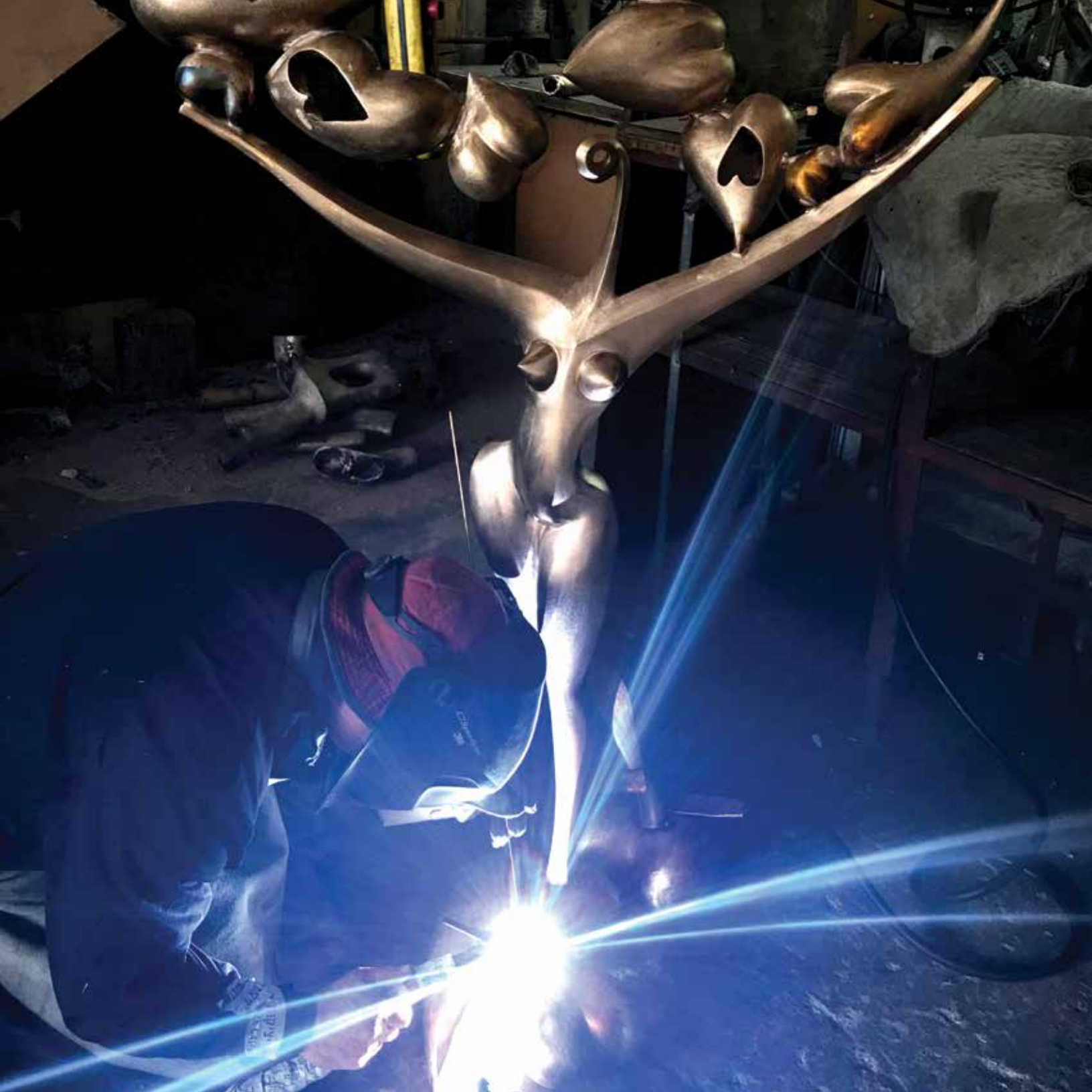
However, like with many of his conceptualizations, Bronstein reminds us there can be more than one meaning or way of seeing, and that his art is much more than a mastery of ancient or otherwise modernized process to engineer fine art construction. When he states, "Engineering and the professional training as a watchmaker expanded my horizons to visualize sculpture structurally and gave me the opportunity to think unconventionally and to see things that are around us differently. Intuitively I learned to relate lines, areas, silhouettes, weight and equilibrium. Looking at all this, I wanted to sculpt not just figurative or abstract compositions that underlie the work. I look at the work not only in its formal construction but also for how it can affect the subconscious. What do I feel? Am I whole and complete, do I get angry and nervous, romantic and loving? Am I indifferent? Happy or sad? Is it making me think?"

Bronstein reminds us
there can be more than one
meaning or way of seeing ...

The title *All You Need is Love* is the same title used by The Beatles in a track they recorded in 1967. This was a major historic worldwide event associated with the first international LIVE broadcast on television. During a time when the entire world was seemingly in chaos, a universal message of “LOVE” was sung around the world. Bronstein was just a teenager, then 16 years of age. American troops were still entrenched in Vietnam fighting, and peace rallies were multiplying as the number of protesters against the war increased. In the Middle East there was conflict with the six-day war, and throughout America, cities were torn apart by rioting and looting that brought the National Guard and martial law to the streets to restore the peace.

Over half a century has passed since that universal message of LOVE was proclaimed and broadcast around the world. Perhaps it is now more relevant than it has ever been. Now through the magic world of sculpture Bronstein shares this... “Love — this is what is THE most important in our lives — it was in the past; it is in the present times; and it will be in the future. Only the power of LOVE can bring people together to eliminate chaos and all existing differences in the world so that all people may enjoy the possibility to live in peace.”

“Only the power of LOVE
can bring people together ...”



FUTURE WORK

The Next Chapter



Looking towards the future, Bronstein would like to create more site-specific public art projects on a larger scale and evolve his popcorn work. He has currently proposed the placement of the *All You Need is Love* sculpture at the entrance to the Angad Arts Hotel in the Grand Center Arts District of St. Louis. He would also like to see his popcorn work enlarged to monumental scale and installed at places such as the Alamo Movie Theater at St. Louis's new City Foundry development or in other related entertainment locations such as Walibi Belgium's new interactive dark ride, Popcorn Revenge by Alterface.

Bronstein is also ready to combine form and color in contrast to a certain form such as popcorn. He prefers abstract forms. He is now planning to work on an enlarged abstract series of unique works using painted aluminum castings. While some of his work will be enlarged, he is also in the process of printing the popcorn kernels smaller using a 3D printer.

In general, Bronstein strives for continuous improvement. Referring to his future works, he says, "I hope that these works will be better than the previous ones." In looking at the evolution of his work throughout the past 40 years, his talent is unmistakable in each decade and theme. While his works may continue to evolve in medium, material, process and technology, his ability to fully capture a moment, feeling, object or interaction through his artistic vision remains somewhere between the fantastic and the real.

“I hope that these works will be better than the previous ones.”

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Between the Fantastic and the Real

PREGNANT WOMAN

1984

Olive Wood

3" x 4" x 21"

Page 25

MY BEAUTY

1 of 9, 1994

Bronze, Patina

20" x 10" x 32"

Page 27

TORSO

23 of 25, 1985

Bronze, Polished

5" x 3" x 9"

Page 29

BONDING

13 of 50, 1985

Bronze, Polished

6" x 6" x 17"

Page 30

SPIRITUAL RECKONING

6 of 10, 1995

Bronze

42" x 20" x 22"

Page 31

OPEN YOUR EYES

AND LOOK ...

6 of 9, 1996

Bronze, Patina

23" x 38" x 19"

Page 33

MOTHER, CHILD AND BIRD

7 of 9, 1992

Bronze, Black Patina

15" x 16" x 32"

Page 35

CARING HANDS

4 of 9, 2001

Bronze

6" x 12" x 14"

Page 39

A HAND TO PEACE

2 of 12, 1998

Bronze

13" x 6" x 31"

Page 40

O.K. HAND

6 of 9, 1998

Bronze

9" x 8" x 30"

Page 41

TEMPTATION

1 of 25, 2011

Bronze

10" x 5" x 15"

Page 42

SUSANNA

2 of 25, 2009

Bronze

11.5" x 5.5" x 8.5"

Page 43

THERE IS ALSO A PLACE FOR YOU

1 of 9, 2013

Bronze, Patina

70" x 36" x 25"

Page 46

GETTING CLOSER

8 of 50, 2000

Bronze, Green Patina

18" x 8" x 27.5"

Page 47

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY

AP 5 of 5, 1993

Bronze, Patina

16" x 5" x 7"

Page 48

I AM SO PROUD TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE MINE

1 of 9, 1998

Bronze

9" x 8" x 30"

Page 49

COME AND BE MY LOVE

3 of 9, 1994

Bronze, Green Patina

38" x 34" x 53"

Page 51

**LOOKING FOR DEEP
WATER**

4 of 8, 2002
Bronze
30" x 12" x 28"
Page 52

**TO THE OPPOSITE
DIRECTIONS**

AP 1 of 5, 2002
Aluminum, Blue Paint, Gold Leaf
33" x 12" x 26"
Page 53

FIRST FLIGHT

3 of 9, 1995
Bronze, Gray Patina
37" x 29" x 56"
Page 55

ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

1 of 5, 2019
Bronze, Patina
31" x 18" x 60"
Front and Back Covers

**JUMPING INTO THE
WATER**

AP 1 of III, 1995
Bronze, Green Patina
31" x 57" x 70"
Page 58

OCEAN'S MAJESTY

10 of 10, 1987
Bronze, Green Patina
45" x 18" x 89"
Page 59

**EXERCISES WITH
SERPENTINE**

1 of 25, 2019
Bronze, Patina
14" x 12" x 27"
Page 60

A NON BITER

4 of 25, 2014
Bronze, Patina
38" x 17" x 34"
Page 61

CENTRAL FORWARD

3 of 25, 2005
Bronze, Patina
20" x 77" x 48"
Page 62

BICYCLE - UP - II

7 of 25, 2010
Bronze, Black Patina
28" x 9" x 20"
Page 63

TO THE SKY

AP III/III, 1994
Bronze, Patina
30" X 13" X 16.5"
Page 64

MAKE A WISH

2 of 25, 2019
Bronze, Green Patina
22" x 16" x 40"
Page 65

UNEXPECTED VISITOR

24 of 25, 2000
Bronze, Patina
22" x 9" x 20"
Page 69

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT...

1 of 9, 2012
Bronze, Patina
40" x 19" x 60"
Page 70

PLAYING LOVE

8 of 25, 2013
Bronze, Patina
20" x 15" x 38"
Page 71

JUGGLING LOVE

6 of 9, 1995
Bronze, Patina
18.5" x 10" x 32"
Page 72

HEARTS IN PASSION

7 of 25, 2008
Bronze, Green Patina
20" x 10" x 12"
Page 73

**WHEN I FALL IN LOVE
IT WILL BE FOREVER**

31 of 50, 2007
Bronze, Patina
11" x 7" x 19"
Page 74

**WE ARE STILL
TOGETHER CHEEK
TO CHEEK**

1 of 9, 2017
Bronze, Patina Black
12" x 22" x 46"
Page 75

DECEPTION

2 of 5, 1994
Bronze, Patina
30" x 16" x 61"
Page 76

K & Q OF HEARTS

3 of 8, 2004
Bronze, Patina
30" x 4" x 19"
Page 77

**TWITTERING AND
CHATTERING**

2 of 25, 2016
Bronze, Patina
36" x 5" x 23"
Page 79

DIALOG

4 of 9, 2003
Bronze, Patina
66" x 9" x 41"
Page 80

**NEW WINTER
COLLECTION**

1 of 8, 2004
Bronze
8" x 7" x 15"
Page 81

**SHARING THE SAME
THOUGHTS**

2 of 5, 2002
Bronze, Patina
79" x 36" x 25"
Page 83

POPcorn #8

1 of 8, 2017
Aluminum, Yellow Paint
25" x 19" x 17"
Page 86

POPcorn #2

1 of 8, 2017
Aluminum, Blue Paint
22" x 17" x 16"
Page 87

POPcorn #10

1 of 8, 2017
Aluminum, Pink Paint
26" x 21" x 21"
Pages 88, 89

POPcorn #1

1 of 8, 2017
Aluminum, Perl Paint
22" x 16" x 15"
Page 90

BRUCE LEE

1 of 9, 2013
Bronze, Black Paint
9" x 6" x 12"
Page 91

POWER HAND

1 of 9, 1998
Aluminum
10.5" x 10.5" x 30"
Page 92

HUSH - HUSH

8 of 25, 2013
Bronze
39" x 18" x 20"
Page 93

CHRONOLOGY

for Leon Bronstein

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 Saint Louis University Museum of Art, St. Louis MO, U.S. – *“Between the Fantastic and the Real”*
- 2015 Mary Martin Gallery, Charleston, SC, U.S.
- 2015 Olly Garden, Ein Hod, Israel.
- 2009 The “Olive Press Gallery”, Ein Hod, Israel.
- 2007 E.S. Lawrence Gallery, Aspen, CO, U.S.
- 2002 Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA, U.S.
- 2001 The Caitlyn Gallery, St. Louis, MO, U.S.
- 2000 The Caitlyn Gallery, St. Louis, MO, U.S.
- 1999 The Caitlyn Gallery, St. Louis, MO, U.S.
- 1999 E.S. Lawrence Gallery, Aspen, CO, U.S.
- 1999 The Old City Caesarea Gallery, Caesarea, Israel.
- 1998 The Caitlyn Gallery, St. Louis, MO, U.S.
- 1997 The Caitlyn Gallery, St. Louis, MO, U.S.
- 1991 International Russian Cultural Foundation, Moscow, U.S.S.R.
- 1991 C.G. Rein Galleries, Edina, MN, U.S.
- 1991 The Willow Gallery, SOHO, NY, U.S.
- 1990 Artist Village, Ein Hod, Israel.
- 1989 The Beachwood Museum, Cleveland, OH, U.S.
- 1989 Emil Leonard Gallery, SOHO, NY, U.S.
- 1987 Adam Art Center, Long Island, NY, U.S.
- 1986 Art Gallery of Harbor Citadel, Caesarea, Israel.
- 1984 The Midtown Gallery, Washington D.C., U.S.
- 1982 Art Gallery of Harbor Citadel, Caesarea, Israel.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 Lahaina Galleries, Newport Beach, CA, U.S.
- 2016 Lahaina Galleries, Newport Beach, CA, U.S.
- 2014 Saint Louis University Museum of Art, St. Louis, MO, U.S. – *“The Dream”*
The Winter Family Collection and the Dreamer
- 2010 SOFA NEW YORK, NY, U.S.
- 2009 SOFA CHICAGO, Chicago, IL, U.S.
- 2009 SOFA WEST, Santa Fe, NM, U.S.
- 2007 Art Shanghai, Shanghai, China.
- 2007 SOFA NEW YORK, NY, U.S.
- 2007 SOFA CHICAGO, Chicago, IL, U.S.
- 2006 SOFA NEW YORK, NY, U.S.
- 2006 SOFA CHICAGO, Chicago, IL, U.S.
- 2005 Art Miami, Miami FL, U.S.
- 2005 SOFA NEW YORK, NY, U.S.
- 2005 SOFA CHICAGO, Chicago, IL, U.S.
- 2004 Art Miami, Miami, FL, U.S.
- 2004 SOFA NEW YORK, NY, U.S.
- 2004 SOFA CHICAGO, Chicago, IL, U.S.
- 2003 SOFA NEW YORK, NY, U.S.
- 2003 SOFA CHICAGO, Chicago, IL, U.S.
- 2002 Art Miami International, Miami, FL, U.S.
- 2001 Art Miami International, Miami, FL, U.S.
- 1999 Art21, Las Vegas, NV, U.S.
- 1999 ArteBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 1998 Art-98, Vancouver, Canada.
- 1995 Art Americas, Miami, FL, U.S.
- 1994 Art Multiple, Dusseldorf, Germany.
- 1994 Art Miami International, Miami, FL, U.S.
- 1992 Tias-Tokyo, International Art Show, Tokyo, Japan.



All you need is love.

Between the Fantastic and the Real shows the range of Leon Bronstein's work throughout his more than 40-year career as a sculptor. His later works evolved in medium and style while consistently illustrating complex emotions, ideas, and relationships with varying degrees of abstraction and realistic detail. In many instances, Bronstein's sculptures are a testament to his keen perception of human emotion and innate talent.

His ability to capture an experience and portray it in a relatable but fresh way is truly remarkable.