

51. International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia
THE EXPERIENCE OF ART; ALWAYS A LITTLE FURTHER



THE SHAPE OF TIME

U.S. Virgin Islands Council on the Arts

CORNELIA KUBLER KAVANAGH

June 12 - November 6, 2005
Opening hours 10:00 am - 6:00 pm, closed on Mondays

INFO POINT ARTE COMMUNICATIONS
Riva S. Biagio (Arsenale boat station, line n.1),
Castello 2145 - 30122 Venice
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Commissioners: Betty L. Mahoney, Lorraine L. Berry
Curator: Paolo De Grandis
Artist: Cornelia Kubler Kavanagh
Organiser: Virgin Islands Council on the Arts
Co-organiser: Arte Communications

“Let us suppose that the idea of art can be expanded to embrace the whole range of man-made things, including all tools and writing in addition to the useless, beautiful and poetic things of the world. By this view the universe of man-made things simply coincides with the history of art.” These are the first two sentences of The Shape of Time, written by my father, George Kubler, in 1962. My *Shape of Time* sculptures evolved from Kubler’s theory that works of art represent cultures and cross cultures, acting as significant markers in the history of civilization.

“Works of art are like gateways, where the visitor can enter the space of the painter, or the time of the poet, to experience whatever rich domain the artist has fashioned.” Through *GATEWAY*’s Romanesque arch, viewers look into a dome-like environment symbolizing sacred space. This opening functions as an intermediary between real space and the imagined space of the artist’s construct.

CHACMOOL is my interpretation of Toltec-Maya recumbent deities that inspired Henry Moore’s reclining figures. Defying gender characteristics, *CHACMOOL* simply reclines upon sturdy arms which form a stylized Moorish arch to contrast with the arches of *GATEWAY*. Having inspired Henry Moore, the Chacmool motivated me to reactivate a “formal sequence.”

Like an angular, multifaceted eye, *PENUMBRA* symbolizes the space “between actuality and the future, where the dim shapes of possible events are perceived.” Unlike the other *Shape of Time* sculptures,



whose maquettes were carved in the Virgin Islands, *PENUMBRA* was fabricated with an interior structure so viewers can sense how hard it is to accept new knowledge.

To represent St. Thomas Aquinas' notion of the *AEVUM*, or "the duration of human souls and other divine beings ... intermediate, between time and eternity," I borrowed from an extinct culture to carve a dual-chambered vessel resembling the Canopic urns used by Etruscans to contain ashes of the dead.

Since concepts in *The Shape of Time* continue to inform my work, I have expanded on the idea of "time and eternity" by carving *AEVUM II*. In direct contrast with the first *AEVUM*, which is an enclosing form, *AEVUM II* is open at both ends to collect light and radiate toward "eternity."

I hope the sculptures I am exhibiting in Venice are compatible with the contention that "artistic inventions alter the sensibility of mankind," if only through their spirit of inquiry and authoritative presence.

Text by Cornelia Kubler Kavanagh

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