

NH Q

*The New
Hungarian
Quarterly*

■ IN MEMORIAM GYULA ILLYÉS (1902—1983)

Poems and the Last Interview — *Gyula Illyés*

At the Graveside — *Béla Köpeczi, András Sütő, Gellért Belon*

Snails for Dinner — *Iván Boldizsár*

■ Socialism and Reform — *Péter Rényi*

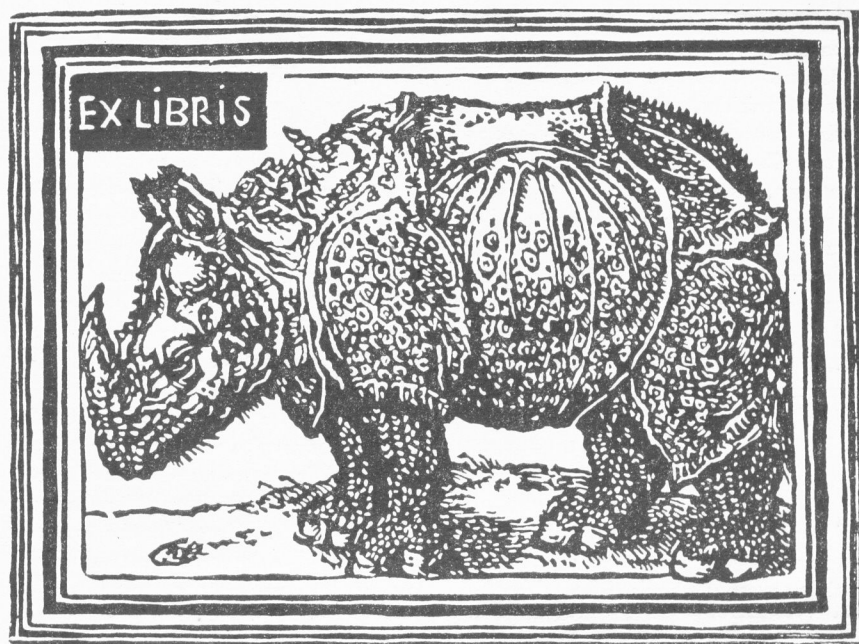
■ Economic Crisis in the Age
of Mutual Dependences — *József Bognár*

■ Carrying on with the Economic Reform —
László Antal

■ Széchenyi and Palacky — *László Dobossy*

91

VOL. XXIV. ■ No. 91. ■ AUTUMN 1983 ■ £ 2 ■ \$ 3.60



Liviusz Gyulai

show; the price, depending upon the number of copies, is quite reasonable.

An agency has been opened—it is called General Art—and its task is to create business relations between artists and the public

as is generally done in art galleries. It is hoped that both parties will benefit from its activity.

JÓZSEF VADAS

FIGURES OF RHYTHM

The Art of András Ósze

András Ósze was born in 1909 in Nagykanizsa, in south-western Hungary. His interest in the basic materials in sculpture was aroused by watching potters at work next door. At the age of twenty-one he became a student of Elek Lux at the Applied Arts School in Budapest, and when the money to pay for his tuition ran out, he decided to study by himself. Between 1937 and 1947 he displayed his works at a num-

ber of one-man shows and group exhibitions, and several of his sculptures were bought by Budapest collections. In 1947-48, he studied on a scholarship in Italy, where he drew his inspiration mainly from early Italian masters. Later he emigrated to Brazil. In 1959 he settled in the United States, moving to New York in 1964; since 1981 has been living in Florida. Study tours have taken him to several countries in

Europe and to Lebanon, Israel and Turkey. He has displayed his works in Brazil, Peru, the United States and Britain in several major exhibitions, and his statues and drawings feature in a number of public and private collections throughout the world. After 1945, his native town was the first in Hungary to mount a minor show of his works (1975); in 1980, a special room for his works was set aside in the local museum. Selections of his *œuvre* were displayed in the Budapest *Műcsarnok* (Art Gallery) in the autumn of 1977, in the Pécs Gallery in December 1981, and in the autumn of 1982 in Csáktornya, Yugoslavia.

*

The sculptures and prints recently displayed in Hungary give some insight into the last thirty years of Ósze's rich working life. They are marked by a more intensive expressive force, lines that provide stylized forms, a novel relationship between planar and spatial division, select nuances of shape and a growing intensity in approach. From the 1960s onwards, his compositions have been organized into increasingly closed cycles. These cycles, consisting of six to fifteen statues, change constantly both in their subject-matter and material, and accordingly, in their technique. The structure of the cycles lies not only in the unity of style, it is backed by the continuity of thought. A cycle does not form a canal already embanked, it serves rather as a pretext (and a stimulating opportunity) for testing the strength and mood of his experimentation; he always conceives and shapes the cycle to his own needs.

Ósze does not always aim at creating a homogeneous formal realm; with him versatility itself serves as a means, since this heterogeneous formal realm is based on a strictly constructed and homogeneous artistic concept which holds the axiom that art means, as well as style, a faculty, an intellectual attitude, which tries to survey

the world and make it easy for others to survey as well. The cyclic units of Ósze's *œuvre*, in this manner, clearly show that the change of formal and intellectual rhythm forms the artist's vital element, that this spurs him on to producing new works, and that this verifies the authenticity of work and life, the one reinforcing the other.

The maturing of his art can be clearly followed through his bronze statuettes and the carved wooden figures he made in Peru in the early 1960s. Typically of Ósze's working of the material, to achieve a more direct effect he moves the surface of the bronze, the rough surface treatment in most cases yielding a scabrous, stone-like effect, and thus resolves the block-like character of the sculptures. Alongside the traditional materials of sculpture, he uses aluminium, copper, lead and metal plates; in these too he has found the technique by which he can shape his conceptions to the internal laws of the material. These statues clearly show that Ósze's real form is small sculpture, and why he never thinks in terms of public squares but in human-size space. The preponderance of concealing, embracing gestures and receptive curves, and the intimate space experience all suggest that these sculptures have their secret—Ósze's figurines always have a secret. Sometimes only a bent head, a tapering off profile refer to the possibility of human unfolding, to the unity of publicity and intimacy, extroversion and introversion. Ósze's great faculty for synthesis is borne out by the fact that in these works he amalgamates, into a harmonic unity, the formal realms of South American Indian civilizations, Greek culture and that of the peoples of the East. In the late 1960s he began to make a growing number of embossed, curved and hammered metal figures (rhythm-portraits), which constitute one of the most typical directions of Ósze's art, a direction evident to the present day. Bent aluminium rods and soldered copper wire are the material for his pendant figures,

which with their silhouette-like outlines merely convey the outlines of the human body. The singular surface texture of the forms cut out of metal plate and further shaped by a hammer, is provided by grains of fired sand.

*

These cycles of sculpture are accompanied in Ósze's work by ethereal cycles of delicate drawings; these sometimes precede or supplement the processes of shaping the statues and sometimes interpret and explain them. Ósze's drawings are typical of a sculptor's drawings in that they present the cross-section, the condensed essence, the summary of the three-dimensional meaning of an imaginary sculpture and of motion, sometimes even indicating spatial character by colours. The drawings present movement reduced to geometrical figures and structures projected to a plane, and despite their apparant variety, they attest to a thorough knowledge of the human body: the same gesture features in several variations, yet the gesture does not become tedious precisely because of the tiny shifts and delicate changes of meaning created by different draughtsmanship. The closed quality of the fragile bodies is enhanced by an elegant elongation of the proportions of the figures; this underlines the singularity and solemnity of the scene and at the same time results in facility. Faceless figures move on the paper, suddenly giving place to some faces of unearthly beauty.

In his latest sculptures Ósze uses fewer and fewer means of expression. He does not intend to incorporate into the work all that his range of thought and technical knowledge would enable him to do—his formal idiom becomes one of the utmost simplicity. Yet his economy is not aristocratic: he employs those few means he uses with high intensity. This highly developed intuition coupled to a complete devotion enable him to penetrate the material and

produce out of it something which is already beyond visible reality. In fact, in all his works Ósze recreates images of this reality beyond visible reality.

András Ósze has intentionally omitted something from most his sculptures. They are typified by a structure reduced to geometric elements and he often closes the forms with a single soft line, yet without softening their hardness. His restrained, summarizing, eschewing of detail leaves just enough space for the imagination to supplement the spectacle freely, unnoticed as it were. This lack of minute detail is also necessary for the details not to check the gesture intended towards something or somebody. These sculptures express desire for something—for a completion that signifies the sense of their existence and fills their want. But what is the origin of this need, this need which flashes from the concave forms of the curves and which excites the feeling both of harmony and incompleteness? One is hardly mistaken in saying that the source of this lack is the experience that there is something missing from man himself, his life and the world. Nobody is sufficient into himself and Ósze's paired and multi-figured compositions show that the same holds true for two or more people. The central problem of Ósze's art is whether man can find the community he has lost, a completeness that means happiness. Every one of Ósze's statues is a negative statement: he undertakes fate in a synthesis he has found or is seeking for, and seeks a solution that contains the possibility of the future, of tomorrow's advance. It is perhaps in this that one can most fully grasp the paradox in Ósze's sculptures: their fragmentariness indicates an unceasing search for order, a search that can never arrive at the order it seeks for.

His best sculptures are characterized by thinking in terms of exact forms, a singular sculptural exactitude; this is one of the main components of his expressive powers and plastic effect. In these works one sees

that Ósze is virtually playing with his formal knowledge, his intellectual experience and yet he brings forth unmistakable compositions. In contrast to the abstract experiments, he is led by an aim to preserve forms, and in his sculptures he aims at rediscovering forms and solicitously maintaining them. He can be sensually attached to reality and give its quintessence at the same time, creating a strict composition that preserves all that the experience of pure spectacle can offer. In his most successful works, plastic form and the idea expressed in it, the emotional and conceptual elements are born simultaneously; content transubstantiates into form, and thought asserts itself in its entirety through form. His forms feel out the forms that exist under the surface, as it were, and in circumscribing and coalescing them he creates a new kind of structure of reality out of them.

Ósze is a meditative sculptor of lyrical conception. For him the statue is not merely a means of self-expression, but one of the most significant methods of experiencing reality. With him a work of art is not only the only possible and final formulation of his notion of things—it is also an ethical attitude. In his view the statue is the manifestation of an intellectual demand, which drives man to self-consciousness. His forms

are not determined by incidental events. He believes in every man having a mercilessly clear moment in his life when he lives through, surveys, indeed, must survey—his life. With his sculptures he aims at these moments and this conviction helps him realize forms in which man can find himself.

András Ósze is an artist of a universal outlook, sensitive to human problems. In his uncompleted and open works one encounters an artist struggling with the problems of space and form, aware of human attitudes and building outwards from within. While he tries to embrace the entirety of life, he attempts to find and portray that singular reality which gives sense to things. His recognition of the fragmentariness of the world does not prevent him from expressing his demand, one which can only be met by absolute values. With him, the sorrow over the lack of something there does not lend to an overemphasis of this lack. In fact, he struggles against that false modernity which wants to force its own uncertainty upon others; he does so precisely by pointing to the possible way out of anarchy. In his endeavour to re-establish harmony, he evinces his faith in beauty and purity.

GÁBOR TÜSKÉS

A PHOTOGRAPHER OF HUMAN LIFE

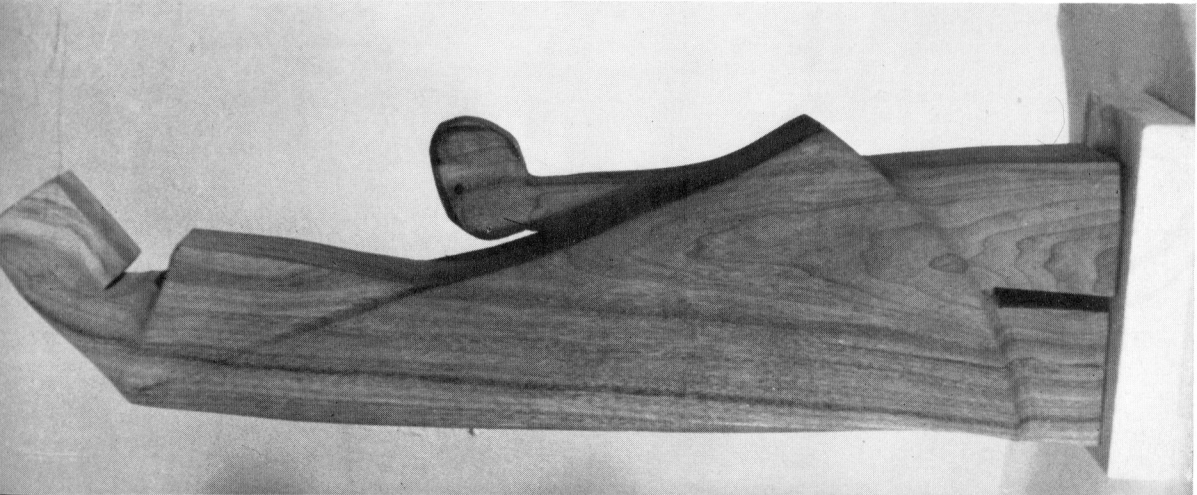
The István Tóth Retrospective

In September 1980 one of the New York photo clubs awarded István Tóth the distinction "The Century's Outstanding Photo Artist." The plaque to mark this honour went into a cupboard which contains 269 other medals and goblets, all carefully packaged. They are marks of the appreciation bestowed on him between 1956 and 1980

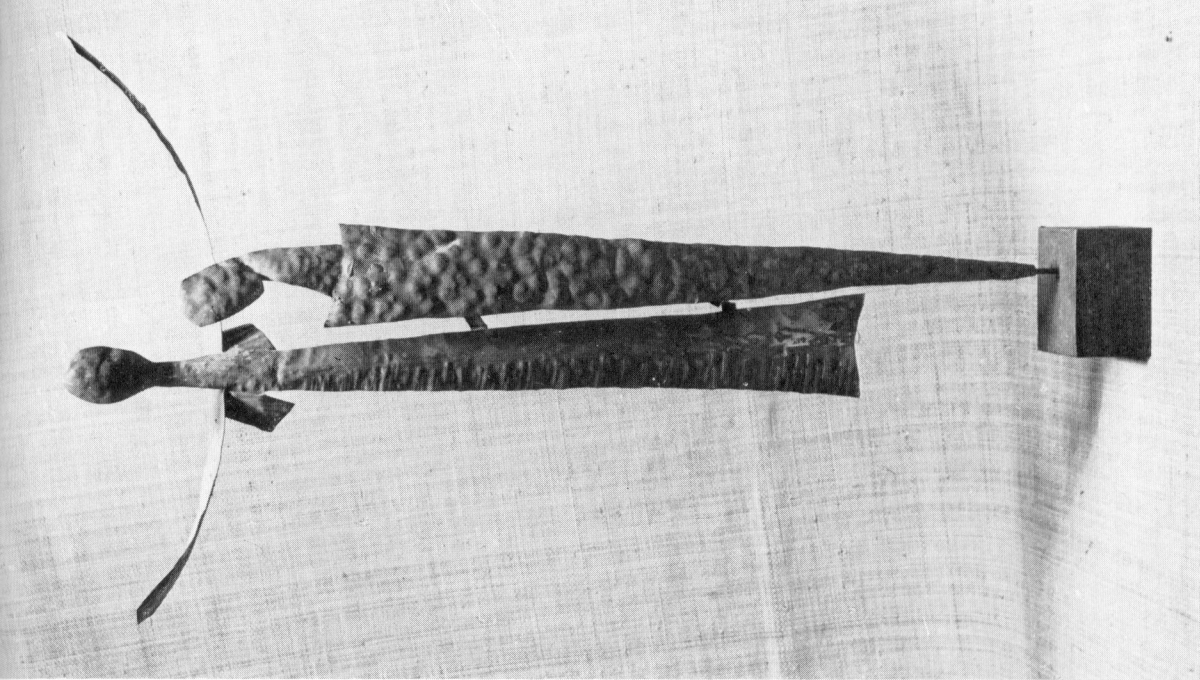
from Singapore to London and from Bordeaux to Melbourne. This internationally acclaimed artist lives in Cegléd, a small town in Hungary.

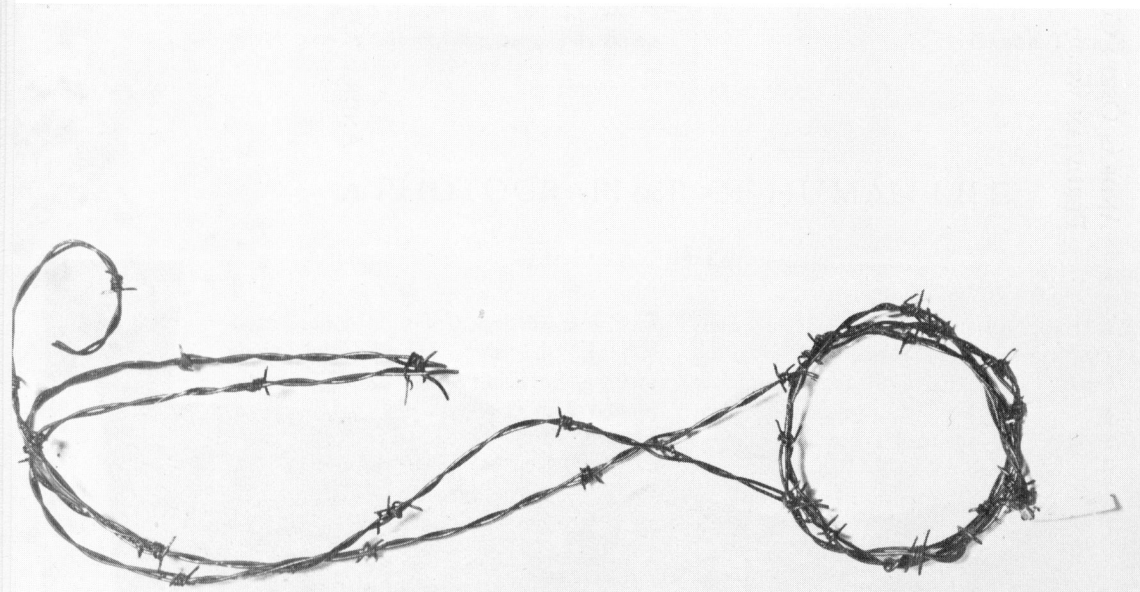
István Tóth was born in 1923 in Nyáregyháza, a small village on the Great Hungarian Plain. His father was the local notary and did not look favourably on his son's

ANDRÁS ÓSZE: CONVERSATION.
PERUVIAN WOOD. 1966. 60 CM.



ANDRÁS ÓSZE: LIGHT—SOURCE. 1961.
BEATEN BRASS. 41 CM





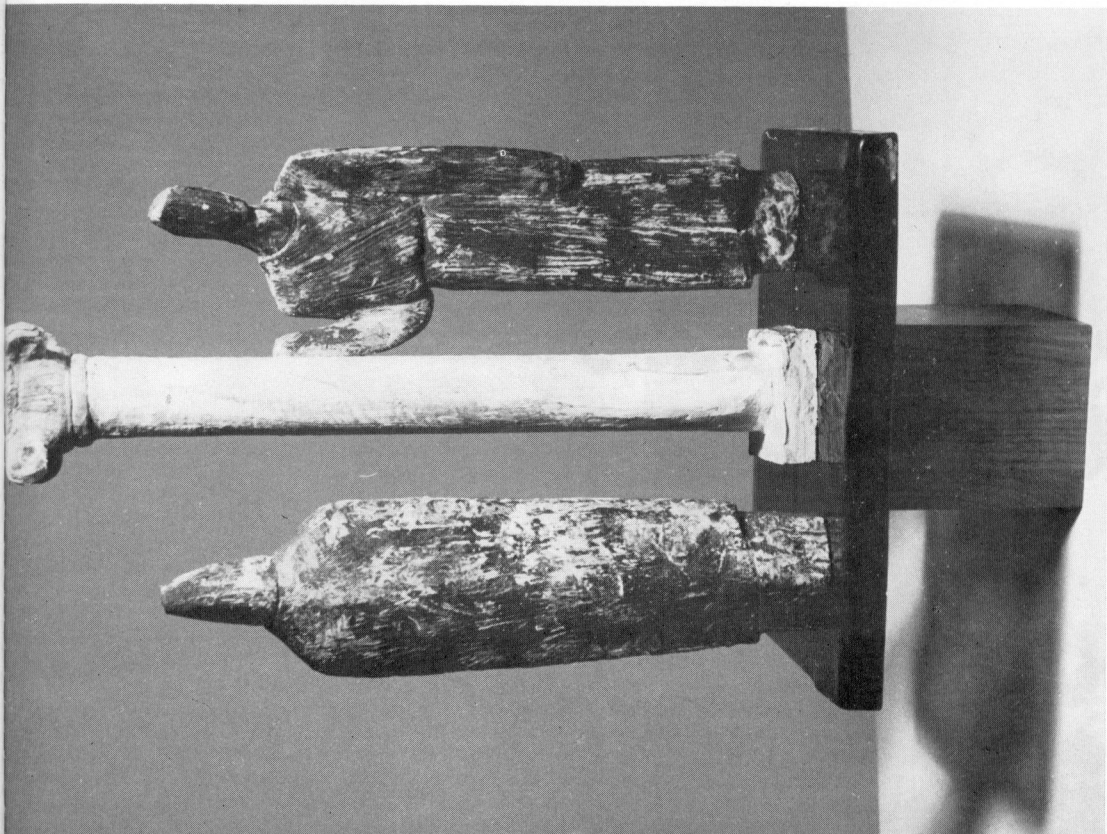
ANDRÁS ÓSZE: GIACOMETTI AS GIACOMETTI.
(FROM A SERIES), 1976. BARBED WIRE. 58 CM

Eva Knapp

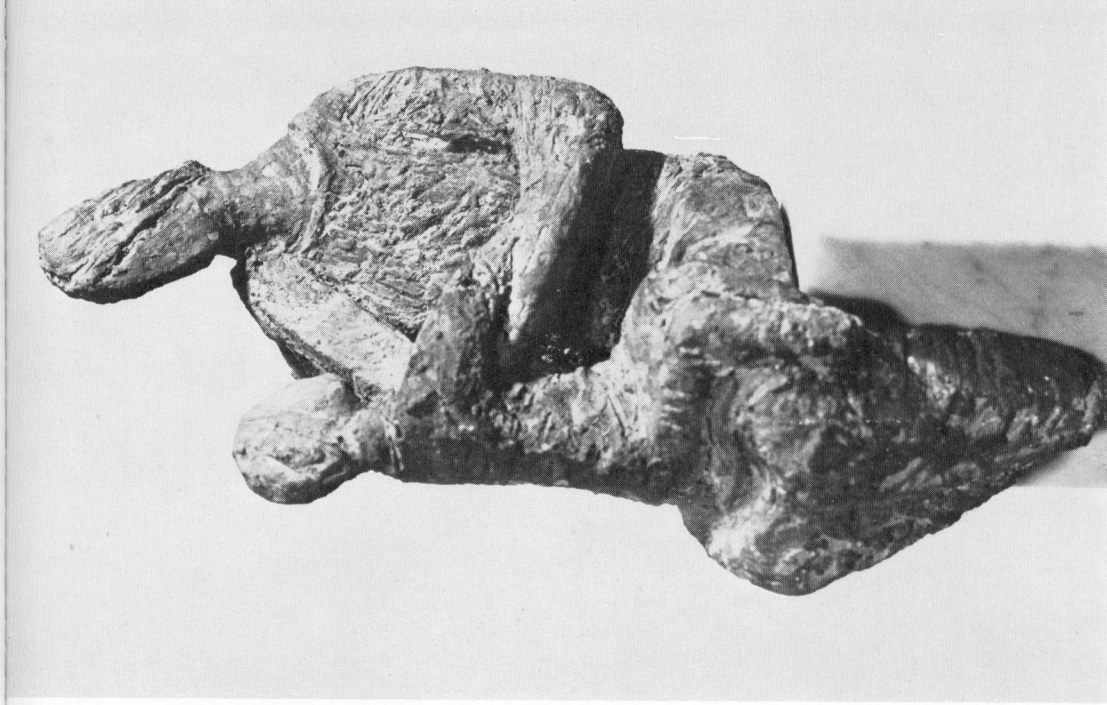


ÓSZE
60.78

ANDRÁS ÓSZE: ETERNAL YOUTH.
PAPER 1960—1978. 35 X 55 CM. FROM A SERIES.



ANDRÁS ÓSZE: CHRIST AND PILATE. 1970. BRONZE. 36 CM
Eva Knapp



ANDRÁS ÓSZE: MY MOTHER TELLS ME A STORY. 1976.
BRONZE. 33 CM