

## Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle

### **Maria Bartuszová : “A small vacuum full of a small infinite space.”**

Maria Bartuszová was born in Prague, she was not unknown in the world of Czechoslovak art though she lived and worked in the semi-seclusion of her studio in Košice.

She worked with plaster in a way which was personal and innovative. She relied on its naturalness, its alabaster whiteness, (which can absorb and blend coloured clays from the natural materials inserted), its fragility and transience, fluidity (the ability to fill in cracks and narrow folds of fabric, balloons etc.). Into the setting mass of plaster she would insert living natural materials: stones, tree branches. Drawing and photograph had several meanings for her and she knew how to use them extremely creatively; gradually it became a mediator of her thoughts and of the processes which she saw in the natural world: meadows, forests, country paths, peaks, rock formations, rivers, in the natural materials and changing natural forces of leaves, grass, seeds, stones, branches in snow, on the ground, in water - river, in air – wind and rain. Snowfall and the mass of fallen and melting snow, freezing natural landscape, ice mixed with earth, a flowing river full of stones she collected for her sculpture. *“Shape. A grass nest. Pieces of string. Other plaster shapes elongated with grass.”* (M. B.) She uses technical solutions and physical experimenting with material in a search to find her own expression and sensitivity, tactile, visual and spiritual perception: *“Contrasts: hard / soft, pressure / vacuum, large / small, fat / thin, weight / lightness, fine / coarse, flatness / point, positive / negative”. Membranes and biomorphs. Flexibility increases the volume, stretches, touch immediately leaves an impression. Soft changes into hard.*(M. B.)

The plaster casts evoke ideas of bones, eggs, cells, plants, marked by human touch and modelling; her naturally and uneffectedly hands formed various bases to these. *“Softness. It grows with pulling. It can crack under pressure. Similar qualities to living organic matter.”* (M. B.) These captured fleeting traces of her thoughts and exuded an atmosphere which is typical and irreplaceable for her. Maria Bartuszová introduced into these shapes vital biological functions: the beginning of life, breathing, movement, perception, sight, thinking, pain and death. Reduction of the physical along with the fragility of the original are both characteristic of her plaster objects formed by experimental casting. Bartuszová used the physical properties of the materials – pneumatic shaping of plaster which almost therapeutically gives the art of sculpting an intangible temporal dimension. At the same time she is a sculptor who also carried off what, in terms of constructions and material, can be seen in the form of several elaborate outdoor sculptures (*Two-part Sculpture*, 1982, Crematorium, Košice; *Fountain*, 1986, Dargov Department Store, Košice etc.).

Mária Bartuszová (born 1936 in Prague, died 1996 in Košice). Studies: 1951-1955 – School for Applied Arts, professor Václav Šimek; 1955 - 1961 - University of Applied Arts in Prague, department of ceramics and porcelain, studio of Prof. Otto Eckert. 1961-1985 she was married to sculptor Juraj Bartusz, in 1962 she created first bio-forms in sculpture, and experimented with plaster casting. She lived and worked in Košice since 1963.

The art of Maria Bartuszová gained success and appreciation: her work was shown in exhibitions Documenta in Kassel (2007), Les Promesses du passé, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris (2010), and in solo exhibitions in 2008, 2009 and 2011 in Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle in Munich.

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