

Sam Keil - Bronze Sculpture

Emmanuel College, Dec 9th-11th 2005



“The point of my sculpture is to capture energy and motion in static form. I work from my imagination and intuition, harnessing the energy that compels the form to move and revealing the gradations of colour and music that we are usually unable to perceive. This weekend at Emmanuel you can see my Swan Lake, Arizona Stallion, and Andalusia collections.

The Swan Lake pieces arose out of a collaboration with director Matthew Bourne and the Adventures in Motion Pictures company during their highly-acclaimed 1996 production of Tchaikovsky’s ‘Swan Lake’, noted for its novel use of menacing, aggressively male swans in place of the traditional female corps de ballet. A film of the original show is on the DVD loop here. Many of you might also have seen the movie ‘Billy Elliot’, where the grown-up Billy who appears in the last few frames is played by principal dancer Adam Cooper in his swan costume. If you half-close your eyes you might recognize him transformed into bronze here in the Old Library.

My stallions were made during a year’s stay in Santa Fe, Arizona in 1999. Horses are highly aesthetic, highly spiritual animals regarded as divine by Native American and many other cultures. I’ve enjoyed riding them since I was two years old, and the unbridled, impetuous creatures you see here are similar to animals I rode bareback in the Arizona Badlands and also in the Negev desert in Israel.

Anything you see that isn’t a horse or a ballet dancer comes from my Andalusia collection. In 1996 I spent almost a whole year living alone on a platform I built near the top of a giant tree near Granada, Spain whilst contemplating on the universe or whatever. Occasionally I came down to sculpt. The pieces which came out of this period ended up being part of an exhibition in Hampstead and are being gathered together here for the first time since then.

I hope you enjoy the show.”

Samantha Keil

December 2005

Biographical sketch and further information

Samantha Keil is trained in fine art and has spent a full life working in a range of artistic endeavours including sculpture, drawing, music, theatre, dance and metaphysics. Her work embodies the multidisciplinary focus and questing spirit of the Renaissance, and the enthusiastic reception her pieces have received in galleries, museums and public places around the world reflects an artistry and skill galvanized by a vision of pure transcendence.

Sam's sculptures are like spirits soaring to the heavens, often giving the impression of flight, and in so doing they overcome the density of bronze and achieve a state of near weightlessness. Her style of working gives an androgynous feel to the medium; many of her figures seem like spiritual beings which are neither male nor female. She also uses the horse to dramatic effect, and her equine sculptures display a compelling dynamic energy. The same striking effects can also be seen in Sam's drawings and in her sought-after large multicoloured plaster figures.

Sam received her training at the City and Guilds of London Art School under the supervision of the Chairman of the Royal Academy of Art, Sir Roger de Grey. She graduated in 1991 with first class honours. The winner of Elizabeth Frink and Madame Tussaud awards, Sam also won the Princess Grace Foundation Monte Carlo Prize for her ten foot *Horse* sculpture (which is on permanent exhibition at Hampden Guerny Street, Marble Arch, London) and the 1992 Toronto Art Show ArtFocus Best in Show and First Place Best Sculpture Awards. She has also designed sets and scenery for the Stratford Festival and the Canadian Opera Company.

Sam is also interested in obtaining a deeper understanding of the effect of visual and auditory stimuli on the human mind. She has put what knowledge she has into practice working in a school for autistic children, where she made full use of her conviction that light and movement have a profound effect on their development.

More recently, Norman Foster's architectural practice has commissioned Sam to sculpt a major piece for public display at their Albion Riverside development in Battersea in Central London. She has also been commissioned to produce a life-sized animal sculpture for public display at historic Clink Street close to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre.

Sam has travelled widely and has lived and worked in many different countries. These days she divides her time between Cambridge and the Towler Institute monastery in Northern Tuscany where she holds occasional art schools and other events. She has permanent exhibitions in London, New York, Santa Fe and Taos in New Mexico, and in Spain, and also in the following well-known individual collections : the Princess Grace Foundation in Monte Carlo, and the Lord Portman Collection, the Christopher Allen Collection, and the Andrew Stephen Collection, all in the UK.

More information about Sam and announcements of further exhibitions can be found on her website www.tcm.phy.cam.ac.uk/~mdt26/sam/sam.html and on the Towler Institute website at www.tcm.phy.cam.ac.uk/~mdt26/tti/tti.html .