

GARY
WEISMAN



THE TRANSCENDENTAL FIGURE

Transcendental is a funny word. In one sense, it describes something as a basic factor necessary for human existence; something as basic as time and space which are fundamentally crucial for our having any experience. Yet transcendental can also mean something at the complete opposite of the spectrum; transcending the immanence of our mere worldly existence. In this sense, a transcendental experience is extremely special and cannot be understood in ordinary ways. It is not worldly but otherworldly. Therefore, transcendental has a fluidity putting us squarely in this world or, on the polar opposite, transcending this world. It is this transcendental dichotomy that I feel when looking at Gary Weisman's sculptures; of this world and yet, so beyond.

What makes this dichotomy possible in Weisman's sculpture? First of all, there is what I want to describe as the "transfer of touch,"—touch being that very present human experience of this world. This "touch" is commonly referred to as "the hand of the artist;" the artist's hand in making the art is made visible to the viewer. But this phrase doesn't adequately describe what is happening. In Weisman's sculptures, the viewer is not asked to be mere spectator. Instead, the sculptures transform the viewer from spectator to participant—you can feel the artist's hand upon the sculptures—in an invitation to touch them.

This transfer of touch is present throughout the entire process in the creation of the sculptures. Weisman first creates an actual-size clay model, taking this model to the next stage of making a mold of that clay, from which a wax replica is made for the lost wax process, and finally casting the wax into bronze. More often in bronze sculptures, the artist's work stops at the modeling of the clay when the clay is then transferred to a commercial bronze foundry to make its transformation from clay to bronze. This is not what happens with Weisman's bronzes. The transformation from clay to bronze is completed in Weisman's own foundry where each stage is actualized through his hands. Because of this continuous hands-on approach, the process in the foundry stages goes beyond routine mechanics. The process now takes on a phenomenological dimension. When Weisman touches the clay to model the figure, he feels the bronze that will come.

Knowing the blind person feels their way through the touch of the cane upon the earth, the anthropologist Gregory Batesman asked, "At what point does the self end? Does the self end at the person's hand touching the cane? Or, does

the self extend beyond the hand to the cane's tip touching the earth. Does the cane, itself, become a vital part of the self?" The same can be also asked of the artist, "Where does the artist's self end?" At end of his fingers? The clay? The wax? The bronze? To Batesman, I would, in-turn, ask, "Why stop at the earth—maybe it doesn't stop at all." Such is the transfer of touch.

While this transfer of touch in the sculptures addresses both forms of transcendental, there is another sculptural element that adheres to the dichotomy—their energy of potentiality. Weisman creates figures challenging the moment before they are lost to gravity. In this scenario, the figures take on the latent energy of a taunt bow before it releases the arrow; staying in this moment because after the arrow is released, energy is lost. Thus, making the potential moment more powerful than the subsequent action. Maybe, however, the sculptures were never at that moment before gravity's pull, but are floating, unaffected by that mere earthly law befalling us humans. In either case, in the moment before gravity's pull or moment of float-defying gravity, the sculptures manifest an energy in their unknown potentiality that is more real than an energy lost in the cause and effect of action. It is this level of ambiguous suspension, the knowing and not knowing, making Weisman's sculptures so powerful.

Finally, the sculptures do not speak of containment—they are not to be described in an "about" explanation typically seen in a posed human sculpture telling a strictly choreographed story. Instead, the sculptures speak to participation where the sculptural figures are in dialogue with the surrounding human space. In demanding participation as a transcendental fundamental factor of their existence, that human space becomes ontological to the sculptures. Meaning—in order to exist, the dialogue is in constant flux; without time, without end. As such, the sculptures exist in that place between transcendental earthly-necessary-here and transcendental otherworldly-there.

Treacy Ziegler

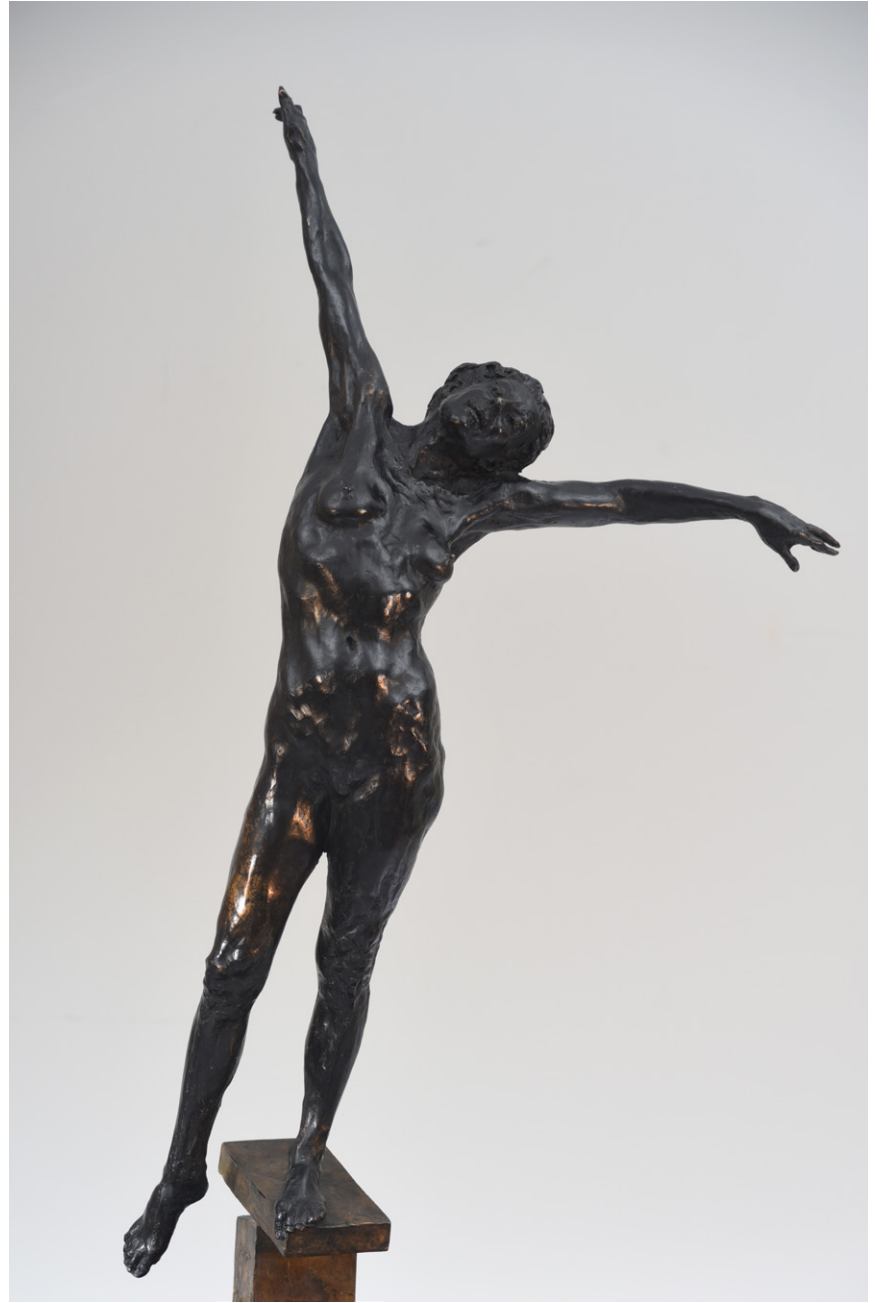
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Upper Feather Bridge
29"/74 cm





Extended Kindness
28"/71cm high



Aeolian Angel
29"/74cm high

Solo Exhibitions (since 2011)

2024 Odon Wagner Gallery, Toronto, Canada
2023 Stanek Gallery "When Words are not Enough", Philadelphia, PA
2023 Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY
2023 Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral, Philadelphia, PA
2020 Stanek Gallery, "Three Voices", Philadelphia, PA
2018 Stanek Gallery, Graham Building, Philadelphia, PA
2015-2016 Sirona Fine Art, Miami, FL
2013 Rosenfeld Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
2011 Arcadia Fine Art Gallery, New York, NY

Museum Collections

Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY, USA
John Jones Museum, Elmira, NY, USA
Marietta/Cobb Museum of Art, Georgia, USA
MEAM, The Museu Europeu d'Art Modern, Barcelona, Spain
Mohlmann Museum, Appingedam, Netherlands
Museo Arte Contemporanea, Sicilia, Italy
Museum of Modern Religious Art, Brussels, Belgium
National Museum of Racing, Saratoga Springs, NY, USA
Norton Art Museum, Palm Beach, FL, USA
The Art Museum of the University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, USA

Notable Collections

City of Philadelphia, PA
City of Chicago, Midway Airport, Chicago, IL
Chicago Public Library, Chicago, IL
Elmhurst Hospital, Queens, NY
Norton Art Museum, Palm Beach, FL
Parc Foundation, Lafayette, LA
Pepsi Co., New York, NY
Ralph Lauren Corp., New York, NY
Standard Chartered Bank, New York, NY
Tom Armstrong, Director, Whitney Art Museum, New York, NY
Tri Star Film Corp., Hollywood, CA
United States Embassy to North Vietnam
Sir Elton John
Sylvester Stallone, Beverly Hills, CA
A. Jassim, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Notable Awards

2023 National Sculpture Society Lifetime Achievement Award, New York, USA
2022 New York CAP Grant, Ithaca, New York, USA
2018-20 MEAM, The Museu Europeu d'Art Modern, Barcelona, Spain
Albert Nelson Marquis Who's Who Lifetime Achievement Award
Arcadia Contemporary Award in the 13th International ARC Salon Competition
2017 Pennsylvania Academy Fellowship Nepal Residency
2013-20 ARC International Sculpture Award
2004 Honored at the White House, Washington D.C., USA

Bronzes available in maquette and life-size



Conceal
63"/160 cm high



Labyrinth
17"/43 cm high



Primary Tangent
17"/43 cm high



Between Apple & Angel
25"/64 cm high

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Front Cover:
Tabula Rasa, 16.5"/42 cm high

River God, 12"/30 cm wide



Scan for complete collection

