

CIVILIZATION AND THE MONKEY

PREVIEW FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY OF

RICHARD X ZAWITZ

SCULPTOR

CIVILIZATION AND THE MONKEY

ONE MAN EXHIBITION

WHY WE ARE HERE!
WHY ARE WE HERE?

ROTUNDA
EXCHANGE SQUARE
HONG KONG
OCT 25. NOV. 10 2016



RICHARD X ZAWITZ

Richard X Zawitz, sculptor, inventor and Thaumaturgist, was born in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, a place long known for its steel industry and Andy Warhol. Zawitz's early sculptural inclinations were deeply anchored in these in two inspirational elements.

Zawitz attained a degree in Fine Arts sculpture, with additional majors in Asian Philosophy and Asian Art History from the University of Hawaii 1972.

Zawitz's work in sculpture has been devoted to manifesting essences and energies of Chinese Taoism, Zen, and other metaphysical and alchemical traditions.

Zawitz had the good fortune of being born at the right time, enabling him to embrace the freespirt of the 60s, while still an art student under the tutelage of Prithwish Neogy, Master Thinker and Chairman of the Art department at the University of Hawaii. There, Zawitz 'unlearnt' arts' Western biases, and it was also from that point onwards that the artist and experimentalist ultimately chose sculpture to be the medium for his creative expression.

Zawitz's accomplishments include the creation and invention of what he calls "Curvism" in three dimensions and The Tangle Particle.

His work encompasses not only Infinity Art but the ubiquitous plaything "Tangle". Zawitz employs numerous materials and mediums in his work, including wood, stone, metals, plastics, fauna and flora, and mind.

The artist's sculptures are found in public, and private collections worldwide, while his miniature works of art, Tangle Playthings, having sold over 100 million editions worldwide, can be found in homes, schools and offices.

Richard X Zawitz has dedicated the past 40 years of his life to the promotion of reace and creativity on this planet.



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ONE MAN EXHIBITION BY RICHARD X ZAWITZ

ARTIST STATEMENT

Inspired by the Chinese Year of the Red Fire Monkey, this exhibition aims to explore human civilization and evolution through a symbolic series of archetypal sculptures.

The second in the artist's Monkey Sculpture series - the first being a specially commissioned exhibition at One Central Macau - Civilization and the Monkey will feature 19 limited edition sculptures, including the Tree of Infinity. The Monkey or Great Ape has been worshipped or mythologized in many cultures throughout history, most notably in China, India, and Indonesia. Mythologies like Hanuman from the Hindu tradition and Sun Wukong, better known as The Monkey King, in Chinese literature, have stood the test of time as lasting symbols of monkey energy.

Each of the 18 monkey sculptures and the Tree of Infinity at Civilization and the Monkey symbolizes a different stage of civil development, and it is my intent that this exhibition goes beyond its artistic merits to enriching the audience's knowledge of our shared histories.

The exhibition serves to explore, educate, provoke, amuse and ultimately ask that most fundamental of all questions, 'why are we here?' For me, that is man's greatest struggle, and one that I believe begins with our ancestors, the monkey. Humans are members of a large and particularly noisy family called the Great Apes. Our closest living relatives include the chimpanzee, gorilla, and orangutan. Just 6 million years ago a single female ape had two daughters; one became the ancestor of all chimpanzees, and the other became the great grandmother of us all, the homo sapiens. This is how our current history began. The ability to think critically and to create is what defines us:
Who are we?
Why are we here?

The 18 sculptures and Tree of Infinity is a manifestation of the grand question, "why am I here?" As humans, we are extraordinarily powerful beings, and it is my belief that this power should be harnessed for creativity rather than destruction. Creativity is a way to drive man away from negativity and towards more positive energies.

It is my sincerest desire to inspire, enrich and creatively energize viewers. From a scientific point of view, it is clear that homo sapiens, or modern humans, are a recent development. Shall we self-annihilate and cease to exist through war and destruction or shall we harness our creative energies collectively and survive and prosper? The aim of this exhibition is to inspire us towards the latter. Let us all become more creative and helpful beings.

I'm grateful to Hongkong Land for this invaluable opportunity to share my views on human civilization and evolution with the people of Hong Kong



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MONKEY OF INVENTION

Monkey of Invention symbolizes the use of all our brains, creative and logical thinking combined, in the pursuit for greatness. The artist who think only for arts' sake will only lead to rigid outcomes. After all, where would civilization be without the likes of inventors and thinkers such as Alexander Graham Bell, Nikola Tesla, Zhang Heng Archimedes, Leonardo Da Vinci, Sir Isaac Newton? Monkey of Invention is staring at a wheel. As one of the first mechanisms invented by man, the wheel took us to unimaginable destinations, including the highly advanced industrial world we live in today.

The wheel takes the form of a circle - the most ubiquitous form in nature. You steer your vehicle with a wheel, tell time with the numbers on a circle, the car itself is powered by a device called the flywheel. The wheel has become a strong metaphor for cycles or regular repetitions, both culturally and spiritually, in fact, very much like the Yin Yang symbol in Chinese culture. Seen as a symbol of health and strength in ancient China, the wheel was utilized by some villages as a tool to predict the future, with its diameter indicative of one's future health and success.



MONKEY OF MUSIC

Sound is the most primordial of all our senses. As babies, we hear sound in the womb. Although invisible, sounds are everywhere.

Music is the magnificent creation in late stage monkey /ape development beings and of course, us humans. Macaque monkeys 'drum' with their hands in the forests. It's for this reason that the artist has chosen the monkey to represent this important stage of civil development, with the drums emphasising on the need for civilisations to communicate and create. As an essential instrument to most musical endeavours, one might even speculate that the drum was the first telecommunications device. The first drums date back to Neolithic period in China during 550 - 2350 BC.

A sense of music and its ability to enrich lives are deeply embedded in DNA of humankind. Music not only involves auditory symbols melody, harmony, rhythm, tonality, color, structure and dynamics, but also visual ones, manifested in the instruments and their performers. And the Monkey of Music, with its drum set and sticks, perfectly embodies this.

RICHARD X ZAWITZ



MONKEY OF KINGS

The King archetype is essential to civilizations as it reflects man's ability to organize and govern.. By the 'survival of the fittest' logic, only the strongest, smartest and most charismatic have the ability to lead. Centuries back, people were already combining individuals into larger groups, and sequestering lands in order to form villages and lead their clans through peaceful and trying times.

Ancient kings and queens ruled, defined boundaries, made laws and defended their countries against external threats.

These early leaders would later become Heads of State, Barons of Industry and Saviour of the Masses. While titles have changed, and state structures have underwent multiple evolutions, the King's power is still manifested in the most powerful leaders of modern society. The artist has chosen Sun Wukong, otherwise known as The Monkey King, to embody this very idea of 'kingly-ness'.

A warrior as well as leader, Sun Wukong possesses the strength, supernatural powers, intelligence and ability to transcend time and space. A King needs to inspire loyalty and awe - Sun Wukong accomplished that and much more.

RICHARD X ZAWITZ



MONKEY OF BEAUTY

The female beauty archetype is most adeptly symbolized by Venus, or Aphrodite for the Greeks. This most ancient symbol of beauty, sex, enticement, seduction and female charm has stood the test of time. Venus has most worshipped throughout the ages, from the Venus of Willendorf, dating back to 28,000 - 25,000 BCE, and across all cultures, from European, African and South American, to Chinese and Pacific Islands cultures.

One might say we worship female beauty with all our visual communication means. In Roman theology, Venus is regarded as the watery female, or Yin in Chinese culture, which relates to generation, birth and the balance of life. In other literature, Venus is also associated with military victory, good fortune and prosperity.

While inspired by this most recognisable archetype of female beauty, Monkey of Beauty replaces the face of Venus with that of a monkey's. The artist is thereby challenging conventional perceptions of beauty and aesthetics. After all, what is beauty? Is it merely in the eyes of the beholder, or is true beauty something more universal? Where would civilisation be without female beauty?

This compelling urge to seek, create and manifest beauty is what drives both art and the artist. It is deeply embedded in our DNA. You, the viewer, is here because of this same deep-rooted urge to find beauty. Beauty and creativity are two of the most essential ingredients in the human cosmos.

THE ROTUNDA

The Rotunda is located in Exchange Square, home to Hong Kong's Stock Exchange, the crown jewel in Hongkong Land's vast property holdings and one of Central's most prestigious addresses.

As one of the most sought-after art exhibition spaces in Hong Kong and indeed, East Asia, The Rotunda enjoys high traffic flow, ensuring that it attracts a wealthy and discerning crowd. Measuring 30 meters and featuring grand columns, the airy space was conceived with full consideration of Chinese feng shui, with protective mountains at the rear, and azure waters of Victoria Harbour in the front.

A continuation of the conspicuous Chi flow, the skylight not only enables natural light to flood in by day, bathing The Rotunda and the art it houses in a warm glow, it is also said to allow money to flow straight through into the building.

All of this makes The Rotunda the ideal spot for Richard X Zawitz's latest exhibition, Monkey and Civilization – One Man Exhibition by Richard X Zawitz. The US-based artist, who studied Asian art and philosophy, is acclaimed for distilling the essence of Taoism into his sinuous sculptures.



TREE OF INFINITY

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