

Artist Ildikó Kalapács Shares a Full Body of Work

A Spokane, Washington artist uses her Hungarian origins and the human form to create art that straddles the two worlds of the literal and metaphorical. Deeply influenced by the folklore dances she both practices and researches, her art graces buildings on three continents.

Spokane, WA (PRWeb) January 25, 2007 -- "It's not about me," Ildikó Kalapács (www.ildiart.com) says in her distinctive Hungarian accent. The Spokane, Washington artist, is talking about her provocative body of work. "Once the work leaves my studio, it is all about the viewers and what they see. The point to the art isn't whether you like it or don't like it, but how you relate to it. It's about what you take with you."

"People come up and tell me what intrigues them, and they share their reactions." While some artists might find this compromising, Ildikó Kalapács is fascinated by her viewers' reactions. "I find that to be a privilege, to be part of that. It's the most exciting part of my art."

Considering that Ildikó Kalapács has done public work projects in the form of murals in Spokane, there are a lot of people exposed to her body of work on a daily basis. Kalapács' work often features one or more nude figures. This tends to cause a stir occasionally, especially when her work is on the side of a building. "I came from a culture where nudity in the visual arts is not a big deal. I'm very comfortable with nudes in the arts. It is not necessarily sexual but it can suggest vulnerability and can explore the similarities we share physically, no matter which culture or continent we belong to. It is to me more about the respect of the human body than anything else. It's interesting to see how people who are more conservative react to the body."

"I'm not going for the shock value," she explains. "But I am rather interested in how people relate to my works. It is a kind of relationship to the work based on personal associations." Ildikó Kalapács' sensitivity to the body has been with her from the age of eight when she first started dancing. "I've always been fascinated by body language and the interpretation of body language," she says. "The relationship of two bodies can be used metaphorically. I'm very sensitive to social relationships, and this allows me to think literally and conceptually/metaphorically. I straddle two worlds, tangible social issues and conceptual issues."

Now that a documentary film is being made about Ildikó Kalapács next summer in her native country Hungary, Kalapács' work will be even more exposed. The film will feature segments of her working in her studio, as well as interviews with art professionals who are familiar with her works, including Mr. Satoshi Sawasaki, artist and art agent from Osaka, Japan, and Mr. Koichi Kawasaki the curator of art at the Hyogo Prefecture Museum of Art in Kobe, Japan. Kalapács will also be lecturing at the University of Central Europe in Budapest, as well as having a one-woman show in her hometown Szeged. This is in preparation for her bigger solo show in Budapest in 2008.

There's no doubt that growing up in the harsh world of a Soviet dictatorship, affected Kalapács, making her sensitive to emotional relationships. But it was her career as an amateur folk dancer that gave her the special privileges to leave the country, which in turn prepared her to become a more open artist. Ildikó met her husband Wayne Kraft in Budapest when they were both in the same folk dance group. He received a Fulbright Scholarship in 1986, and this led to Ildikó's access to the United States.

Ildikó's continued involvement in folk dance has taken her and her husband to cultural forums in many places of the world. They lecture and perform with a band known as "Jómóka" in the United States. A couple of years ago they were featured in a one-hour documentary on Danube Television which included Ms. Márta Sebestyén, the

famous folk singer of Hungary.

Over a twelve year period the couple has been involved in extensive folklore dance research in Transylvania, Romania. By living with Hungarian families and interviewing them, they document the cultural influence of dance and music in their lives. "The Russian army left Hungary in 1991," Ildikó says. "But you can still feel the aftermath of the dictatorship in the way people live and think in Hungary."

In between her work as a studio artist and her folklore performances and research, Ildikó occasionally gets commissions for murals where her art can be seen by a whole city at once. She is currently working with the Planned Parenthood of the Inland Northwest to create a mural in their building. A local gallery, the Tinman (www.tinmanartworks.com), is planning her second solo exhibition in the fall of 2007.

Spokane art critic Lanny DeVuono recently commented on Ildikó Kalapács's body of work: "Over the years, Ildikó has been an energetic presence in the Spokane art scene. The sculptures and paintings she makes seem to flow effortlessly from her love of dance. They consistently explore the body in motion and are a perfect accompaniment to her activities as a performer. I suspect Ildikó does not privilege one over the other, but sees her dance, sculpture, painting and community activities as parts that when put together make a much larger whole."

Ildikó Kalapács' work may be viewed and purchased at www.buyoutsidethebox.com.

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