



**SCULPTURE**  
(1960-2005)

S A L V A T O R E  
T R O P E A

Kirsty Gallery - London

From 12 th October - to 11 th November 2007



1996 Figure bronze h cm 195x45x45

## **Tropea's sculpture**

Forty - five years of sculpture making. This is not a short experience, even for an artist as Salvatore Tropea, used to move easily from style to style and from trend to trend.

In the period from 1960 to 2005, sculpture has evolved in the world, assuming several different forms. Tropea has looked and lived this evolution with interest and very carefully. In the sixties sculptors such as Marini, Manzù, Messina , the “new classic” sculptors emerged (this is

just to talk about Italy). Now-a-days the classical meaning of sculpture making has been expanded. Even in our museums, we can see the halved bodies of cows preserved (in formalina) by the sculptor (sculptor?) Damien Hirst.

The journey that Tropea took in the world of sculpture is something different. In the 60's he started from the first impressionist experiments, then he shifted to cubism, to abstraction, then back to figuration, and just before 2000 he reached what he calls the "periodo lamellare".

I want to say, that Tropea did not try to follow in an obsessive way the new plastic trends. His search was deep, aiming at a definition of art that combines quality as pure beauty and expressionism as spiritual symbolism.

He has sought sculpture that utilizes the experience of the past to reach a full understanding of mankind and of our spiritual communication.

In the past, when analyzing Tropea's painting I was able to identify the beginning of life, the mastering of history, and a way to see order in chaos. I concluded that his art "transforms itself in our skin, like a soft touch, a stroke, a smooth swing and a growing excitement". Talking about his sculpture, instead of the skin I would talk about the flesh. Sculpture is, as Conova used to say, is "flesh and blood", for it represents the inner nature of man.

Therefore, you can understand why at the beginning of his career his sculpture belonged to the impressionist school (Rodin) with the objective to give the raw material the power of life.

Following that initial period, Tropea felt the need to achieve order. Using cubism's structure, Tropea gave to plastic body geometric shapes, made of sharp edges and linear cuts. Then, with his works "Madre e figlio" and "Cavatori di pietra" he reached a para-abstract style centered on balanced contrapositions of mass and hollow.

Shortly after this period (1964), Tropea's sculpture made a fundamental change. His sculpture started to include basic curvy shapes, in the fashion of Arp (and Alberto Viani). At this stage you almost do not realize that the "forma" is abstract for the softness of the shapes that easily take organic feminine body reminiscence. The artist names "Forma", (as Arp would have done) a simple shape characterized by a hole in the top half and calls "Legno Nero" a similar piece, horizontally oriented, with five holes. It's 1965 and Fontana's work is part of Tropea's way of feeling. He aims at "sculpting the void"

(as Arturo Marini had said 20 years earlier) and looks at the hole as the filter for the fluid of life.

At this stage, Tropea has learnt not only the basic alphabet of shapes but also the principles of a new syntax.

His development enfolds. In 1967 he is back to classicism ("Venere Classica", the title of one of his works in bronze 1967 is a clear declaration of classicism).

Classicism does not have any archeological connotation or meaning but refers to an ideal model refined and proved by history. In his new way of sculpting you can not only see the beauty that is interpreted as platonic harmony, but also the adoption of organic shapes that are perfectly conceived. It is clear that Tropea finds inspiration from Donatello to Moore, he overcomes the centuries freeing himself from any contingent definition of style for his classicism. Great example of this is "Nudo" a bronze piece dated 1967.

From this point on, Tropea's evolution looks like it is inspired by the need of lyric. It looks like the artist had found the key to solve his communication problems, his pains, his anxieties, his aspirations, and his hopes. In the period from 1969 to 1974 the events, even tragic ones that happened in Italy (but not only in Italy) disturbed Tropea so much as to accentuate his work's expressive power.

Nudes elongate and wither, they become wrinkled and agitated. It is the human existential drama that reflects in his sculpture. His work indicates that after pain there is ecstasies or at least hope of ascension. Figures simplify, and contours are sharp. You realize that the development path of an artist is not nostalgic but the foreseen of an upcoming serenity. Using cirmolo's wood Tropea builds female figures (see "Nudo" 1980) that overcome time; they are both antique and modern at the same time. Until we get to 1996 "Genesi": ribbons that move upwards in a way that is natural and spiritual at the same time. Pipes almost weld in "Composizione" of 2000/05: like a bundle that gathers the most noble of human hopes and sentiments about the divine.

However Tropea's adventure does not stop here. It is very important and essential that the artist has found a way to solve both his and our problems. By now, a sculpture is not anymore an hedonistic exercise, but a tool to understand through creativity the human kind. Art as a mean to understand the world.

**Paolo Rizzi** (Venice 2005)

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Salvatore Tropea was born in Milo, Italy in 1943. He is a painter, a sculptor and a print maker. He studied art at the "State Institute of the Arts" in Catania and learned the craft of casting at the "Arturo Bruni" in Rome. He has also worked as ceramic designer at the "Bay Keramikfabrik" in Ransbach Westerwald (Germany). He has studied copper engraving with the master Eugenio Tomiolo.

He is very involved with the artistic life both in Italy and abroad and has had many exhibitions both private and public in which his work has been recognised.

He has exhibited in: Paris, London, Milano, Roma, Verona, Rovigo, Vicenza, Padova, Catania, Trieste, Badia Pol., Torino, Firenze, Ravenna, Ferrara, Freiburg, Manchester, Basel, Bologna, etc.

He has been reviewed regularly by well known art critics in art publications and has been included in the History of Art ed. Ciranna & Seregno (MI) 1997 by S. Saglimbeni. He is quoted in many year books and Bolaffis.

His works are in private and public collections in: Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, England, The United States of America, Australia, Japan, Brazil, etc.

His complete Bibliography is available from "Archivio Storico Bio - Iconografico" of Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome.

### **The artist lives and works in:**

AFFI (Verona) Italy - Via della Repubblica. 58  
Tel. 045 6261202

[www.tropeasalvatore.it](http://www.tropeasalvatore.it)

E-mail: [tropeasalvatore@alice.it](mailto:tropeasalvatore@alice.it)

I am happy to invite you  
for the opening of the exhibition  
of sculptures

by

Salvatore Tropea

Opens  
Saturday October 13 th 2007  
at 6 p.m.

13 th October - 11 th November 2007

**Kirsty Gallery**  
58 LANGDON PARK ROAD - HIGHGATE  
LONDON N - 6 - 5QG

Catalogue available in Gallery bay P. Rizzi, Verone, 2005