

M A R I A N F O U N T A I N

L I F E F O R M S



Germe I, bronze 20 cm and 29 cm high, Paris 1996. Edition of 8

MARIAN FOUNTAIN - LIFE FORMS

Elemental, exciting, erotic - any of these adjectives could be used to describe the sculptures and medals of Marian Fountain. In fact they defy description in their strange, disturbing and ultimately extraordinary capacity to mean different things to different people.

It may be a cliché but what would you make of a work called *Domesticator* ? This appears to me to be some sort of pasta-making machine where the female figure above it seems to be exuding babies rather than spaghetti. And as for *Liquidator*, the woman in question appears to be mangling a torrent of bronze which could be lava or a fire or even people.

Whatever Marian makes, there is an invariable quality of metamorphosis about her work. Nothing is quite what it appears. Everything is changing yet everything remains directed by a life force which is almost palpable. The symbols she uses invariably include different versions of this - from origins of life associated with sperm, the nourishment necessary for life from breasts, versions of larvae and pupae; organisms waiting to convert from inert nothingness to vibrant being. There is a remarkable *Germe Animé* shown in Paris in 1996. To some it looks like a curled up bird. An animated germ - what can she mean ? Certainly it folds in on itself in circular, cell-like form. But the head could be that of a prehistoric bird claws reaching out - to what ? Life or even prey ? Who knows ? It is for you, the viewer, to decide.

A New Zealander by birth, Marian Fountain brought to Europe in 1984 an anthropological approach to the human species. This, she says, made her return to

"Pacific, figurative images such as Easter Island's 'Bird Man' which to me had close links with the aesthetics of medieval European art in its spiritual quality"

Yet enormous sensuality underlies all her work and these strange, primitive, winged figures appear on many of her pieces. Take *Intimacy*, for example. A small, medal-like sculpture, the convex obverse is a pair of breasts patinated turquoise. The concave reverse shows primitive figures which might have stepped right off the walls of a primitive cave.

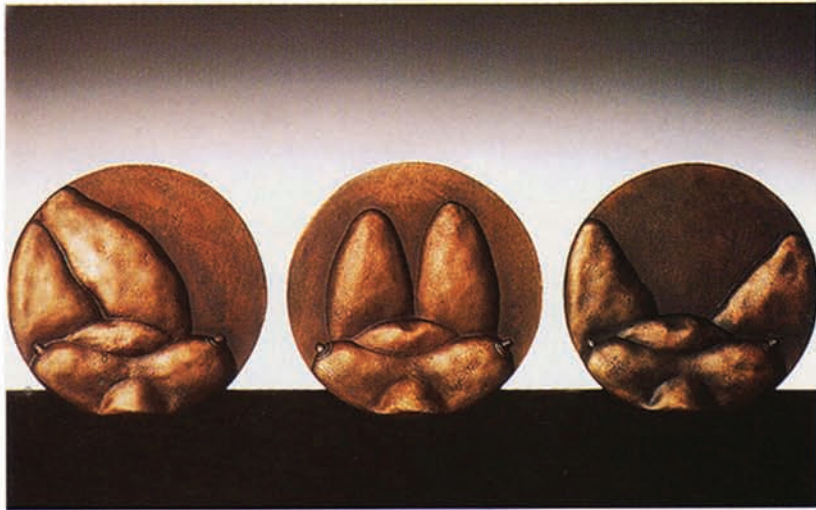
What is she trying to achieve ? Again in her own words...

"I am interested in the area where religion or moral attitudes meet with science because there one finds the human species trying to understand the meaning of existence. To me it has always been unsatisfactory how spirituality has been in conflict with science. To blend the two is a function of art"

Maybe that is exactly what she is doing, but her artistic concerns do not concern the ordinary visitors to her exhibitions of which she has so many. We just want to look, touch and wonder at the remarkable work she has produced. Great art invariably disturbs and hers is no exception. Yet it does show a celebration of life rather than a denigration. In effect it is life-enhancing.

You can as a visitor, just pick up a trivet for your dining table or even a door handle - such mundane articles of everyday life are also represented in the show. But I would rather have a plaque of what looks like the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, standing above an organic form winding in on itself, surrounded by fire, water, air or does it consist of all the elements ? Who knows ? That is the joy of it.

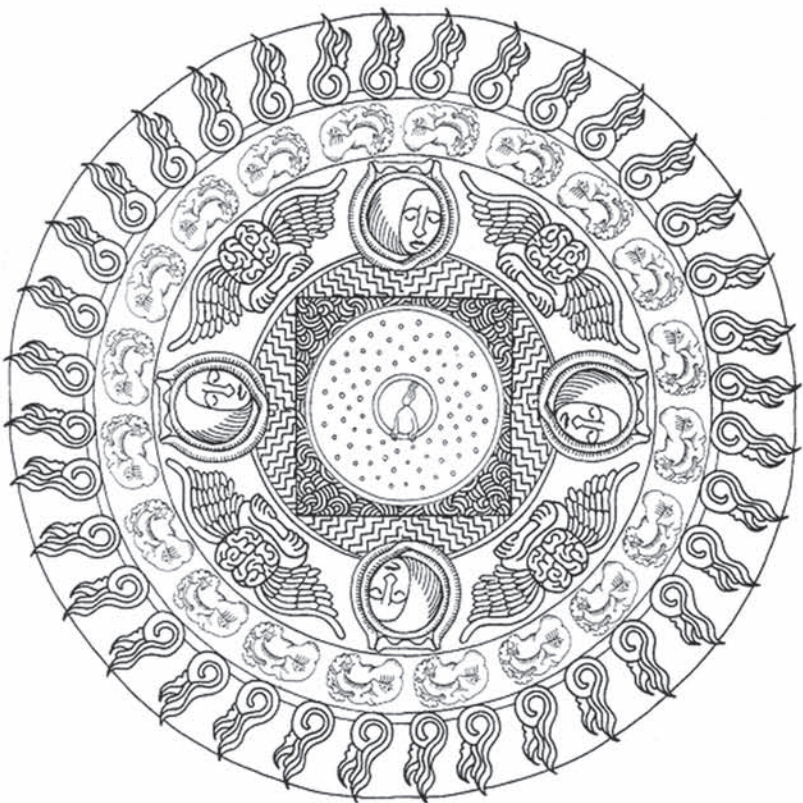
Paula Davies

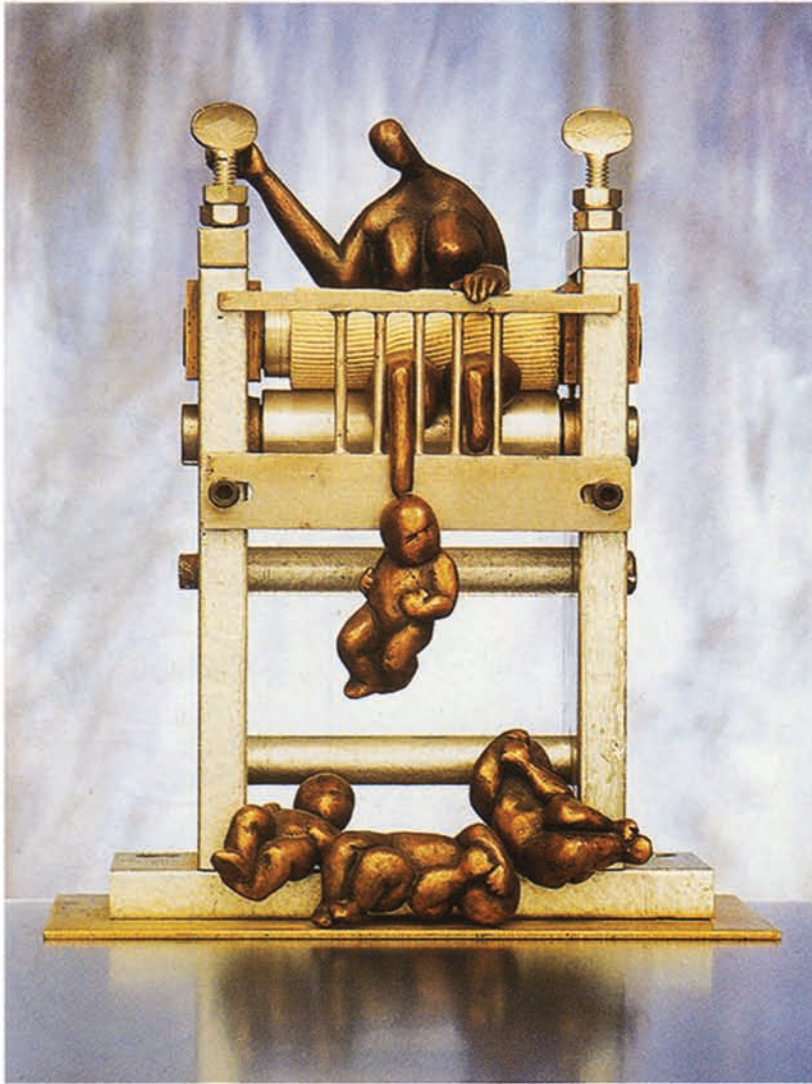


Pandora's Box, I, II and III, bronze, 9.7 cm diam., London 1994. Edition of 25

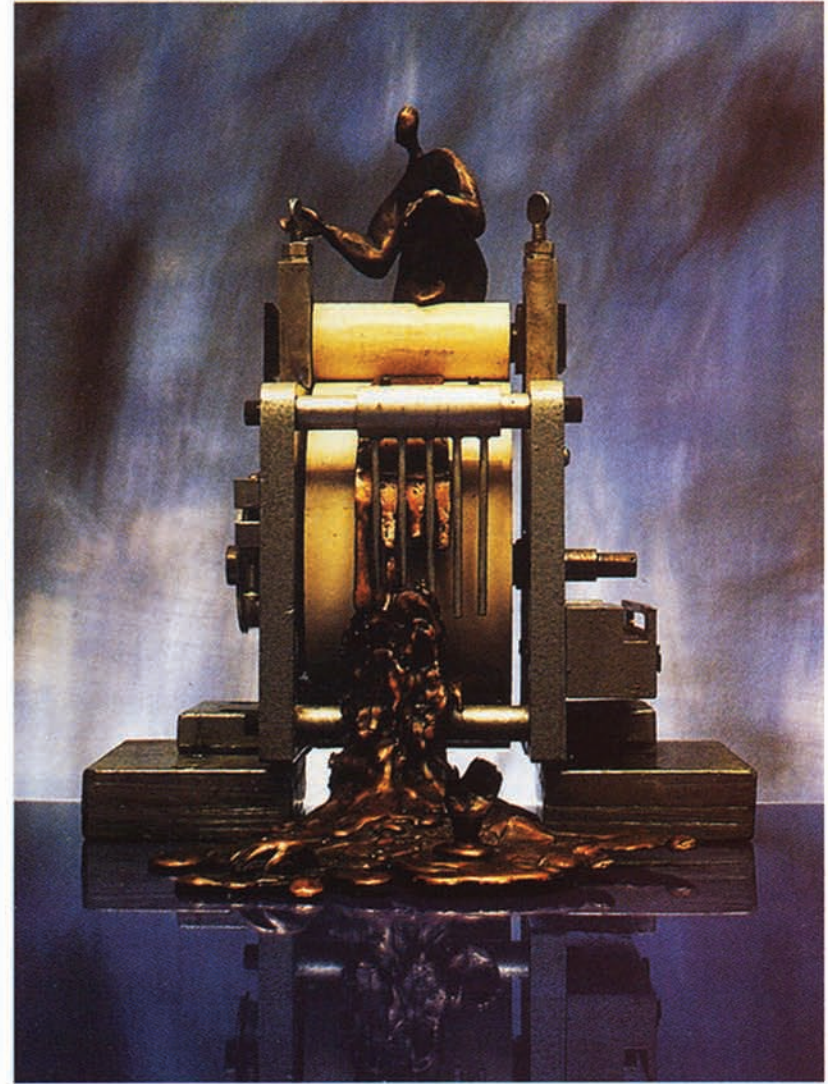


Germination, bronze, 29 cm long, Paris 1996. Edition of 8





Domesticator, bronze and objet trouvé, 21 cm high, Paris 1992



Liquidator, bronze and objet trouvé, 28 cm high, Paris 1992

CURRICULUM VITAE - MARIAN FOUNTAIN

- 1960 ▪ 4 October, born in New Zealand. Marian Fountain has lived and worked in Auckland, London, Rome and Paris
- 1979-82 ▪ Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture and Design, Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland
- 1985-86 ▪ Scuola della Medaglia, Rome Mint, Italy

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1983-86 ▪ 'New Bronze Age', New Vision Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 1986 ▪ Galeria Schneider, Rome
- 1987 ▪ KROK-O-DIL Gallery, London
- 1988 ▪ Aberhart North Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 1989 ▪ CSA Gallery, Christchurch, NZ
- 1990 ▪ Museo Archeologico Numismatico, Milano
- National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. Cabinet of Medals
- 1993 ▪ 'Métamorphose', NZ Embassy, Paris
- Furstenburg Gallery, Paris, with works by Salvador Dali
- 1994 ▪ 'Soirée Métamorphosante', 100 sculptures, 1000 guests, La Villette, Paris
- Limehouse Gallery, Christmas Show, London
- 1995 ▪ 'Muse and Mother', York Museum. 80 medals
- Aberhart North Gallery, Auckland, NZ
- 1996 ▪ 'Le Lys' Gallery, Ile Saint Louis, Paris
- 1997 ▪ Château de Châtelperon, France

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1981 ▪ The National Exhibition, Crafts Council, Wellington, NZ
- 1981-83 ▪ Various group exhibitions in NZ
- 1985-96 ▪ Bi-annual FIDEM Congress (Fédération Internationale de la Médaille) Stockholm, Colorado, Helsinki, London, Budapest, Switzerland
- 1985-97 ▪ Collective exhibitions of British Art Medal Society

- 1988 ▪ 'Cento anni di storia d'Italia attraverso Monete e Medaglie della Zecca del Stato', Milano
- Manchester Academy of Fine Arts Open Exhibition
- 1989-91 ▪ Collective exhibitions with the 'Medallions Group', NZ
- 1991 ▪ Robertson Retrospective, Sargeant Gallery, NZ
- Gillingham Open Art Exhibition England
- Exposition d'Art Contemporain, Espace Glauser, Paris
- 1992 ▪ Varosi Gallery, Nyregyhaza, Hungary
- 1993 ▪ Musée Adzac, Paris
- 1994-95 ▪ 'Tree Association' Exhibitions, Paris, London, New York
- 1995 ▪ Art in the Hand Gallery, Florida, USA
- Exhibition with Karen Cole, London
- Public Auction of jewellery, Backstage, Paris
- 1995-96 ▪ Exhibitions with group 'Barde la Lézarde', Paris
- 1996 ▪ Press Museum, Istanbul
- 20th Century Art Fair, Piano Nobile Gallery, London
- 1997 ▪ 'Fountain, Kahn, Routier' Lipworth Foundation, Paris
- Europart 1997, Geneva, 'Decorare' stand

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

- 1981 ▪ AHI Crown Crystal Award for Design of Goblets
- 1984 ▪ Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Major Travel Grant
- 1990 ▪ Residency at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, Scotland
- Prix de sculpture, first prize, French Mint
- 1992 ▪ 16th symposium, Nyregyhaza, Hungary
- 1993 ▪ Sculpture Symposium (stone carving), Czech Republic
- Lipworth Foundation 1993 Sculpture Prize
- 1995 ▪ International Art Symposium, Kvols, Denmark
- 1996 ▪ International Art Symposium, Gokçeada, Turkey

COMMISSIONS

- 1983 ▪ 'Sundial' for Medical School, University of Auckland
- Two commemorative portrait plaques for former directors, Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland
- 1985-90 ▪ Medals for BAMS



Possession, bronze, 22 cm high, Paris 1997. Edition of 8



Retreat I, Advance, Retreat II, bronze, 9 cm diam. and 14 x 9 cm, London 1991. Edition of 20

- 1986 ▪ Medal for la Monnaie de Paris
- 1988 ▪ Prize and commemorative medals for XIVth Commonwealth Games, Auckland, NZ
- 1989 ▪ Plaque for the tomb of aviatrix Jean Batten, Palma Cemetery, Mallorca. Commissioned by NZ Govt
- 1991 ▪ Abel Tasman Commemorative Plaque, first European sighting of NZ
- 1992 ▪ Bronze gate for dog cemetery of Ferne Estate, Wiltshire, England
- 1993 ▪ 50 medals for Glauser International, Paris
- 25 door handles for Château de Châtelperron, France
- Commemorative medal for liberation of Du Quesnoy, 1918, commissioned by NZ Government
- Hotplates for Conran Shop
- 1995 ▪ Gold jewellery for private collector, produced by Arthus Bertrand, Paris
- 1997 ▪ Letterbox, Château de Châtelperron

WORKING EXPERIENCE

- 1981-83 ▪ Acquired experience in techniques of bronze casting at 'Art Works' Foundry, Auckland, NZ
- 1984 ▪ Worked at Red Bronze Studio Ltd, London
- 1984-85 ▪ Design Consultant for David Shaw Silverware, London
- 1990-93 ▪ Plaster model work for Tower Mint, London
- Designer for Thomas Fattorini, Birmingham
- 1991-93 ▪ Engraver and designer for Arthus Bertrand, Paris
- 1991-94 ▪ Experimental work, Girebronze Foundry, Paris
- 1997 ▪ Cultural Class for Artdecojeunes, Ville de Paris
- Cultural Class, Châtelperron, France

ACQUISITIONS

- British Museum, London
- Smithsonian Museum, Washington DC
- Auckland Museum, NZ
- Private Collections



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57 Boulevard de la Villette. 75010 Paris

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Cycle V, plaster, Paris 1997

SIMMONS GALLERY
53 LAMB'S CONDUIT STREET, LONDON WC1N 3NB.
Telephone : 0171 831 2080 - Facsimile : 0171 831 2090