

The Search for Line and Color as Floating Lightness

*I believe that it is one's duty to paint rich and magnificent aspects of nature.
We need gaiety and happiness, hope and love.
Vincent van Gogh*

The Zürich-born sculptor Claire Ochsner has discovered in her art new means and yet at the same time traditional ways of affirming the expression of joy of life through use of radiant color and lightness of form. Like modern artists in the past as Van Gogh, Matisse, Klee etc., her art speaks of line as rhythm discovered in nature and painted in brilliant sun-drenched chromes, sky-blues, and vibrant reds as A celebration of joie de vivre.

This artist's fertile imagination has created mobiles and sculptures that convey sensations of graceful dancing forms, poetical and musical allusions that contain universal symbols through circular forms deriving from nature.

The universe is perceived by Claire Ochsner as a circle, the symbol of infinity, as the sun, a life-giving energy of light, and love. Forms are dominant motifs in her ground and water sculptures; playful and recurrent motifs found throughout her Claire Ochsner's oeuvre.

At the core of all of Claire Ochsner's creation is to be discovered her fertile mind's respect for nature and its motifs. The artist is fascinated by the question how the elements in nature; wind, water, air, can create new potential form and harmony in sculpture and how, at the same time, these can become a part of the movement to create three dimensional space. Nature remains the pre-requisite starting point for all her work. Her fountain sculptures are aesthetic studies, of form, balance, melded to the rhythms of water as art and energy in conjunction often with solar-driven elements.

The circle, and its derivative, the spiral, are fundamental to Ochsner's research into line as three-dimensional space.

This exploration at the same time includes the exploration of space by means of the arabesque, semi-circle, spiral; each becoming opposing expressions of concentric and excentric space. This artist has understood the potential of line which can express both outward and inward space; the energy of line as enclosing and releasing energy in space, spatial dynamics as conceived in the sculptures by the Italian Futurist sculptor Boccioni at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Ochsner's art is a direct heir to twentieth century modernist experiments in France and Switzerland. Her semi-biomorphic forms recall the early works by Arp, yet her images are careful to avoid pure abstraction

and instead observe to retain representational reality. Her sculptures create new forms; fascinating transformations of nature; humorous and playful metamorphosis replete with witticism. Ochsner's violin-shaped sculptures, recall Picasso's interest in questioning representational reality by providing the viewer the option to read the object on several levels of meaning.

Brilliantly red/violet colored violins are transformed into women's figures and faces revealing varied types of personalities. The circle, spiral conjure up new shapes and through them new images in the viewer's imagination; representing Fish/women/ amphoras, poets/seals, sun/flowers, bird/clowns; polyester sculptures, all painted in glowing water-proof colors, inspired by and often set against mother nature. A child-like delight for pure color and simplicity of form permeate Ochsner's sculptures, words, and humour remain a central theme in all her pieces.

The artist's mobiles recall Calder's playful shapes and themes and affirm Ochsner's fundamental philosophy in her work. She states: "Ich suche immer eine Gewisse Leichtigkeit schwebende Kunst." The viewer will be reminded of some of Klee's poetic metamorphosis and usages of applying color and motifs such as red circles/dots against vivid blue background skies.

Both Ochsner and Niki de Saint Phalle's decorative shapes and colors owe to Gaudi's fantastic shapes. However the threatening gigantism and Surrealist tendencies in De Saint Phalle's sculptures as in her water sculpture in her Beaubourg Museum Fountain in Paris have been transformed by Ochsner into playful, benign objects reminiscent of happy childhood experiences reflecting life and nature.

Claire Ochsner's art creates a fresh dialogue with past artistic traditions and at the same time provides us with a unique glimpse into the artist's fertile imagination. In our present times, often replete with troubling moments her art allows for the viewer to stop and partake in a visual poetic celebration of the joy of life.

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