

Text – Sabine Maler, Timeless, Elusive, and Mysterious – or “How a Sculpture of Claire Ochsner is created” ...(translation)

When you step through the door into Claire Ochsner’s studio, you’re greeted by a jungle of brushes, pencils, spatulas, paint tubes, cans, and water bowls. Powerful fields of color immediately catch your eye. And in the middle of it all: the artist herself, dabbing her blue color with focus. She looks up briefly, then continues painting. Curved lines line up side by side.

“Look here...,” she begins enthusiastically, pointing to a half-finished windwheel. She explains what she has in mind, gesturing animatedly. Her eyes sparkle and flash in between. She already knows exactly how it’s going to be — no doubt she’s been seeing it with her mind’s eye for quite some time.

“And here...” She moves to the next piece and starts explaining — because she never works on just one thing at a time! That half-finished wind wheel will, by tomorrow, no longer be half-finished, but ready for the next production stage. Yet other sculptures are already waiting. Their still white bodies will soon shine in a riot of colors — maybe even by tomorrow!

Sometimes, like magic, new forms suddenly appear, almost overnight. One quietly wonders: Where does all this come from? And just watches, amazed.

In this space, the creative, generative energy feels tangible. Everything is close together — in neat rows or sometimes wild disarray — and all the tools and materials reflect the density of creation that happens here, every hour and minute. There is tension, action, emotion. Life manifests here in its most vibrant essence and becomes something entirely new, powerful, and expressive.

A little off to the side stands a large table covered in sketches — snapshots of a never resting mind. A bunch of ideas, all pressing to be brought to life. Where does this creative flow come from?

The pencil sketches are fresh and full of momentum, extending to the edge of the page — and seemingly beyond. From these idea sketches, the artist’s works gradually take shape. From the pencil lines, she moves to color renderings, still on paper and still two-dimensional. This is the stage Claire Ochsner calls the “search for the right form”. What decides between “right” or “wrong” is more intuition than logic. When the artist lets me glimpse this part of the process, she uses words like: “Reaching upward – harmoniously balanced, floating, flowing, new.” These words feel “right”, and thus help bring the form closer to perfection as it evolves.

Soon after, three-dimensional models are developed (for large sculptures), or the form is immediately transferred into reality. This is where skilled assistants come in: cutting sweeping forms out of thick aluminum sheets for wind sculptures, or welding steel frames for a sculpture’s inner structure. The creation of each work involves a team of craftsmen — mechanics, welders, engineers, and auto painters — all working hand in hand. And at the center of it all: the artist herself, ever-present, carrying the creative spirit forward, overseeing everything, and personally involved in every step. No work is ever just someone else’s responsibility. It always remains hers — and is always exactly as she envisions it.

Once a sculpture is welded and coated in a hard polyester shell, it's meticulously sanded — over and over again. During this phase, clouds of dust swirl like mist through the workshop. The workers, covered in fine white powder, look like snowmen, their laughing mouths hidden behind protective masks.

The surface must be flawless, with no scratches or dents. Only then is the sculpture primed in white and returned to the studio to receive its coat of color.

That step is reserved solely for the artist. With the color concept already perfected in her mind, she begins. This doesn't mean there won't be adjustments — the creative process is never linear or predictable. It's a dance with the moment, always in motion, always subject to change.

The colors she uses are striking in their intensity: red, blue, yellow, green — ever new in composition, each time forming a new picture. She dabs and shades them directly onto the sculpture with a brush. The speed and certainty with which she paints is astonishing. Once again, the studio fills with an atmosphere of intense focus — as if Claire Ochsner is capturing a dream, a concept, a moment — in color, held fast with power and intent.

This finality is meant to last. These sculptures are created for eternity and are built to endure. The auto painter gives the final touch: a protective coat of high-tech UV-filtered, two-component lacquer. Wearing a protective suit and mask, surrounded by bright fantasy creatures, the painter looks like someone from another world.

After the paint has dried, my own part of the work begins. Each sculpture is assigned a work number and unique name, then cataloged. Together with the photographer, we document each piece individually. The goal is a comprehensive, permanent archive before the works venture out into the world.

Every year, a catalog of works is created — a concise yet powerful record of the year's creative output. One year, for example 2008 included:

- 63 sculptures
- 8 paintings
- 2 mobiles
- several exhibitions
- numerous competition entries
- plus a whole pile of prints, idea sketches, and spontaneous snapshots.