

THE STATUE OF THE SHROUD OF TURIN

REALIZED BY *GYULA PAUER*

of *László BEKE - Ilona FARKAS*

(from the booklet "The Statue of the Shroud of Turin" - Budapest 1991
and "Collegamento pro Sindone" - November/December 1991)



The word "pseudo" means false, of unreal. This is the label Gyula Pauer gave to the sculptural technique that he developed around 1969-1970. The flat surfaces of his Minimal Art works - such as blocks and half spheres - were made to appear wrinkled or bumpy. When we examine these works more closely we realize that we have been deceived, but we still think the three-dimensional appearance of his work was achieved through photographic techniques. Whereas, the method actually used is very closely related to painting.

Pauer's early pseudo works were made in the following way. He would crumple up a piece of paper, or simply fit it into some negative form, and then spray-paint it from the side. (Instead of paper, he would at times utilize other materials, such as pliable, thin sheets of tin foil.) The spray-paint would only make contact with the protruding surfaces - and that remained to be done after this was to flatten out the material once again. It's clear that this method gives rise to a false sense of space. Within this space, shadows vary according to the amount of paint used and according to the angle between the paint-gun and the surface being painted. Thus, Pauer's technique is the symmetrical equivalent of the shadow created by a ray of light. It is interesting, to observe that when light is projected onto a pseudo surface, our eyes will perceive the form as negative or as positive, depending on whether the light comes from the left or from the right.

With this method, Pauer was able to conquer the "no-man's-land" that lies at the spot where sculpture, painting and photography meet. This is the space where during the early 1970's many different artistic orientations came to interact: Minimal and Conceptual Art, photography and Hyperrealism. With all of these, the aim was to question visual reality, and this indeed a the goal of Pseudo Art as well. In his later works, Pauer extended what, after all, is an epistemological approach to such other areas as set-design, public-performances, landscape painting and body imprints. It is the experience gathered from this last that has been incorporated into the creation of The Statue of the Shroud of Turin. Here the spectator is confronted by the question: In what manner does the "pseudo" join with a phenomenon which, for multitudes of the faithful, is simply the most factual - transcendent - impression of reality?

The Statue of the Shroud of Turin
Frontal view
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László Beke



The statue of the Shroud realized by the Hungarian sculptor Gyula Pauer was given to the Pope, who accepted it with joy. It was delivered by the author himself and by the mayor of Budapest to the Apostolic Delegate to the Hungarian State, His Excellency Mons. Angelo Acerbi on October 15, 1991, during a solemn ceremony at which the representatives of the newspapers, of the Hungarian Radio and Television were present. It has also been realized a nice brochure with texts in Hungarian, French and English.

Transferred in Italy, the statue, before the delivery to the Vatican, was exposed at the Hungary Academy in Rome. Now it is kept in the Vatican Museums, ethnographic section, and it is part of the collection of the gifts received by the Holy Father.

The author of the work received a letter from the Pope of special thanks and enormous appreciation for his valuable and extraordinary artistic work, with a benediction and the wish to continue this precious way in which the roots of the renewed Christian faith of the Hungarian people are perceived too. This statue is a tangible sign of the fact that also in Hungary the interest for the Shroud is more and more on the increase.

Ilona Farkas

*The Statue of the Shroud of Turin
Dorsal view
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