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!Angel Orensanz! !No Wall Art!

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Angel Orensanz's event-oriented art defies classification. His art cannot be reduced to a material or object-based essence. Angel is true to his own person. When he approaches a site, it becomes a scenario, a place where human culture (as personified by the artist) and nature, which for Orensanz is very much a living, three-dimensional tableau, interact. The focus is on the temporal and the ephemeral art scenario. Landscape as site is an experiential theatre, where each detail the artist integrates, changes the way we see our place in all this, or in the vista that a landscape can be, or the cityscape site, if that is the place for the art.

When a particular performance, sculptural situation, or environmental intervention takes place, Angel instigates it all as if art could never be walled in, or hermetically sealed in the flat white block-like cube that Brian O'Dougherty defined so integrally for future artists in a 1976 issue of Artforum (another arts canon that later became a dogma). Not many artists are so conscious that art exists within a historical and global continuum as Angel Orensanz. This field or terrain is one where Angel Orensanz explores his own history through the performance interaction with environment. His art events are like postcards to the very essence of the world. "Art is seen as something that raises the human spirit, draw us up, maybe to the heavens."

What is initially used as a frame of reference in Orensanz's metal and concrete sculpture, breaks open, and redefines the initial cues it develops. Some of these works are like line drawings or sketches in three-dimensional space as with the red linear material; effects created by a waterfall at the Monasterio de Piedra in Aragon in 1988. The lines curve and carve their way through space, gradually ascending, moving outwards from a centre. The extensions of these sculptures are like cosmic signs. Their potential symbols have parallels with Joan Miro's plastic sculptures or Picasso's ceramics for they do have a fabulist and universal imaginative and childlike character. They ascend or move outwards horizontally from a central point. These sculptures are events that express and exist in a place with a totality that is transitional, yet has an ephemeral character. The symbolic still plays a role with Angel Orensanz's art. The Harvest Sculpture (1996) of red metal in Beami, France brings harvest machinery to mind. River Argon (1978) in Saragossa, Spain carries an emphatic and Baroque sublimity in its presence. The cut out steel forms are expansive, celebratory and hopeful. They recall something of the Spanish exuberance of Antonio Gaudi y Cornet's surrealist Sagrada Familia, and Casa Vicens. The same can be said for Wall Sculpture (1982) and the vertical pillar-like Lighthouse (1974) of concrete and steel in Saragossa, Spain. Swirling around and circling the archaic concrete are bands of steel that have a hypnotic, suggestive sweep. The Banderillas del Guadalquivir (1992) made of steel and wood, precisely because the materials used in the construction are rudimentary projects a dreamtime sense that is imaginative and childlike. The character of this sculpture recalls Joan Miro's comment: "The forms expressed by an individual who is a part of society must reveal the movement of a soul trying to escape the reality of the present, to offer other men the possibility of rising above the present. In order to discover a livable world — how much rottenness must be swept away!"

The vertical steel tubes Orensanz has exhibited at Holland Park in London England and on the banks of the River Obro in Saragossa, Spain in the 1970s, were echoed in a later installation at Studio 54 in New York (1985). More recently Orensanz has exhibited his tube-like forms in Montreal, Canada. The vertical thrust of this colourful collectivity of forms suggests a spiritual dimension. One of the most striking and powerful sculptures Angel Orensanz ever made are the Wind Sails made of aluminum and painted with enamel for Moleres de...
Dei in Spain (1974). The same can be said of Spirit of Valley 1 (1982) constructed of pre-cast concrete and steel in Sallent de Gallego in Spain. Sited on a tall cylindrical pedestal in a mountain valley this formidable sculpture recalls Max Ernst's outdoor sculptures. It has a primitive, surreal energy and looks like a transmitter for some lost Gods, for a mythological civilization and its myths. These sculptures mark a high point in Orensanz's vernacular sculptural style. Like another piece, Sun Screen (1987) made on Sea Island in the southern U.S., these works are conceived as ephemeral accentuated architectural details that alter the surrounding environmental space, leaving colourfull traces in space.

While we can perceive Angel Orensanz's performance installations as objects independent of their environment or as elements directed towards other elements, with which they are correlated -- architecture, space, and the viewer — they also merge perceptually with the environment as we see them. A dialogue with space, and environment repositions Orensanz's artistic production, so that we realize this dialogue embraces ancient, modern, contemporary art simultaneously. Orensanz is a universalis who sees no basic dichotomy between the various periods and disciplines, practices and approaches to art. He has never segregated his art from the physical world, nor from nature's processes. Instead Orensanz intuitively recognizes that art is more than an idea made manifest. Art can embody greater primal forces while keeping a very human, vernacular, even comical sense of the event that is the art aktion.


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