

Flash Art

Bruno Gironcoli

Clearing / Brussels

Clearing's new Brussels space is just a short walk from Wiels Contemporary Art Centre. Situated in a former warehouse, it is impressive in scale and one of the largest private exhibition spaces in the city, perfectly suited to hosting the works of Bruno Gironcoli (1936 - 2010).

This show focuses on works from the late 1990s and early 00s, during which the artist produced monumental sculptures in his large studio at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, where he led the sculpture school from 1977. It is hard not to consider the artist's original training as a goldsmith when examining the gold and silver patinas of these pieces. Over the years Gironcoli made numerous aesthetic experiments involving installations of wire, sculpture and other media, culminating in his highly recognizable style. However, arguably it was only at the end of his life that he took full advantage of his early skills as a craftsman, having spent his career apparently distancing himself from more artisanal concerns.

It is therefore ironic that despite all these sculptures having the appearance of cast metal, most are instead assemblages of steel, wood and synthetic resin, covered with metallic paint. Notable are *Untitled* (1999), *Figure with Suspended Oval Pieces* (1990) and *Untitled* (2003). It is almost impossible to tell the difference between these and other works cast in aluminum, such as the spectacular *We the Children of Villach* (2005), or *One Body, Two Souls* (2001), which lends the show its title.

These works intermingle geometric and organic elements, straight lines and curves, abstract and figurative motifs, a number representing babies. They resemble giant altars serving the rituals of some strange religion, or at least the personal mythology of the artist. Perched on stylized feet, they seem to hover above ground. Despite working closely with the Viennese Actionists, Gironcoli never gave up his quest for an ideal beauty. He was a baroque sculptor, one who saw the art in the execution.

by *Pierre-Yves Desaiève*



Bruno Gironcoli
Untitled
(detail; 1993-95)
Courtesy of the Estate
Bruno Gironcoli and
Clearing, New York / Brussels
Photography by
Julien Hayard