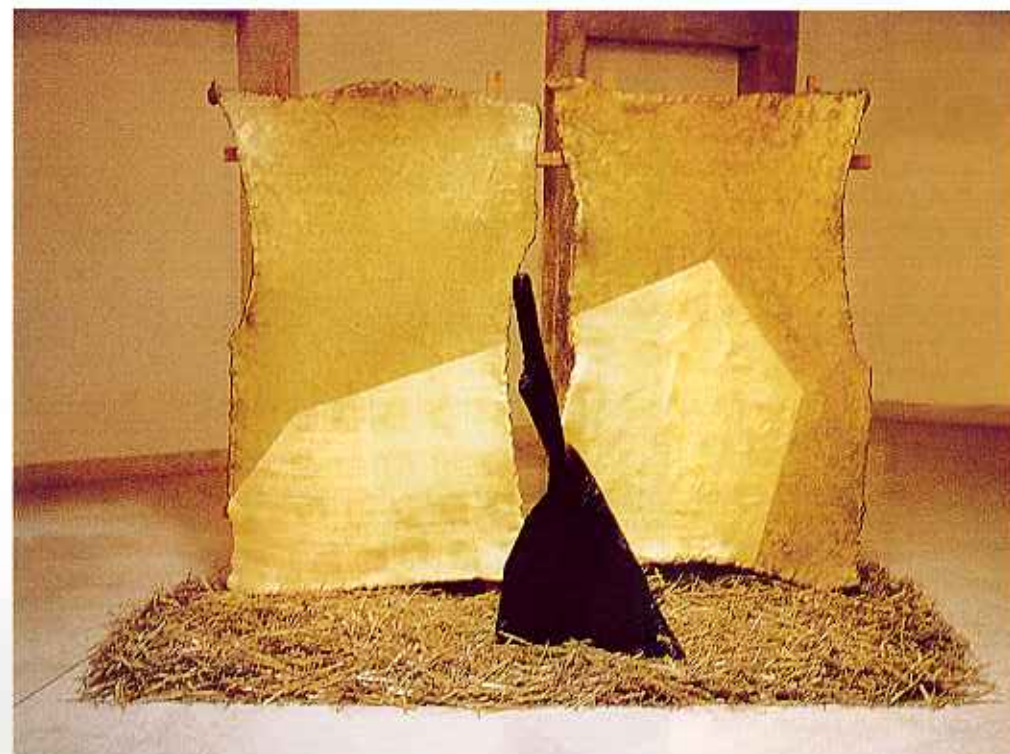


through a hole in the door, we can see an aggressive, menacing owl staring at us; because of the surprise we cannot help feeling in danger. Through this device the artist forces us to face our obsessions and fears. Merz's sculpture is a work in progress. Five marble figures will be installed in five windows of the new Museum of Contemporary Sculpture.

Parmiggiani's *Senza titolo* (*Untitled*) is a huge marble egg laid in the fissure of two rocks. It took many hours for the artist and his assistants to reach the perfect balance. It is an amazing intervention, not intrusive at all, as if it were a real egg laid by an unknown bird. Is it a friendly presence or a menace? The answer depends on us, on our relationship with nature. If we do not have a guilty conscience the presence of the unusual oversize egg will not make us feel uneasy but simply curious and confident, waiting to know what it will happen next. We are aware that whatever it brings, it will add something to our knowledge and therefore it will be good for us.

—Laura Jansini



Above: Claudio Parmiggiani, *Untitled*, 2002. Carrara marble, 185 x 138 cm. diameter. Right: Gabor Zaborszky, *Memorial for Joseph Beuys*, 1990. Mixed media, installation view.

Gyor, Hungary

Gabor Zaborszky

Varosi Múvészeti Múzeum

More than 25 years of work by Budapest artist Gabor Zaborszky was collected in the beautiful galleries of the Varosi Múvészeti Múzeum, a former Esterhazy palace. This retrospective exhibition showed Zaborszky's development from printmaker and painter to sculptor, as well as his conceptual evolution from the melancholy and sometimes angry statements of the communist era to the more conceptually expansive works of today.

Constant throughout Zaborszky's work is concern for surface, as expressed through a variety of natural earthy materials, ranging from paper pulp to cement. Some of these surfaces have a stucco or adobe quality, while others almost feel like stretched animal hides. All of them have a lushness and tactile quality that reflect Zaborszky's love of texture. The use of sticks and branches as structural supports emphasizes his attachment to nature, which is further reinforced by the earth

tones of the surfaces. Many works refer to fences and walls but feel more like shelters than barriers.

Many of the works from the mid-to late '80s have a dark and heavy quality that suggests primitive archetypal animal forms. These sculptures, which often cantilever off the wall, loom like shadows, a little threatening and yet strangely human.

The large paper works executed from 1997 to 2000 have the same kind of solid simplicity as the earlier works, but ominous darkness has been replaced by an almost cloud-like lightness. These sculptures, sometimes suspended from walls and sometimes hanging in open space, are constructed of paper pulp over a wire mesh armature, with areas covered in gold leaf. The resulting visual softness gives these pieces a very quiet quality. The carefully rolled and folded forms seem sometimes like robes or vestments, sometimes like pillows, and at other times like ancient scrolls. The titles refer to gates and entryways but also to dreams, underscoring the metaphysical nature of the work. Several of these works have been exhibited in churches-turned-exhibition-halls in the cities of Budapest and Eger, where the quasi-religious nature of the spaces combined with the sculptures to make a very powerful statement.

Memorial for Joseph Beuys (1990) brings together many of Zaborszky's themes. In this installation we see the wall-like structures of his earlier *Indian Fences*, organic in nature and supported by wood branches. Looming forward, as if emerging from between these walls, is a black organic form whose shape carries a very human presence. With the floor area covered by straw, the installation brings to mind *Coyote/ Joseph Beuys: I Like America And America Likes Me*, in which Beuys, wrapped in a felt blanket, fends off a live coyote with a cane. In

fact, the spectral shadow-like form in Zaborszky's sculpture corresponds directly to the wrapped body of Beuys. Its suggested movement, coupled with the strong relationship to the narrow opening between the walls, suggests a spiritual rather than physical passage.

—Barry Parker

Dakar, Senegal

Dak/Art 2002

Is contemporary artistic production in Africa a succession of innovations or a pale copy of form and content already in existence elsewhere? This was the central question posed by Dak/Art 2002, the fifth Dakar Biennial of Contemporary African Art, the only biennial on the international circuit to restrict participation to artists who either live in Africa or have a direct connection to the continent.

Given that Dak/Art opened in May, a month before the opening of Documenta11 in Kassel under the directorship of Nigerian-born Okwui Enwezor, the question seemed particularly pertinent. Representatives from over 30 African countries had their work on show in a main exhibition of international (African) artists, three individual exhibitions by invited curators of three artists each, a retrospective of 10 years of Dak/Art, and a fringe program including 90 other events.

Dakar, of course, is part of Francophone West Africa, and much support for the event comes from cultural organizations in France and Belgium. Until this year, the catalogue had always been printed in France, but first-time director Ousseynou Wade insisted that this year, it should be a local production, thus proving at least that African printing is up to international standards.

How agreeable (speaking as an African artist) it would be to say that the rest of Dak/Art was equally successful, but this would ignore an inadequate curatorial process. A central committee

selected work for the international exhibition from 35mm slides submitted by artists who apparently had been recommended by past participants or who had found the call for proposals on the Dak/Art Web site. This system led to a rather random selection of artists. In addition, weak organization and funding that came through at the last minute meant that the work of some artists, including the eminent sculptor Sokari Douglas Camp, was never collected to be shipped.

of depressingly similar elongated metal figures, fingers extended, marched along a bed of discarded rubber thong sandals, with a strip of disco lights running along the center.

Modou Ndiang is a Senegalese artist who now lives and works in Providence. His *Manhattan of Moi*, a response to the events of September 11, was one of the few pieces that successfully combined an African voice with a conceptual edge. The collage wall piece showed photo images of



Emeka Udemba, *World White Walls*, 2001. Mixed-media installation, dimensions variable. Work shown at Dak/Art.

Judging purely by the work in Dak/Art, one would have to say that many African artists are engaged in an uneasy struggle to bridge the gap between traditional forms and contemporary installation art. Thus the winner of the grand prize (a controversial decision), Senegalese Ndary Lo, favored student of the internationally known Ousmane Sow, presented *The long walk to change. An army*

the familiar canyons of Manhattan patched and intersected with shards of brightly painted tin. Manhattan damaged but resilient, reconstructed with the cheerful ad hoc ingenuity of the squatter camp and initiated into the rest of the world.

Another strong prize-winning piece came from Nigerian artist Emeka Udemba. For *World White Walls*, which addressed the