



Sculpting Souls: Clemens Gerstenberger's Artistic Expression Unveiled

Clemens Gerstenberger is a Germany-based sculptor who unveils the intricacies of his artistic journey, delving into the fusion of craftsmanship and inspiration. From a cabinetmaker apprenticeship in the GDR to embracing diverse cultural influences, his sculptures and objects breathe life into a harmonious blend of natural forms and abstract expressions. The team at Artiste Culture had the opportunity to connect with him and learn more about his journey.

Can you tell us about your background and early experiences that influenced your journey as a sculptor, especially your cabinetmaker apprenticeship?

In my early years, I read books about Tilman Riemenschneider and Veit Stoß. I was fascinated by the sculptors of the late Gothic and Renaissance periods. The depiction of the robes in particular left a deep impression on me. As it was hardly possible to train as a sculptor in the GDR, the former socialist part of Germany, I first trained as a carpenter and learned the practical basics of woodworking. I acquired the theoretical basics of design during my studies to become a designer. This enabled me to implement my ideas.

Your sculptures and objects are inspired by natural forms. Could you share some specific natural elements or experiences that have had a profound impact on your work?

The inspiration for natural forms comes mostly from organic shapes found in flora and fauna. This can be a tree, a beetle or a body made visible under a microscope. Looking at the floral elements in different moods and light influences gives me the possibility of abstraction.

Your work embodies a fusion of artistic expressions from various cultures. How do these diverse cultural influences shape your artistic philosophy and the design of your sculptures and objects?

I spent almost 2 years of my life in Japan and learned to appreciate the clear formal language of interior design. The abstract ornamentation of the mosques in Uzbekistan also gave me new ideas. Furthermore, the archaic design of the Romanesque period. On closer inspection, the different impressions have triggered in me a formally reduced and abstract language of form, which does not particularly emphasise one or the other influence. Not to be forgotten is the task of the artist, who should reflect the zeitgeist of his epoch.

You mentioned that functionality loses its significance in some of your sculptures. Could you elaborate on the balance between artistic expression and functionality in your work?

Correct, the functionality must lose its significance, as it is an art object and not, for example, a piece of furniture that can be used. The only function a work of art should have is to touch the soul and the associated engagement with the work of art. The balance between artistic expression and functionality is up to the viewer to determine.

In your series “*Corpus Fractum*” and “*Folded Body*,” you take an abstract approach to sculptural objects. How do you navigate the fine line between abstraction and recognizability in your creations?

I think that the recognisability of my formal language lies in the abstraction in which my sculptures can be found. I intend to create the body with a minimum of lines. It is precisely the fine line on which I walk that distinguishes my sculptures from many others.

The interaction of elevations and depressions in your sculptures creates a unique visual and haptic experience. Could you explain how these elements contribute to the sensory and aesthetic qualities of your work?

The elevations and depressions are responsible for the visual, i.e. aesthetic perception. They describe the shape of the sculpture and thus its formal language. They are perceived by the senses via the smooth, rough or textured surface of the sculpture. Depending on the form of expression, the sculpture receives its surface and thus emphasises the overall statement.

You’re a member of several professional art associations. How have these institutions and relationships enriched your artistic journey and influenced your approach to sculpting?

The art associations are an important means of exchanging ideas with other colleagues. Sculpture symposia are more of an enrichment for my creative process. Here, you can enter into a dialogue with colleagues in the creative process, see new working techniques and find out what’s new on the scene.



Your studio works with a variety of materials, including wood, metal, clay, and concrete. How do you decide which material to use for a particular project, and what qualities do you seek in these materials?

The choice of material is based on the design language and location of the sculpture. I usually use hardwood, as this material can be worked and shaped very well with my design language. I use clay to create small cast models, as this is where I feel I have the best creative freedom. Bronze is a very noble and expensive material, which has the highest durability. I only cast the most perfect sculptures in bronze and those that will be permanently placed outdoors. In addition to bronze, I also offer cast iron, stainless steel and aluminium.

Corpus Fractum N° 22101



Can you describe the creative process and techniques you use when working with different materials, such as wood, bronze, and stainless steel, to bring your designs to life?

The creative process starts with brainstorming and design sketching. I often base my designs on a mathematical concept. This gives the design its mathematical and creative proportions. The ideas are inspired by natural forms, modern and classical architecture and morbid urban charm. The designs are realised almost exclusively by hand with the aid of hand tools such as sculpting irons, files, rasps etc. and machines such as chainsaws, angle grinders, milling cutters etc. The machine tools are first used to carve out the basic shape and the hand tools are used to work on the details.

Folded Body N° 22111

You mention that your artefacts have a soul that can be subtly experienced. Could you elaborate on what you mean by “soul” in your art, and how do you aim to imbue your creations with this quality?

Soul refers to the totality of emotional impulses or mental processes in a person. The creation of a work of art requires the emotional impulse, i.e. the soul, so that it can be created at all. As an artist, I therefore also create soulful art. It is a circumstance that is inherent in every work of art created by man.

You create sculptural furniture and objects for individualists. What message or mindset do you hope your work conveys to those who choose to surround themselves with your representative objects?

A message that many artists probably associate with their work. To take in the work and be inspired by it. To develop your ideas and thoughts about the work of art. For this reason, my sculptures are only given family names and are provided with a number code. In this way, I do not incapacitate the inclined viewer, but leave it up to them to see what they want to see in the artwork.



Folded Body N° 20081

*An Unknown Face , 2023, African
Print Wax Fabric By Samuel Nnorom*



Empowering Artists, Elevating Art

Artiste Culture

Are you ready to unlock your full creative potential? At Artiste Culture, we're more than just consultants – we're partners in your artistic journey. With our global network, industry insights, and personalised strategies, we empower artists to reach new heights of success. From consultations to outreach, publications to portfolio management, we provide the support and guidance you need to thrive in today's competitive art world. Join us and let's shape the future of art together.

info@artisteculture.com