

DOUCET SAITO Sculptors

Satoshi SAITO, RCA

Exhibition Doucet Saito, Canada House, London, 27 April 2006

Opening Statement

High Commissioner, Agent-General, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: it is a real pleasure to be here with you this evening and to be invited to the private view of the exhibition.

We are doubly grateful for this exhibition, since we have a major sculpture, *Marebito*, currently being shown at The New Art Center, Roche Court—a beautiful garden, which reminded us, on our first visit there, of the countryside around Way's Mills, where we have been working for almost 40 years. And to have this exhibition in this country in which we were so much impressed, on a visit two years ago, with the beauty of the cathedrals, Stonehenge, and the beautiful church at Mells.

Last year, we went through hundreds of photographs of our work, in preparation for the book *Marebito*. We enjoyed following our own evolution, and remarking on the consistency of the work done, we felt, if you will excuse the understatement, “not so bad.” We felt that we had developed our own deeply personal vocabulary. We hope you may see something of this “vocabulary” in the exhibition. Many of the sculptures shown here were conceived to be cut or cast later on a larger scale. We suggest you take the time to look at the slide presentation, which may be viewed in the smaller gallery, and which will give you a more overall view of our work.

We live on a farm in a small village in a region of fields, forests, lakes and rivers. I am tempted to say that deciding to live where we are, and to live as we do, has created almost half of our work for us, for the nature around us there shows a different face every time we observe it. This has been a very important aspect of our creative process. Some image, some movement or impression, may trigger the beginning of our work. But the initial image may go through a long period of questioning, even of fear and uncertainty, before we have a clear idea of what we have glimpsed, and of exactly how it is going to take shape.

And only later, if we are lucky, will we recognize that the sculpture is taking a really satisfying form. At this point the work in progress starts having a life of its own, finding completion in quiet harmony with its surroundings.

It is difficult for us to verbalize our work. Clay and stone are such very quiet materials! They reveal themselves to us bodily, and we respond. Their beauty silences me.

Of course, we hope we are not so peculiar that we cannot share these experiences with other people. We want that the materials, shapes and colours, the lights and rhythms of our work, may communicate something of our feel for the world.

Last year we stood silent at Prehar Vihear, in Cambodia. It is on top of a hill and facing the Khmer temple, and is built of stone quarried nearby. We were in another world, and we saw how our work may be “dust in the wind.” Of course, we hope that the forms we produce, their volumes and rhythms, bear some essential relation to time—and to our everyday lives. More to the point perhaps, we hope they may articulate space in the rhythms and proportions we would ideally like to find in our lives.

Happily, we have met people who believe in our work and who have kept us afloat in a variety of ways. Certainly, this is the moment to say thank you to those responsible for making this exhibition possible and for bringing *Marebito* to the beautiful region of Wiltshire. Here we would like to thank George MacLaren, for his constant support; Mr. Mel Cappe, the High Commissioner, for his generous invitation to exhibit at Canada House; CDP Real Estate Europe for their financial support; Lady Bessborough for arranging *Marebito's* first appearance at Roche Court; and to the staff of both government offices for their sterling work.

Thank you, *et merci*.

Satoshi Saito