

The workshop faced west, with the rear facing towards the east. The late-afternoon sun could be viewed in all its glory here. The myriad of tones and hues of yellow and the way the light falls vary according to many factors such as the season, month of the year, daily weather, clouds, and even the wind. Notwithstanding the wind, even the manner in which you see affects these yellows. The presence of the observer is undeniably important. A whole mass of rays might change according to your observation. The large, single-room workshop is located in a small side wing on Sarine Street. I do my sculpting inside during the winter and outside during the summer.

She was reading the plaque at the entrance of the workshop:
Things that are none.

Art is the form of things that are none; the motive for filling voids with void.

Like giving shape to a death that does not exist.

The rest of the writing, the superhero's sidekick, the authentic one.

"Making art is like making death," I said.

"What isn't?" she replied.

To counter her heavy energy, I was willingly keeping my own energy low. I thought she found me too pretty for such an environment. Such people are prejudiced about the looks and intellect of artisans.

I didn't start out as a headstone sculptor, but rather, I studied sculpture at art school and became an artist. For some time, I persevered in the industry. I chased down opportunities with dogged determination and resolve. Besides producing art, I did my damndest to send out

applications and to grab a chair at dinners organized after exhibition openings. After a while, however, as I looked at what we produced, both myself and the people around me, I came to the conclusion I had no connection with any of it. That's how I got started with what I'm still doing today, what others might consider ironic. Rather than producing in an industry that made me feel dead, I chose a field in which I felt alive. I've always pondered the proximity of artistic production and death anyway. I believe that when you place your product in an art space, you kill it. The product is alive only until its presentation. A sterile exhibition hall is the deathbed of art. And after death, we organize a funeral, inviting people to come and witness this death.

From the moment I began viewing it in this manner, I no longer had any esteem for this function ascribed to art. For me, artistic production no longer had a function, and it was in fact disturbing. Finally, I realized that not only did all these attitudes and works not add anything to my own production. Those who held them were only interested in networking, so I decided to find my own path. Relying on my meager savings, I learned a bit about headstone carving and opened my own shop. This was really exciting for me. This after all is what life is all about. If you feel something, you've got to act on it.

The headstone business is intriguing. We put the dead in the same ground from which we quarry the marble. We want to know where our dead are with a view to keeping them in our world a bit longer. The piece of marble is their last remnant on earth. I wouldn't want a headstone for myself. I wouldn't want to leave anything behind.

Why would I want a trace I wouldn't be able to experience for myself?

Before I start carving the headstone, I collect information about the deceased. I like to think about their lives, their jobs, personalities, contributions to the world, and so forth. As I design their headstones, I contemplate the kind of energy that has left this world.

"My sister told me she saw your *Sculpture Is Dead, Long Live The Object* exhibition years ago. That's how she got to know about you."

Art is essential on countless platforms. It is a thinking. It means crossing over to another dimension, creating an alternative to life, and expanding life itself. It is to construct, to make up. This is the art that isn't dead. Because its continuation is everywhere. It's not limited to the body, but circulates with the idea. I'm not talking about immortality here. What immortal thoughts could we ever have in a world doomed to death?

I don't know how she heard about my last exhibition. Maybe she read about it in an op-ed newspaper article about me. Had I known about the existence of such an article, I'd definitely have prevented it from being published. I can't begin to tell you how much this kind of thing makes me sick to my stomach.

"What do you do yourself?" I asked her. In fact, I couldn't care less, but asking this question was the best way to close the subject.

"I'm an architect. I work in an architecture bureau where I'm also a partner."

“Why didn’t you say that? We’re colleagues.”

“Yes, we most certainly are!” she agreed.

“I often think about architecture’s close connection to death, just like art,” I went on. “In the context of existentialism... living inside some information, but unable to grasp the full gist of it... I also think I somehow construct buildings for death. Here though it’s not for those who are gone, but for those who remain. However, I find a certain childish enthusiasm in it, you know, offering humanistic and artistic propositions to the unknown, trying to build a material connection with death. It’s actually not all that different from other mediums that continue in life. Just like a headstone, architecture is also sculpture. I find it disturbing that it presents beauty obsessively. I’m disturbed by the beautiful production standards. The same also exists in art, in that rather than being beautiful, it presents itself as beautiful.”

She was examining some small pieces of marble in front of her. Dressed more casually this time, she had dropped by to bring me a few more letters and to pay me in cash.

Her eyes opened slightly. “Who would want to produce such beautiful forms? If life is not as beautiful, who are these forms for?”

My eyes opened involuntarily. “Isn’t that what modern architecture is for?” I was stunned. “I don’t think placing such forms in our lives means anything more than concealing or covering up certain other things. Just like whitewashing.”

Architecture is a medium used to conduct the practice of patriarchy and capitalism. Architectural space is generated

so that these two concepts can function. Rather than being all about esthetical structures, modern architecture represents these systems. Apart from this, if we consider their God complex, it would seem entirely natural that architects have a liaison with Satan. The relationship I'm talking about, between architecture and death, is not a poetic connection. Anyhow, we only view a small part of this connection with good intentions. Architecture is writing. It doesn't have much to do with the realm beyond writing.

I didn't want her to be offended by my opinions. My discourse on architecture and art usually disturbs people. I no longer enter a discussion with folks who are fanatically committed to their jobs, to their production in the industry. I realized that she was even more radical than me. "Humanity was doomed the moment it rose higher than the tree," she said.

The light was now shifting from orange to the yellow of dried mangoes. During this conversation, the light in the workshop was turning into a Nils Frahm composition. And that was the moment the track Says kicked in.

"I'm thinking of using a red stone called Rosso Levanto for your sister," I said. It's a type of marble that's not easy to find. But I would like to see a sculpture on the grave that would look like a piece of life and I believe it would suit our situation perfectly."

Her eyes welled up and I could tell she loved the idea.
