



FRANK ZAMKOTOWICH

Oratory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I've enjoyed working with Dale Amundson. His sensibilities and contributions towards organizing and producing this exhibition are invaluable.

I would also like to thank Grace Thomson who encouraged an exhibit of my work from the beginning and who has offered on-going support.

Thank you Karen Armstrong, Jim Stadnick and Tom Wood.

I extend my appreciation to the members of the Gallery 1.1.1. Selection Committee for their confidence and to the Manitoba Arts Council for their assistance.

Frank Zamkotowich

FRANK ZAMKOTOWICH

Oratory

Gallery 1.1.1.
School of Art,
University of Manitoba

November 19 - December 16, 1989

ORATORY

1 oratory : n. a small room or secluded place, set apart for private prayer.

2 oratory : n. the art of speaking in public eloquently or effectively.

In the installation *Oratory*, Zamkotowich creates an environment that calls to mind places of ritual that are universally known, places that linger in our minds without specific connections to any given religion or site. He constructs, through the use of the four interrelated sculptures, a psychological space that brings to mind timeless rituals and the universal search for relationships between ourselves and those things outside and inside ourselves that we can never truly know, but only speculate upon and perhaps try to understand.

It is as if all things are probed and all things are possible within this space; orators, elicitation, stations,

words embossed on the fossil of tree suspended in space the endless arc, the shifting colour, movement,

Below lies a pathway of flat rocks
A creature passing footprints

An animal incised across a ladder,
a metaphorical watchtower, a view,

nature and man peering imbedded,
camouflage, colour, eyes

movement

There

Is an alter crudely yet reverently
constructed, with images
fleeting as recollections
of bygone pilgrimages, images
real or imagined.

A single plank leans casually against two panels, a mysterious offering or perhaps the remnants of a shrine. The contrast of the physical and the ethereal. The space evokes human habitation, a place of dwelling - a hut. The single plank becomes a shelter, the painted panels a metaphor for every habitation. We can project ourselves inside the metaphorical space of the dwelling, sheltered by a single plank, and our protection is assured.

*My house is diaphanous, but it is not of glass. It is more of the nature of vapor. Its walls contract and expand as I desire. At times I draw them close about me like protective armour. . . But at others I let the walls of my house blossom out into their own space, which is infinitely extensible.*¹

Like the house Spiridaki describes, the dwelling in *Oratory* is more of spirit than of reality. It exists only if we are inclined to desire its protection and it opens and closes to suit our needs. Perhaps to some it does not exist at all. To those who have no need of it or to those who are unwilling to enter the poetic space of the mind, it is merely a plank leaning against a wall. The physical reality functions as a stimulus for a private space; a psychological space that is as unique and personal to each of us as is Spiridaki's house.

Space, outside ourselves, invades and ravishes things:

*If you want to achieve the existence of a tree,
Invest it with inner space, this space
That has its being in you. Surround it with compulsions,
It knows no bounds, and only really becomes a tree*

*It takes its place in the heart of your renunciation.*²

The creation of a profound inner space through the creation of an external physical space is, of course, the object of all monumental architecture, but *Oratory*

is not architecture. It is a place where connections could be made through records of rituals to inner rituals yet unperformed and perhaps never known. Nature and man exist in this place, both contributing image and history, each transformed by the other, yet each retaining the essence of self.

There is time and tension in this space. We feel time through the tensions; tensions that are physical, emotive, intellectual and experience oriented. We try to hold on to fleeting impressions of images that seem to materialize and dissolve as we move among the elements of the installation. Through movement, time becomes a perceptible component of the installation.

The contrasts of the phallic upward thrust of a black form against the delicate curving of a coloured line in space or the heaviness of the leaning wooden plank against dissolving surfaces of indeterminate space and shadowy figures create other tensions, both formal and experiential. Fragments of experience, evocative but unexplained occur throughout. A stepladder, an object of function, old and worn, a box of earth at

its top, rises above surfaces that are as evocative as they are mysterious. Eyes seem to peer from the surface opposite. But can we be sure? A stack of logs is covered with a dark surface of images that shift and change, reminiscent of drawings on the walls of ancient caves. An enclosure, a platform, a table? Does it serve some function unknown to us, or perhaps none at all. Its presence is immediate, yet it reaches back through time beyond history.

Zamkotowich alters nature, but he is also altered by it. It lives in the work as tree trunk and branches. He paints them, writes on them and even mimics them in the snake-like loops that are suspended in the air, hovering weightlessly above the ancient records of fossils impressed upon the stones beneath and the man-made tracks of a non-existent animal carved delicately in them. But he never imposes his absolute will upon them. Their influence on him is as strongly felt as is his upon them.

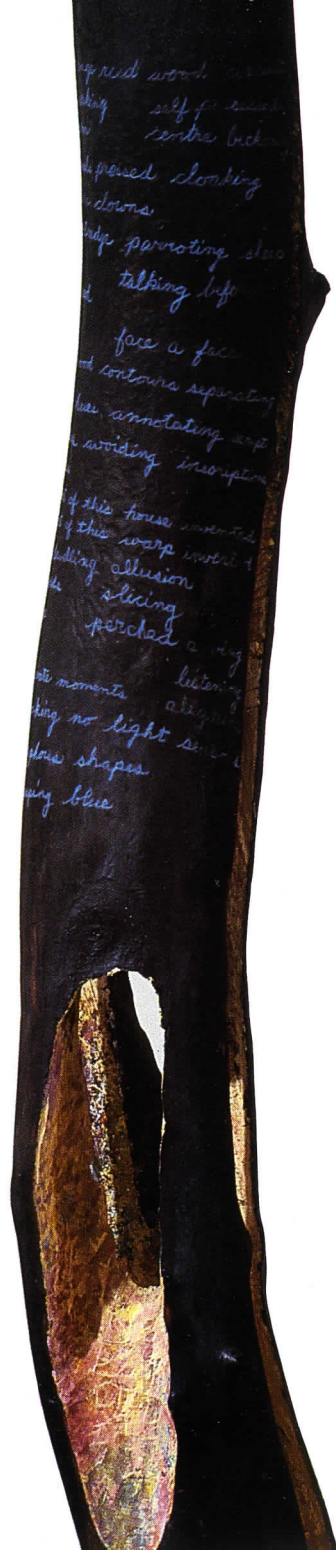
The sculptures of Frank Zamkotowich convey a sense of presence reminiscent of some mysterious place of ritual

uncovered in an archeological dig. Nature and man, accidental and deliberate, functionless and purposeful, they embody the modernist's concern for the nature of the sculptural entity, controlling and defining the spaces which they occupy, together with the sense of history and human association that comes from the retention of the identity of their derivation in nature and the evidence of the intervention of the human act; the power of the combined rituals of art and life.

Dale Amundson, 1989

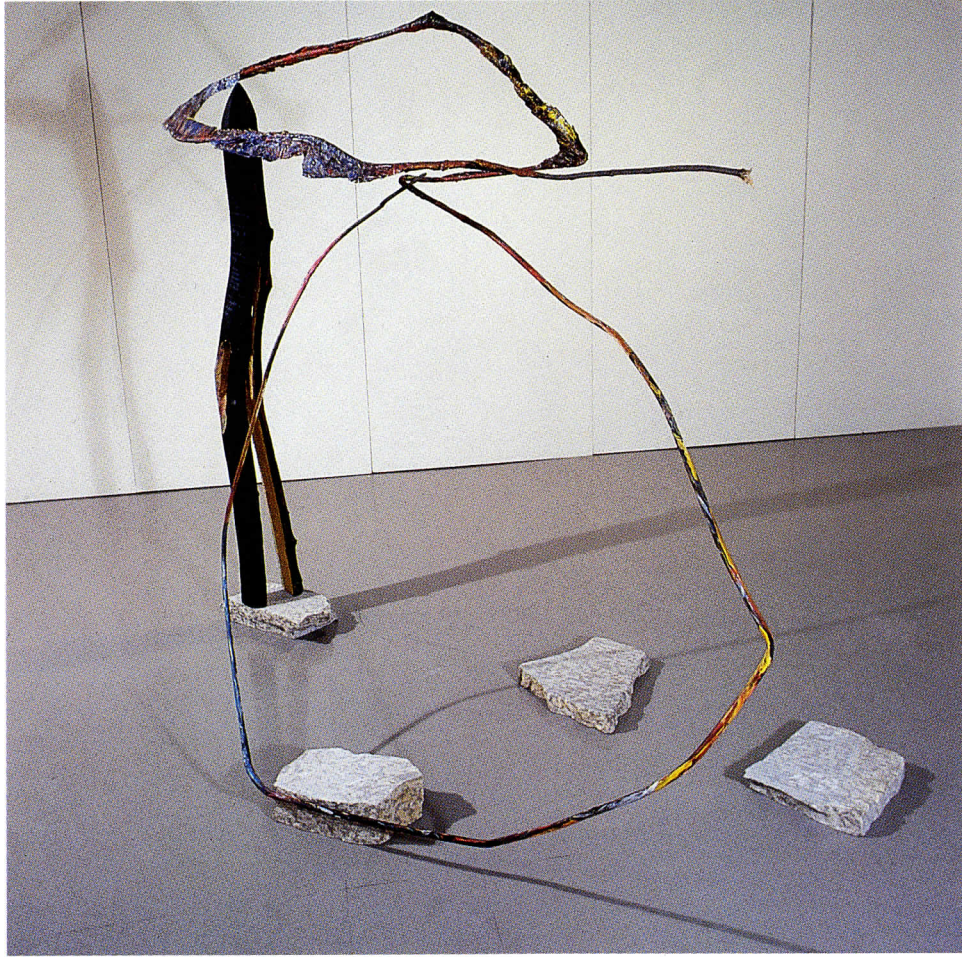
NOTES:

1. Georges Spiridaki, *Mort lucide*, p. 35, Seghers, Paris. (Quote from Bachelard, G.: *the Poetics of Space*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1969, p.51).
2. Rilke: Poeme dated June, 1924, translated into French by Claude Vigee, published in the review *Les Lettres*, 4th year, Nos. 14, 15, 16, p. 13. (Quote from Bachelard, G.: *the Poetics of Space*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1969, p.200).



The work for Oratory developed out of my curiosity and interest in phenomenological aspects of awareness. This work is experience oriented, perhaps more physical than visual. For me it is tactile and I've tried to be sensitive to space and its alliance with presence and psychological perception.

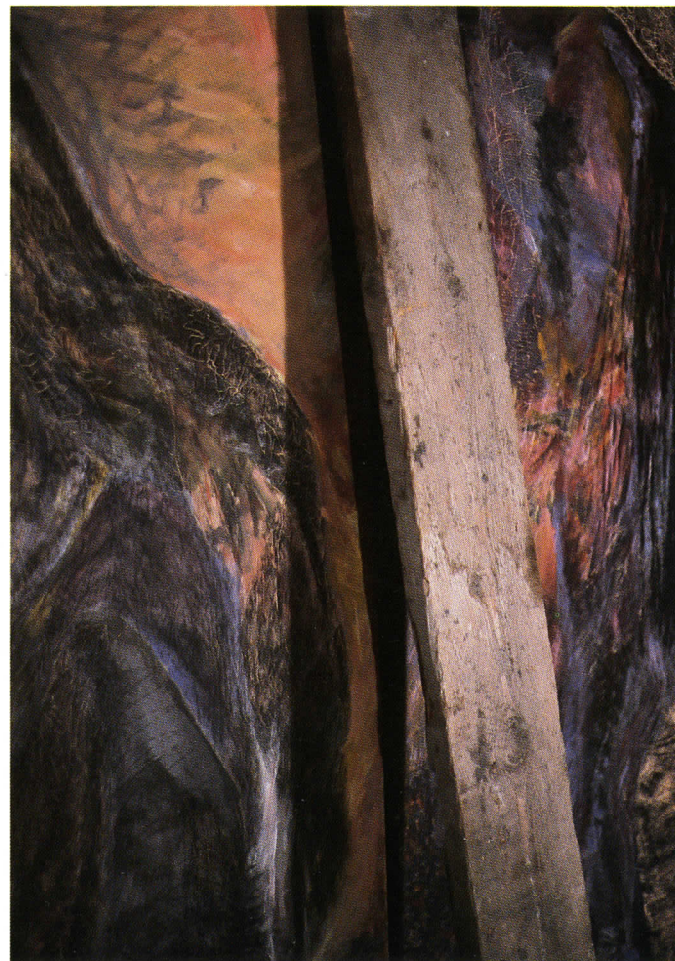
The word oratory is used as a canopy. It evokes my sense of contemplation about space and communication.















FRANK ZAMKOTOWICH

MFA, Department of Art, University of Montana,
Missoula, 1977

BFA, School of Art, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg,
1975

Exhibitions

1989 MacDonald Stewart Art Centre, Guelph, Ontario

1989 Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba, Brandon,
Manitoba

1988 The New Gallery, Calgary, Alberta

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Nickle Arts Museum, Calgary, Alberta

1987 The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba

1978 Arthur Street Gallery (Plug-In), Winnipeg,
Manitoba

1977 The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Manitoba

1977 Gallery of Visual Arts, Missoula, Montana

Awards

1989 Visual Arts Grant, Manitoba Arts Council

1988 Short Term Grant, Manitoba Arts Council

CREDITS

Exhibition Curator Dale Amundson
Photography James Stadnick
Catalogue Design Karen Armstrong
Installation Technician Tom Wood

Special thanks to Frank Zamkotowich for his assistance
with editing and structure of the catalogue essay.

*Manitoba
Arts Council*

financial assistance
from the
Manitoba Arts Council

Copyright 1989, Gallery One One One, Winnipeg, Canada
All rights reserved.

ISBN 0-921958-01-3

