

Sculpture Center **WOWS** with Gary Spinosa exhibit

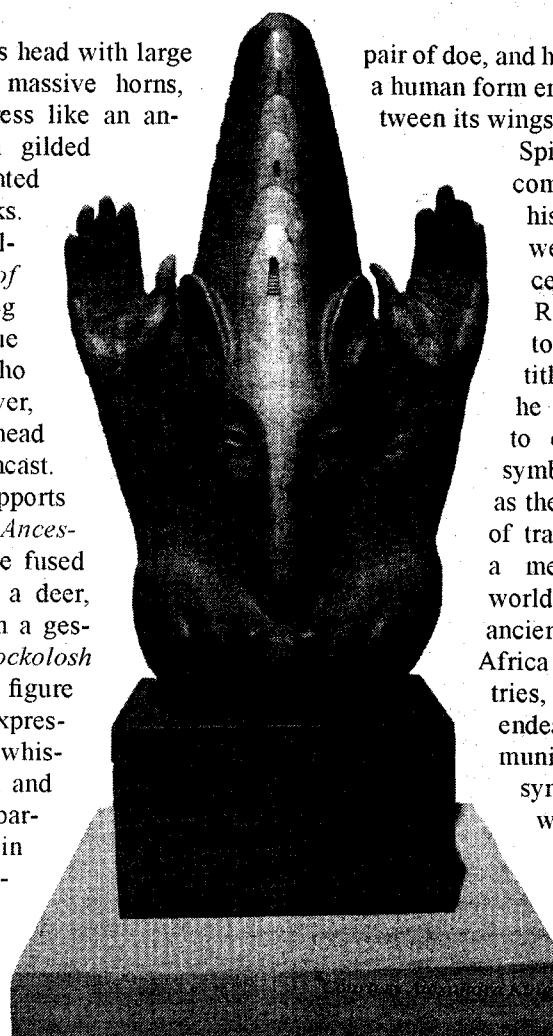
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Entering The Sculpture Center's Main Gallery is like entering a sacred space, a sanctuary in which sculpture is used to communicate an intensely spiritual relationship with the natural world. Indeed, *Gary Spinosa: Through Forests of Symbols* is a remarkable display of illuminated sculpture with a spiritual quality all its own. Visitors are invited to explore the artist's intuitive responses to the archaic natural realm, a journey on which they will encounter morphed animal figures perched atop pedestals, nestled in niches, and piled atop one another.

Spinosa's sculptures come in every shape and size, from towering structures to small shrines and porcelain *Stones*. He works with a variety of materials, from classic sculpture media such as clay, ceramic, metals, and wood, to more unlikely materials like shotgun shell casings, tin can lids, plumbing parts, and plastic electrical insulators. Every sculpture attests to the artist's great attention to detail in its rich textural quality and vibrant coloration. Most of his sculptures are polychromed in pearlescent hues of green, blue, and purple, their surfaces so expertly coated that the true medium can barely be discerned.

Upon entering the exhibition, viewers come face-to-face with *Life Force of*

the Fields: a bull's head with large gentle eyes and massive horns, wearing a headdress like an ancient tower with gilded niches, and mounted on two tree trunks. Central to the gallery space is *Dog of Sorrow*, a clay dog painted a dark hue of forest green who sits hunched over, its ears back, head and eyes downcast. One pedestal supports the elegant *Night Ancestor*: a female nude fused with the head of a deer, her arms raised in a gesture of blessing. *Tockolosh* is another horned figure with a serene expression, sporting real whiskers and a goatee, and a small bird apparently whispering in his ear. Dominating one corner of the exhibition is the *Tower*. A tall wooden structure, each of its four sides contains a niche guarded by a



Life Force of the Fields is one of Gary Spinosa's many works currently on display at the Sculpture Center's Main Gallery.

pair of doe, and houses a bird with a human form emerging from between its wings.

Spinosa works with complex layers in his sculptures as well as his conceptual approach. Referring back to the exhibition title, Spinosa says he uses animals to express feelings symbolically, such as the bird, "a symbol of transcendence, and a mediator between worlds." Inspired by ancient and tribal art of Africa and Asian countries, Spinosa says he endeavors to communicate a "universal symbolic language" which transcends cultural barriers. Animals have complex symbolic and spiritual meanings in various cultures and religions, in

mythology, and in dreams. It is appropriate that he uses animals to articulate inherent spirituality, as animals have an emotional and spiritual vibrancy that cannot be communicated through human language. For Spinosa, animals serve as an important intuitive channel for his creative vision: animals communicate the archaic memories and primal nature in every human soul. Spinosa's exhibit has a tranquil, calming effect, providing a space to ponder our emotional and spiritual existence in connection with our ancient past and the natural world.

Also on view in the adjacent gallery is the Artist Archives of the Western Reserve opening of Pat Parker's *Eye Need Your Vote*. In The Sculpture Center's Euclid Avenue Gallery is *Cleveland Sun, A Citywide New Weather Group Installation*.

At the Sept. 7 opening, there will be a 6:30 p.m. Main Gallery talk with Gary Spinosa and Sculptor Virgil Villers, and a 7:30 p.m. talk at the Euclid Avenue Gallery with the New Weather Group. The hours for this one-night-only opening are 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. The Sculpture Center is located at 1834 E. 123rd St., and is open Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. Admission is also free of charge. For more information on the exhibit and others to come, visit <http://www.sculpturecenter.org>.