

Heidi Messing McDonald

The sculpting life

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Born in Kassel, Germany, Heidi Messing McDonald has lived in Québec since 1953. She earned her BA in studio art at Concordia University in 1988. Heidi is a founding member as well as current president of the Sculptors Association of Montérégie (Association des sculpteurs sur pierre de la Montérégie). However, before turning to sculpture, Heidi Messing McDonald was a painter. She discovered sculpting only after meeting Jean-Pierre Neveu from Saint-Basile-le-Grand.

Somehow sculpture seems associated with social causes. In fact it was during the fifties and sixties that three dimensional art reached the height of its popularity and media coverage. Who can forget artists like Roussil, Vaillancourt, Trudeau, Guité, Lewis, Bisson and Schleek? In fact some of their work can still be.



admired on the slopes of the Montréal Landmark, Mont-Royal. Those years were times of social change and the Québec Association of Sculptors was very active. Members of the association continued in the spirit of artists like Suzor-Côté and Laliberté. The next generation may now be found on the south shore. Included are artists like Jean-Charles Charest, Danielle Shoe Beaudoin, Gérald Bruneau, Thérèse Hébert and Louise Drolet, to name but a few. In fact some twenty artists meet at Heidi Messing McDonald's every Tuesday to study and discuss such great masters as Rodin, Maillot, Epstein, Moore, and Ballach



Heidi, or "Messing" as she signs her work, draws inspiration from her entourage, relatives and friends. The characters that she sculpts have not facial features. Whether adult, child alone or in a group, they remain anonymous yet provocative, moving. The lines are rounded and the dimensions "human" so that the work, be it in stone, cement, bronze or alabaster, are more accessible than some of the monumental and abstract sculptures that decorate our urban landscape. The artist's own feelings or inspirations can be seen in her choice of titles, e.g. *Le Lien maternel* (the maternal ties) and *Coeur à Coeur* (Heart to Heart).

Messing's technique is impeccable. She is one of those artists who successfully adapts the familiar and the intellectual in her choice of medium thus making it easier for viewers to understand her work and appreciate her talent. Many already have acquired pieces signed "Messing". Heidi has shown in Québec, Europe and the United States. One of her statues was shipped to Japan. Like Liardi, Taillon, Langevin, Toutain and Laurin, Messing belongs to her time but manages to erase borders with her talent and with the well-merited recognition that she has among collectors.