French artist's sculptures inspire reflections on modern life

By Bi Nan (chinadaily.com.cn)

Updated: 2015-11-24 14:44:28

Jean-Jacques De Dardel (3rd L), Swiss Ambassador to China, Fan Di'an (4th R), president of Central Academy of Fine Arts, Philippe Staib (1st R), founder of Philippe Staib Gallery in Shanghai, Henry-Claude Cousseau (2nd L), president of association YISHU 8 and Christine Cayol (2nd R), founder of YISHU 8, attended the opening ceremony of VAL's exhibition at YISHU 8 in Beijing, Nov 21, 2015. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

A French artist's sculptures at a Beijing art center inspire reflections on human relationships with nature and modern society.

Dozens of sculptures by Valérie Goutard are on display in an exhibition at Beijing YISHU 8, "Anatomy of a Creative Path".

The bronze sculptures, which portray slim figures standing, sitting, walking or flying, are reflections of modern people's lives and resonate with gallery visitors.

"When I speak about humans, I feel that whatever the difficulty in life, we can have hopes and expectations", said Goutard, who is known by her signature name, VAL.

Regarding the slim characters on the sculptures, she said that "I feel that human life is beautiful but also fragile. For me, my characters are quite slim or thin, to represent the idea of fragility."

She added that the slim characters are much lighter in weight and will better keep the whole sculpture balanced.

"I got three ideas when making a sculpture. It has to be 'balanced, humane, and lively'", VAL said.

Some of VAL's sculptures seem to portray humans in modern skyscrapers, some in the nature, some with their lovers and some with their families, while many are by themselves.

"Loneliness is a necessary moment to know who you are", VAL said. "People can be lonely, but not in desperate loneliness. It's active waiting, waiting with expectations or meditations."

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People talk during the preview of VAL's exhibition at YISHU 8. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

VAL began working on sculptures in 2001 and in 2004 went to Bangkok to learn about bronze and then set up her studio there.

After spending more than 10 years in Thailand and travelling around Asia, VAL said she thinks that her life experience in Asia, away from her motherland, inspires her to think more freely.

"My sculptures are my words, and doing sculptures help me get a better knowledge of myself", VAL said.

If you go:

From Through Jan 10, 2016

YISHU 8, former Sino-French University, No 20 (jia), Dong Huangchenggen Bei Jie, Dongcheng district, Beijing

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Two people hold hands in this sculpture by VAL. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

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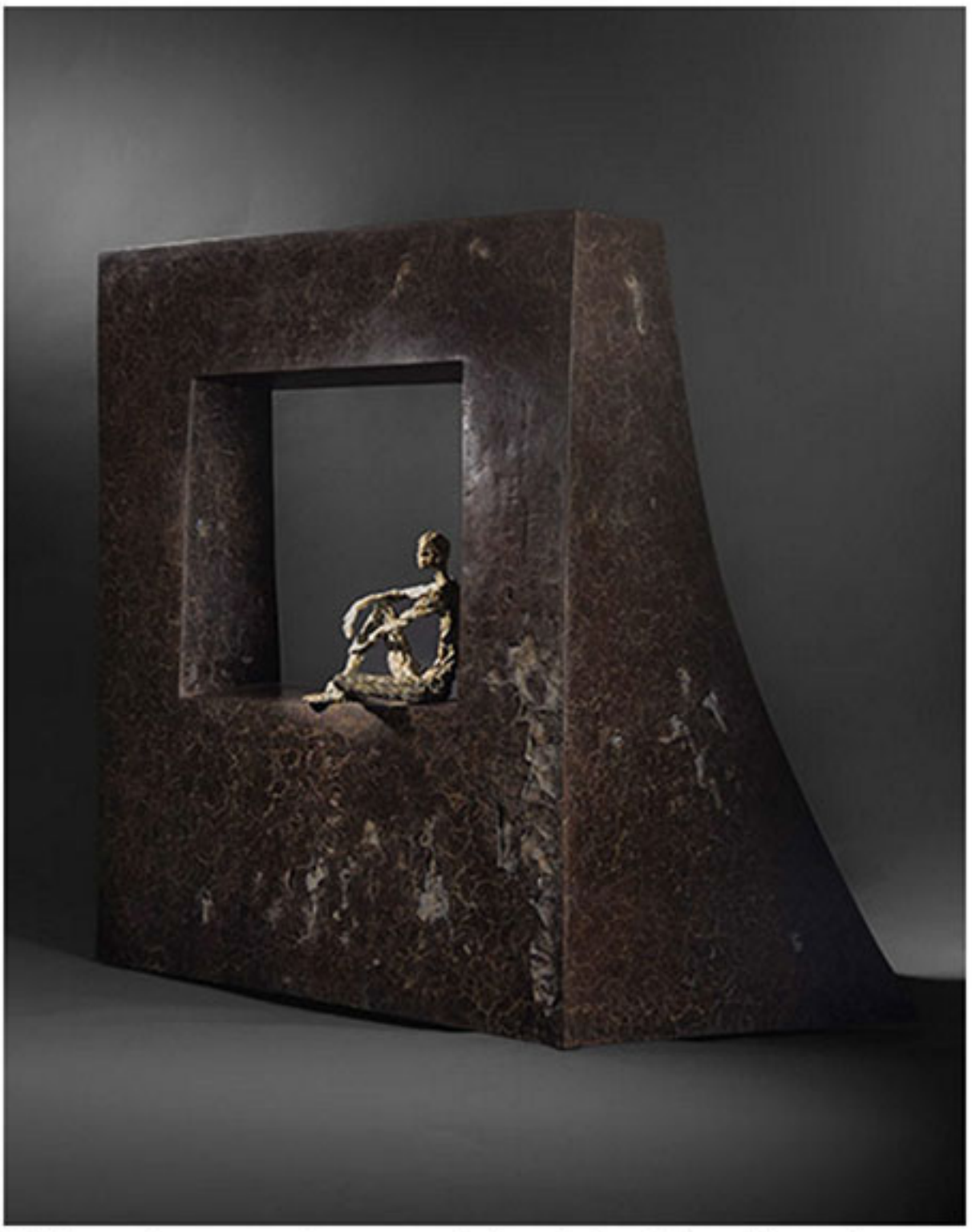

VAL's sculpture explores people's relationships with society. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

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Two people hold hands in this sculpture by VAL. [Photo/chinadaily.com.cn]

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Two people stare at each other in this sculpture by VAL. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

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French artist VAL [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]