

as loneliness and fantasy, the search for love and connection with others.

Goutard-Andrianoff's gift is her ability to create monumental subject matter on a small scale. Her tiny figures are placed in urban or natural settings on stands or pedestals, which are intended to convey a sense of the gigantic. Works that measure some 30 centimeters in height can also be mentally transposed into the midst of colossal installations, proving the artist right in her choice of proportions.

Goutard-Andrianoff focuses on elements of urban architecture that are excessively high, which overwhelm and crush us, as much because of their spatial dimensions as the arrogant pride and excesses of the ego. She is drawn to things that are larger than the individual and therefore make them appear fragile and unsteady. These works heighten the impression of man as a stuttering tightrope walker—a precarious, ephemeral, flickering shadow—in the great adventure of life.

The artist describes her reflections on the "human condition in the immensity of the universe surrounding him" as a way of putting proportions in perspective. Man, insignificant in relation to the infinite, stands on the edge of a cube or on the

base of a pillar, bringing to mind a pathetic version of the Tower of Babel.

Goutard-Andrianoff thinks of herself as having a "mental library of sensations." A book or a random street scene instinctively nourish her stock of images and arouse emotions that are later translated in clay and ultimately in metal.

Much of Goutard-Andrianoff's work is distinguished by the primacy of support, whether it is man-made—suggested by architectural forms—or natural—with rocky promontories, cliffs, or aquatic expanses.

However, all these supports serve only to highlight the subject that interests her—the infinite regress of mankind. The plate allows her to demarcate an imaginary space where dream-like scenes unfold or to isolate a vision. The base is transformed into an integral part of her works. It is often a matter of a solid, stable foundation. In Goutard-Andrianoff's work, bases are not necessarily designed for specific sculptures. Instead, they may shift from one piece to another, according to the rhythmic relationship between works, which the artist is constantly revising and correcting.

Goutard-Andrianoff's work was exhibited at the *Shanghai Art Fair 2009* and her

next three solo exhibitions will take place at the Isle of Ré, at the François Giraudeau Gallery; in Singapore at Red Sea Gallery in September; and in Hong Kong at Wellington Gallery at the end of October 2010.

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### CHINA

## A Sculpture In Shanghai

The bronze work of the sculptor Valérie Goutard-Andrianoff will be exhibited at the entrance of the *Shanghai Art Fair 2010 (SAF)* (September 8–12, 2010), and in conjunction with *World Expo Shanghai 2010*. The sculpture, entitled *Urban Life*, is made up of five elements, each five-meters high, portraying "man caught in a high-rise urban architecture."

Valérie Goutard-Andrianoff, a 40-year-old French artist, lived a nomadic childhood, shuttling between South America and Africa. She has lived between Paris and Bangkok since 2004. Self-taught and instinctual, she spent two years studying in Paris with the artist Yanne Kintgen during which time she gained confidence in what her hands and mind could produce. The artist says that she does not regret any technical or cultural shortcomings: She credits them with giving her creative freedom.

The time she devotes to her pieces each day is a kind of meditation: she stands back, empties her mind, and thinks about nothing but the work at hand. Capturing the shapes when inspiration guides her fingers is nothing less than an automatic sculpting process. She strips things down to the bone in order to uncover their essence. Through minimalism and essentialism she has found a way to capture the quintessential nature of the human form and convey such feelings



Valérie Goutard, *Urban Life 6*, bronze, H: 75 cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist.