

# Mária Lugossy

## Interview (Budapest, June 6, 2000)

Almost a decade and-a-half have passed since I won, the first to be so honored, the Jutta Cuny-Franz Memorial Award, which has perhaps the greatest artistic recognition during my young years. The honour and the credit, both in a moral and material sense, gave me a tremendous „boost“ or motivating momentum for the rest of my career. I was propelled to fame, but also compelled to prove myself worthy.

One after the other I gave „birth“ to those works (*Cosmogenesis, Tectite, Existence – in the Making*, etc.) that were the most significant pieces of a definite, albeit early phase of my creative career, called Genesis. In the works of this phase I tried to express the mystic mystery of human existence and its beginnings. Work followed work up to the 1990's, when a great turning point occurred in the history of the late 20th century. The iron curtain between East and West crumbled, earlier historical scars were torn open again, and a tidal wave of human emotions burst forth from people kept under lock and key for over forty years. The reactions of sensitive artists to such great events were even more vehement than the emotions themselves. The same thing happened to me as well. My early world of peaceful inclusion in harmony with their „hosts“ had dramatically changed. A new series of somber and sober works of much greater tragedy was launched. All those things that had previously perforce been buried as taboos, now burst forth irresistibly (*Victims of All Times, Memorial for the Victims of '56, Kristallnacht*, etc.). Meanwhile the historical events had swept away the typical ‚socialist realism‘ of the totalitarian regime's public sculptures; and the challenges of the new times demanded new apposite creations. Thus I first had occasion to create the *Monument for the Victims of World War II* for its appropriate commemorative place; and subsequently the *Flame of the Revolution* monument, for permanent exhibition in front of

the Parliament of the Republic of Hungary.

In 1998, I began the creation of my *History Books* series, into which I intended to write, with sculptural means, everything that I hold sacred, transcendent, and important from the past and the present, for the future. These are and will be requiems and commemorations of those millions of nameless people, who died the death of martyrs, those unknown victims of all times, from ancient tyrannies to the present day. I weep and sculpt for slaves and gladiators, for annihilated hopes and prisoners of camps and gulags, for the countless, slain in massgraves. Never can there be said enough about them, therefore I feel certain that I need to present their books here and now too, in this exhibition.

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