

JOURDAN ARPELLE

ABOUT THE SCULPTURE

CROSS TOTEM SERIES 1996-1997

SIZE

Series: 2 sculptures, conceived as maquettes for works in stone

Dimensions: Large sculpture: 96 in. high x 24 in. wide x 12 in. deep
2.43 meters high x 60.96 cm. wide x 30.48 cm deep
Small Sculpture: 48 in. high x 12 in. wide x 6 in. deep
1.21 meters high x 30.48 cm. wide x 15.24 cm. deep

Material: Painted wood

DESCRIPTION/FORM:

The "Cross Totem Sculptures", simple Byzantine crosses stacked three high on top of a foundational base or plinth the same height as the other cross elements. These sculptures are painted a shade of light, atmospheric gray.

MEANING/CONTENT:

Inspired by the artist's Gayatri Mantra/Prayer Painting Series, these sculptures evoke the human form in the shape of a Byzantine cross. By referring to the horizontal and vertical alignment of the body as demonstrated in Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of "Vetruvian Man", the artist emphasizes the meeting of the sacred and the profane, as well as the marriage of heaven and earth. The artist embraces the Eastern philosophy which considers this union of divine mind infused with physical form as the highest possible expression of creation.

The Gayatri Mantra/Prayer Painting series which inspired these totemic sculptures is based on the Hindu Vedic mantra, second only to the mantra "OM". The English translation of this appeal to the goddess Gayatri, personification of *the ultimate unchanging reality that lies behind all phenomena*. Is as follows:

"You, whose rays illuminate the entire world,
Illuminate my heart, so that it, too, can do Your work."

The positioning of three Byzantine crosses which become less volumetric as they ascend in height, refers to the artist's theme of ascension from matter into spirit. This idea encompasses both the concept of the transformation of the Self within a lifetime, as well as the concept of transformation of the body from its physical form to its essence or soul vibration. The artist seeks to interpret, through visual iconography, the Unknown and the Unknowable, imagined by the great philosophers throughout history.