

# Simone Fattal

## Interview

### Simone Fattal – Storefront Show

28 May - 09 June 2020

**Karma International:** It is hard to place your work in time. They could be artifacts from an ancient civilization. In texts you have been compared to an archeologist. Can you elaborate on the influences for your sculptures?

**Simone Fattal:** My sculptures look archaic. They look as if they have been transplanted from a very ancient time. In fact, my sculptures are made today, and I want them to speak about today, and yet they look archaic. It is because they share the same aesthetic as work done in archaic times. They are abstracted forms and use a minimum of details, hinting at and possessing many layers of meaning. I want my sculptures to not speak of formal shapes. (In that sense, too, they are archaic: no work of art was done as a work of art in these times.) It is also right to say that, as I give them names of Gods or heroes of ancient times, form and quality collide together to become a whole that is recognizable. They have to convey all the particular qualities of the name of the hero or God I give them. At the same time, I call on these qualities to reappear. They have to embody meaning. Therefore, upon recognizing them, the viewer starts putting the history and myth together, in order to understand what I really mean with this form. I want the different references this name possesses to be present in the shape they have.

**KI:** How do the collages tie in with the sculptural work? When and where were they made? Do you remember which magazines you used?

**SF:** The collages proceed from the same vision. They always use images of archeological places or artifacts, modern day pieces of art, e.g. a reproduction of a Paul Klee, a Goya, or whatever piece I had just seen in an exhibition. Or I suddenly find an image in my papers that speaks to me, and speaks in relation with the context of the other chosen images. It always starts with one image that looks especially important. It may be a color, a detail, or a romantic landscape. I also put in images of my own work. The whole has to be coherent like a painting; the finished product has to make sense as an image on its own. The result should not be a painting that is made of different abstract pieces, but of images that I want to be read exactly as one reads the different details of the many components of a Persian miniature. When you look closely at a miniature, you discover there is a bird on the branch of a tree, or slippers showing a little bit of their shape under the bed. My images have to be looked at and read for themselves. In the end, they constitute a kind of mental journey of my thinking on that particular day. They are closer to an inner monologue, when the "I" in the novel lets his mind wander between subjects. My images go from one topic to the next and I wanted people to see that they are related, with inclusions of my own work, and/or a significant political or cultural happening of the day. These collages are more obviously tied to the present than my sculptures, but only on the surface, at first glance. As for the magazines, they are of all sorts. Lately I have been given a lot of older magazines from the sixties. I can also keep an image from a newspaper for years before I find its use. But most of the time, it is a specific image that triggers the work - so often from the day's newspaper - and then one has to follow the flow.

**KI:** Much of your work bears the traces of your hands. How important is the physicality of a material for you when you work on it?

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**SF:** The physicality is paramount. I am always asked if I draw a sculpture before I work on a piece, and the answer is "No, never." I draw a lot but they are drawings in their own right. They are drawings which remain drawings. The sculpture comes directly from the kneading of the clay. While kneading I let my mind wander and find an idea; or else the clay starts taking shape and I discover that it is an interesting form so I follow it, until it becomes something. The clay as a living being is a relationship. We work together. This is why I favor clay over other mediums. You do not have the same intimate rapport with wax or stone.