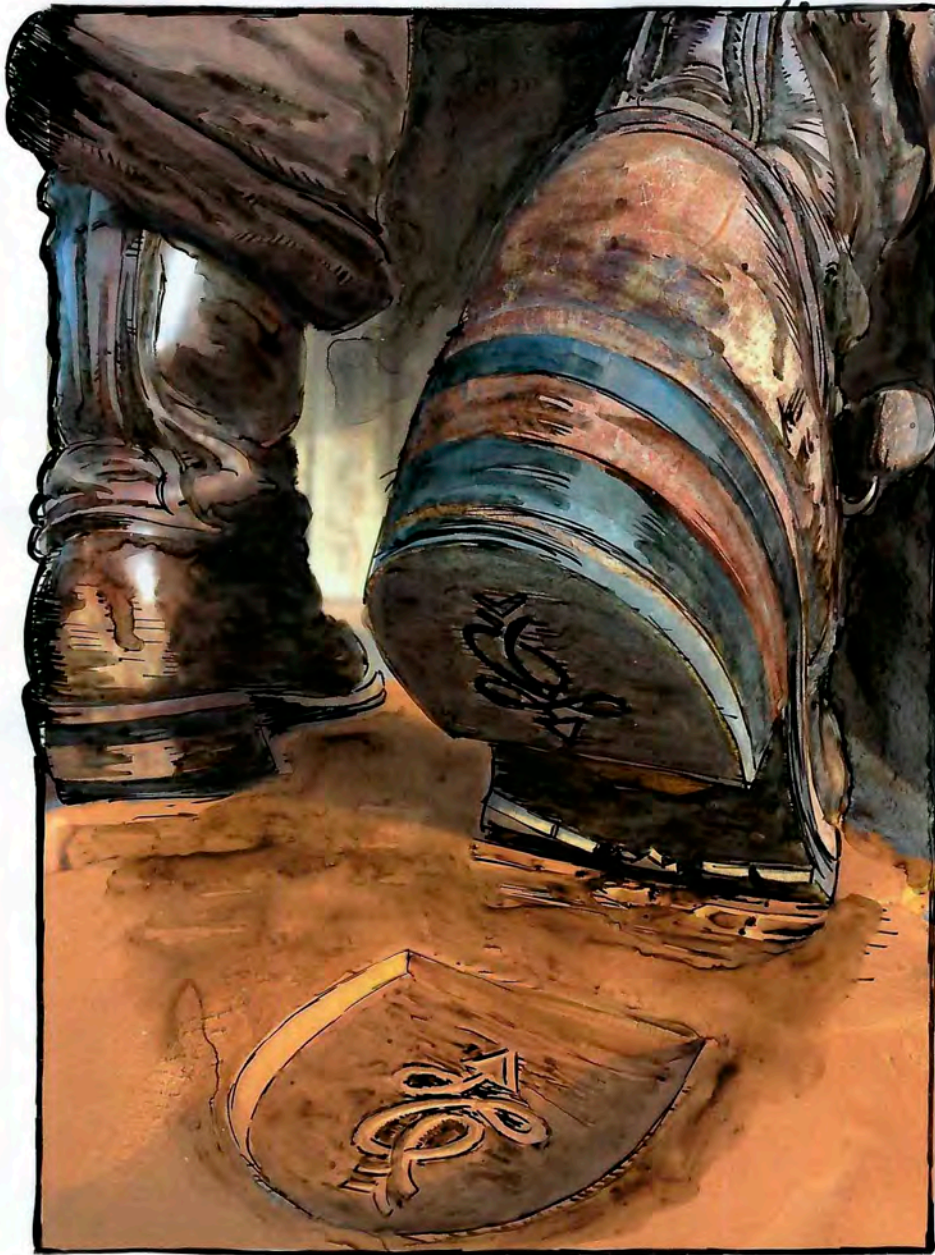


MELANIE STERBA



FROM THE
PRIMAL FORCE
OF STONE
TO URBAN
INTERVENTION



Melanie Sterba – 3D Print



MELANIE STERBA – FROM THE PRIMAL FORCE OF STONE TO URBAN INTERVENTION

Melanie Sterba belongs to a new generation of sculptors who merge traditional craftsmanship with a contemporary artistic language. Having sold her first sculptures at the age of 20, she is now, at 30, one of the most exciting voices in modern sculpture. Her work spans from monumental granite blocks to experimental small-scale sculptures and street art installations that actively engage with urban space.

Trained in classical stone sculpture, she quickly developed a distinctive artistic signature. Her works are characterised by a direct, physical engagement with material—whether marble, granite, or metal. She continually moves between two poles: the overwhelming monumentality of large-scale sculptures and the fine, intuitive gesture of her smaller sculptural experiments.



Take Away Art



SCULPTURAL MONUMENTALITY – THE POWER OF STONE

Sterba's **The Victory of Human Will** series explores the limits of weight, mass, and balance. Her granite sculptures, often towering several metres high and weighing over twenty tonnes, appear almost weightless, balanced on massive wooden constructions – an illusion that challenges the viewer's perception. These works explore the interplay between physical burden and artistic willpower, between material mastery and organic expression.

Over ten years, she has created twenty of these monumental granite sculptures, including a colossal piece measuring four metres in height and weighing twenty tonnes, now permanently installed within an architectural development.



Milestones

Milestone

Her work with granite led to an even deeper engagement with stone, bringing her to marble. While granite asserts its raw power, marble allows for a more nuanced approach to surface treatment and form. This dual engagement with materials prompted a pivotal question: how can sculpture move beyond the studio or sculpture park and actively integrate into urban life? This inquiry ultimately gave rise to **Take Away Art** – a radically different concept that extends sculpture into the public sphere and invites direct interaction.



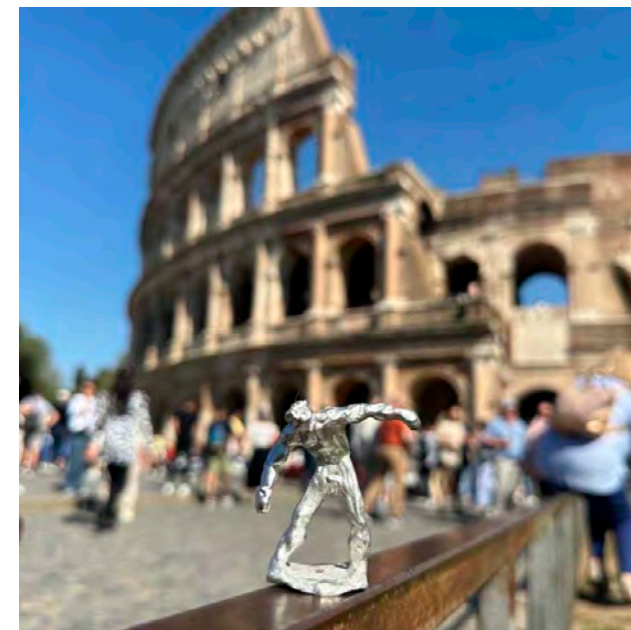
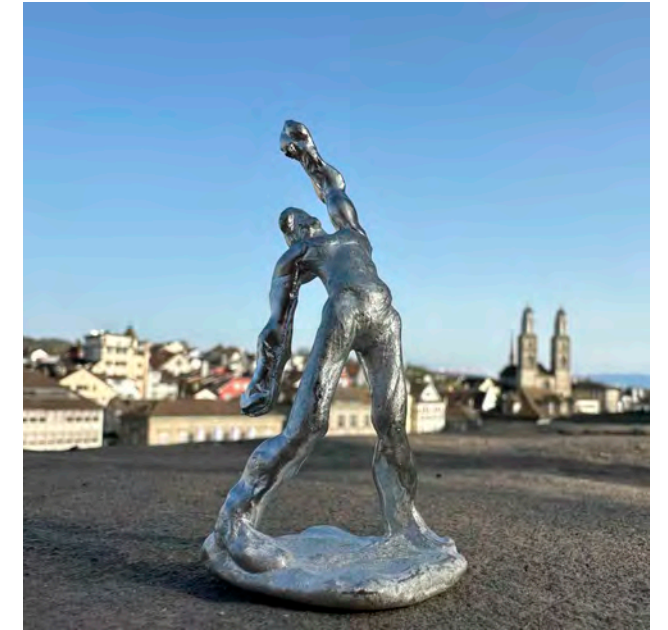
FIGURINE EXPERIMENTS – “TAKE AWAY ART” AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Sterba’s **Take Away Art** is a natural extension of her sculptural practice. The idea is simple yet powerful: art should not just be exhibited but released into the world. To achieve this, she developed a unique modelling technique that allows her to capture the raw essence of a thought as it emerges—unfiltered and immediate.

The results are small human figures, just a few centimetres in height—fragile yet expressive sculptures created in a spontaneous, intuitive process. Without any subsequent alterations, the initial idea is directly transferred into material. These miniature sculptures are cast in tin and produced in limited editions before being placed in public spaces. Each piece is individually handcrafted, numbered, and signed.

Take Away Art functions as an open art project: those who find one of these figures are free to keep it, pass it on, or relocate it elsewhere. A code on the underside provides information about the project and offers a direct connection to the artist. Over the years, this approach has generated countless stories—encounters that go far beyond the original concept and elevate the interaction between artwork and viewer to a new level.

Beyond their physical distribution in urban space, Sterba also translates these small sculptures into larger sculptural formats. Digital technologies such as 3D scanning and printing enable her to transform these miniatures into monumental sculptures without losing the immediacy of the original moment. While 3D-printed enlargements retain the raw spontaneity of the original, her hand-carved marble sculptures are reinterpreted through a conscious, refined artistic process.



LARGE-SCALE SCULPTURES, BIG DREAMS – AND SOLD-OUT EXHIBITIONS

Since 2023, Sterba's works have been exhibited in renowned galleries. Her solo exhibitions **Nº** and **Marbled Facts** at Zurich's **Galerie Nicola von Senger** were not only well received but also completely sold out – a remarkable indication of the resonance of her artistic language.



Marbled Facts



In **Marbled Facts**, she showcased sculptural works in Carrara marble, executed with striking craftsmanship, where she fused classical sculpture with a minimalist, almost abstract aesthetic. By alternating between highly refined and raw, unpolished surfaces, she created a tension between roughness and precision, between weight and fluid movement.



Cupido

Faites Vos Jeux



David

Undine

Nº

Her 2024 exhibition Nº pushed this exploration even further. Here, she examined themes of de-evolution and stagnation—concepts also reflected in her **Take Away Art** street project. Figures that had first appeared as small plastic forms on Zurich’s streets were now presented as enlarged marble sculptures, hand-carved to scale. Their surfaces, treated with silver accents and dark coatings, intensified the interplay between material transformation and conceptual reflection.

In 2025, Melanie Sterba is expanding her presence on the international stage. In April, she will participate in a major group exhibition at the historic **Villa Arconati** in Milan, organised by **Segantini Unlimited** in collaboration with the **Augusto Rancilio Foundation (ARF)**. This exhibition provides her with an opportunity to present her work in a historically significant setting while also forging new connections within the international art scene.



SCULPTURE BETWEEN TRADITION AND FUTURE

Melanie Sterba's work is a profound exploration of form, material, and perception. She bridges the centuries-old knowledge of stone sculpture with innovative artistic approaches that embrace both digital and participatory processes. Whether monumental or miniature, her sculptures challenge conventional understandings of space, weight, and expression.

Her upcoming exhibitions continue this trajectory. In Zurich and beyond, Sterba's growing recognition is fuelled not only by her gallery presentations but also by the participatory nature of **Take Away Art**. A particular focus is on the large-format enlargements of her works—sculptures and modelled forms that stem from her unique artistic technique.

The act of enlarging these pieces makes the immediacy of the artistic process strikingly tangible. The raw sincerity of the initial gesture remains intact—whether through 3D printing, which captures the artistic impulse unfiltered, or through marble enlargements, where Sterba reinterprets her own designs with new depth.

As her exhibition activities extend beyond Switzerland's borders, Melanie Sterba is increasingly establishing herself as an international voice in contemporary sculpture – one that challenges tradition while remaining deeply rooted in its history.

More about the artist: www.melaniesterba.ch

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