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Shrine To Liberty

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Shrine to liberty

Like the riches of Australian Songlines, which are invisible paths the aborigines are said to read like sheet music by which -it is claimed- Australia was literally sung into existence by ancestral creatures, so is one reminded of the forces at work within this seemingly monolithic monument being built by master Sculptor Armand Vaillancourt here in Santo Domingo, the capital city of the Dominican Republic.

The riche sense of unearthed paths leading to the native Taino's roots is present within each stone, seemingly musically placed in

complete harmony, one with the other, and almost magically, each reminding of the conquered Native's features, with its jaws crying in their own anguished Songline, while longing for recognition.

One wonders if the able Master Sculptor sensed the release of each of these stone's soul. If the imagination were to enlarge on this Songline theme, then it is easy to feel and even hear the stones grow!

The quite formidable work is ensconced within a fortress-type moat from which the

manifest rocks grow under one another, each stone chosen as a strong mask of facial expression. They are as Nature would -no amount of chiselling by Vaillancourt's most masterly eye was deemed necessary. On the contrary, he knew that the riches of these native Taino Songlines were naturally present. Therein lay their strength and he let it peacefully rest so.

The moat, once completed, will flow with a stream of water as guardian to the fulfillment of this monumentally happy conclusion, of Humankind's constant quest for Liberty and as a hindsight reminder of the native Taino's chagrined shedding of tears in their pursuit of this end.

As one becomes aware of this majestic work's theme, that of the Freedom of Man, then the path of the stones becomes one with the winged lone bird in flight, as a cyme to the possibility of a flourishing flock to follow: the release of so many interred thoughts and feelings.

A SCULPTOR'S CAROM

A stolid fortress once
encircled the eye of Hispaniola
of stones -and bones
and now another
re-emerging grandly
from the same quarry takes shape

as the phantom Tainos look on
and would deem domination
a respectful slate
gleaming forbiddingly

for the grand adage
to the freedom of Man/Woman to be sure
in both lie la libertad la liberté
freedom and liberty
to choose and to be free

without libel nor fiefdom
rocks interlocked -not linked
likened into inanimate juxtaposition
of great jaws firmly jutting
in frank repose
with its paloma taking flight
but never in fright

Martha Ottolenghi

Armand Vaillancourt, "El clamor" (détail). Sculpture-fontaine en cours de réalisation en République Dominicaine. 1985-88

