

Imaginary Work

An Interview with Gil Bruvel,
Bruvel Inc. and Bruvel Editions

EDITORS' NOTE *At the age of nine, Gil Bruvel made the decision to spend his life creating art. In 1974, he began to study at an art restoration workshop and spent the next three years learning the techniques of the old masters and modern masters of fine art. He became a permanent resident of the United States in 1990, and he currently creates functional art, sculptures, and paintings. Bruvel has been exhibiting his work since 1974 in various places around the world, including France, Monaco, England, Denmark, the Netherlands, Hungary, Japan, Singapore, New York, Florida, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Hawaii. Information on his collections and upcoming shows can be found online at www.bruvel.com.*



Gil Bruvel

What is your particular style of work with regard to painting, sculpture, and functional art?

We used to call it visionary but most people seeing it at first glance would categorize it as surrealistic. I call it imaginary work. For me, it's based on observation of nature and finding patterns in nature, and trying to recreate that with my own personal creative process.

Do you focus across a few different mediums, or are you more focused on the paintings?

I focus fairly equally on the paintings, the sculpture, and the functional art. It depends on the mood and what's going on with regard to shows.

Is your target market a higher end niche market or is it much broader in terms of the range of pieces you offer?

It's a high-end niche market, with customers from CEOs to famous musicians. It's definitely an elite clientele. But at the same time, we have people who will buy a piece of work through a gallery and make payments on it.

Where can customers find your work?

We always look for the high-end galleries and representation that the market is constantly going after. We have gallery representation in Maui, Hawaii; Newport Beach, California; San Francisco; Bend, Oregon; Telluride, Colorado; Santa Fe, New Mexico; South Beach, Florida; and at two galleries in Denmark.

How has technology affected your process over the years, and are you implementing technology in the creation of pieces?

Technology in the realm of 3-D sculpture and functional art has brought about a tremendous change of gears. About 12 years ago, I started to do all my modeling in 3-D, with different 3-D modeling software, and started to print my model in 3-D for larger pieces. The software has been evolving tremendously, and it changes the paradigm of the creative process for me.

Is there a good understanding today of what functional art is all about?

I believe so. We've had a tremendously brisk market for it. I think for those interested in functional art, it's a much easier decision for them versus the sculpture, where it's more like an intellectual statement or an aesthetic statement. When people buy a chair that looks like a sculpture, they still see it as a beautiful piece they're going to use on a day-to-day basis.

Is your process one where you're working on a number of pieces at one time?

When I paint, I work on one piece at a time; when I do sculptures, or projects, I work on several elements of pieces at a time.

Do these pieces take a lot of time to complete?

I will do a design very quickly and from there I evolve it, and that can take quite a bit of time, although sometimes the first shot is good. This is why I work on several pieces at a time. I print several 3-D versions of a piece, get feedback from friends or collectors, and the design starts to evolve.

Where did your focus on the imaginative experience, mythology, and spirit come from?

When I was growing up in France, my mom encouraged me to read a lot. The mythology part of it was definitely through literature. I went through a phase when I was interested in masks, and I did a book of portraiture related to that, so I studied the culture of masks. It's about having a constant need for knowledge and trying to understand the cultural influences behind all of it, in terms of the structure of things.

Did you know this was what you were going to do for your career?

Definitely, from very early on. My mom was a piano teacher, my dad was a cabinetmaker,

but also a pianist, and my brother was a pianist. At nine years old, I wanted to be an artist – there was no conversion process.

Is it challenging to balance the creation of art with the business aspect of selling the work?

The business of art is essentially teamwork. Creative talent is a small part, and the success comes from the art of delegating in terms of finding the right team players, who are going to take care of all of that. My wife has been taking care of the business part, learning to delegate, and working with these multiple entities, whether they be galleries or traveling shows or dealing with collectors or museums. So that affords me the opportunity to just create.

Which artists have influenced you the most over the years?

As a younger artist in France, I was influenced by the surrealists. I was impacted by Spanish architects like Antonio Gaudi, as well as Salvador Dali for a while, and I always enjoyed Picasso's work. There is a range of interests that were there all the time because of the close proximity of it.

How important is it to meet with your clients, maintain relationships with them, and keep them informed?

There's a kind of renaissance going on now where the artist is in very close contact with the collector, especially in the high-end brands where people want a different experience in general. We've been traveling with our collectors and have been invited to different places all over the world to bring the work to them. The time when you would wait for the collectors to come to the gallery is not over, but it has changed tremendously.

Could you have imagined in the early days that you would have been able to have this type of career and the clientele you have?

Yes. I think that's why I was able to go through so much hardship at the beginning. I've been doing this for 35 years.

Has it been a good ride?

Yes, it's been an excellent ride. Growing up as an artist in France is very hard because it's a different cultural system where most people won't give you the time of day. But the U.S. has been very good to me, and it's been a fabulous ride. ●

George's Horse, by Gil Bruvel

