



The Gib Singleton Newsletter

"I'm not decorating somebody's living room. I'm not decorating somebody's garden. I'm decorating somebody's heart."

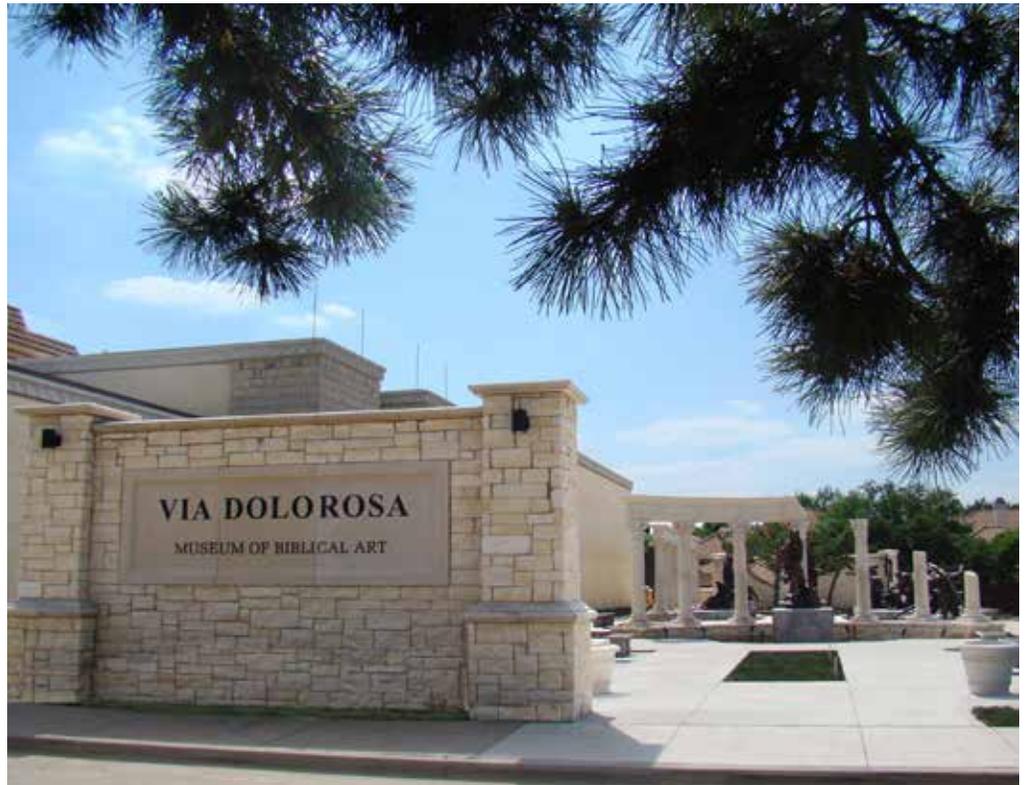
Walking 'the Way' in Dallas

Gib's goal from the time he was a child was not only to create art, but also to use his art to help call forth the kind of world he dreamed of – a world of love, peace, compassion and beauty. He believed that if he could just pour enough emotion into his bronzes, they could help open our hearts and restore our spirits.

Now, a little over a year after Gib's death, a new installation will offer millions of viewers the chance to experience that 'emotional realism'. In May, the Museum of Biblical Art in Dallas (MBA) will unveil the Via Dolorosa, or 'Way of Sorrows'.

This outdoor exhibit, built around a lifesize set of Gib's 14 Stations of the Cross and several other works, will augment what is already the largest collection of his spiritual works in the world. And it couldn't be in a better spot, as MBA is directly across from the NorthPark Center – the largest attraction in the state of Texas with more visitors annually than the Alamo, Six Flags or the San Antonio River Walk.

Designed as a Mediterranean style garden for mediation and reflection, the Via Dolorosa was made possible by a long-term loan of



the bronzes from the Tia Collection and a tremendous outpouring of community support. Local and distant donors underwrote or donated design and project management services, excavation services, stone, concrete, fencing, plumbing, electrical, trees, plantings, benches and more.

Gib was a great fan of MBA, and especial of its Director / Curator, Scott Peck and his vision of utilizing

art to promote tolerance and understanding. While he died before he could see the Via completed, Gib followed the work closely and was intensely proud that it would offer visitors the kind of encounter with his art that he always dreamed of.

A public dedication ceremony and interfaith blessing of the installation are scheduled for Saturday, May 16th at 11:00 am.

UR

Ur is the name given to the first *Homo Erectus* discovered by anthropologists. He was the first guy to walk upright – ‘the missing link’. That sculpture was commissioned by a guy in Westport that I met through Alexander Calder.

Sandy Calder was one of my heroes. I loved his work, and he was also a friend. In fact, the day I met this guy, we were sitting in Calder’s little barn where he had these great pieces working, talking over a glass of wine. While we were talking, Sandy made the little rooster piece out of a coffee can.

Afterward, his friend came into my studio in Westport, and said, ‘I want you, because of your mind and how you think, to make me the first man. That was *homo erectus*, and his name was Ur.’ He gave me the name. He must have been an anthropologist or archeologist. He said, ‘Think about it and see what you come up with.’

So I thought about it a great deal. Because this is a pretty important piece of history here that I’m making. When man stands up – this is the first time, right? – he locks his knees, pushes the legs back behind him, and he closes himself and realizes for the first time that he’s naked. So he wraps a piece of leather around himself and covers himself.

And he also realizes he can communicate now. Prior to this, being an animal, he couldn’t communicate. But he’s no longer an animal. So he stretches his hand out to greet



Ur
Bronze, Edition of 99
15" x 6" x 6"

someone. To meet someone. To become a social person. That’s the sign of being social – extending your hand and reaching out to someone.

You also notice his head is larger. That’s because as you get older, you use parts of your body that you normally don’t use, so they get larger. And the parts you don’t use, they eventually go away. So Ur starts to use his brain, instead of just his body, and his brain and head get bigger and the body gets more fragile.

It’s a beautiful piece, but the guy I created it for died in a racing accident in Florida right after he commissioned it, so I never poured it. I carried it around as a wax for years until Paul Zueger finally had it cast. It’s one of my favorite little pieces.

Gib Singleton

Remembering Gib

The earliest piece I remember dad working on was the doors that were headed toward Yad Vashem. In fact, they were purchased by Golda Meir for the State of Israel. The first three studies he did for those doors he called the ‘Desecration of the Jews’. They were plaster studies, done on barn wood doors. The two figures were lifesize and hung on these doors. And he would do different models in reference to how he was actually going to construct the figures.

One morning I came down to the studio, and he had taken all my Barbie Dolls and nailed them to these wood crosses, and then taken his acetylene torch and burned them.

They melted, their hair turned crispy. I was horrified.

He told me, ‘You need to see the world the way it is. These are the things that are going on, and we need to make it better.’

So that was my first art lesson. You have to see the world the way it is. You have to confront it. You have to address it. And you have to make it better.

Shelly Singleton-Kinder

Excerpted from the forthcoming book, Opening the Heart: the Life and Art of Gib Singleton