

THE FORM OF MEMORY

Bronze Sculptures in Public Space

Volume II

CATALOGUE ESSAY

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Bronze is the material of one of the oldest and most deeply rooted relationships humankind has formed with sculpture. Melted in fire and cast in moulds thousands of years ago, this alloy has carried a long tradition stretching from images of the gods to the monuments of cities. The bronze sculptures by İlker Yardımcı gathered in this catalogue continue that heritage not through the language of the figure but through that of geometric abstraction; designed to stand in squares, before buildings, at the water's edge and in city gardens, the works bring an ancient material together with the questions of contemporary public space.

The formal world of the works is broad yet coherent: egg-shaped bodies wrapped in fine grooves, rings passing through one another to form knots, ribbons twisting as they rise towards the sky, surfaces curling like a wave or a shell, spheres that open from within to reveal their layers, vertical totems built of stacked lamellae, and triangular masses folding onto themselves. The vortex of Lyrical Whirl, the inward silence of Mundus Silens or the weight of Gravitas are different stations of the same plastic inquiry. Each asks how a closed mass might open, and how a fixed form might acquire movement.

The character of bronze lends this inquiry a particular weight. The casting process, while multiplying the artist's model, gives it a permanent body; the form that passes through fire becomes, once cooled, an almost unchanging presence. The warm gold and brown tones of the surface do not harshly reflect light but take it in with a soft glow. Light moving over grooves, curves and hollows gives the metal depth and vitality; from afar the sculpture is a silhouette, up close a surface that invites touch.

Patina is the silent agreement bronze makes with time. Formed slowly by air, rain and the touch of hands, this layer turns in places to a dark brown, in others to shades of green and turquoise. In some of the works this green surface is deliberately emphasised, giving the sculpture a maturity, as though it had stood there for years. Bronze thus strikes a balance between remaining unchanged and accepting change: its body resists, its skin lives.

In public space these qualities become a sense of dignity and memory. A bronze sculpture gives its place a centre, a meeting point, a sign of remembrance. A work standing in the same spot for generations becomes part of the city's shared memory; those who played around it as children find their own past on the same surface years later. Yardımcı's open, flowing forms soften this monumental tradition without stripping it of gravity; they invite the viewer not to stand before them, but to walk around them and look through them.

The Form of Memory joins the millennia-long continuity of bronze with the artist's geometric and poetic language. In these sculptures material and form complete each other: bronze gives permanence to forms that curl and open, and the forms bring today's rhythm to bronze. What emerges is a public presence that leans on the past while speaking to the future, quietly carrying time within the city.



032

Observer

Bronze



033

Untitled

Bronze



034

Untitled

Bronze



035

Lyrical Composition

Bronze



036

Untitled

Bronze



037

Untitled

Bronze



038

Untitled

Bronze



039

Untitled

Bronze



040

Composition

Bronze



041

Untitled

Bronze



042

Untitled

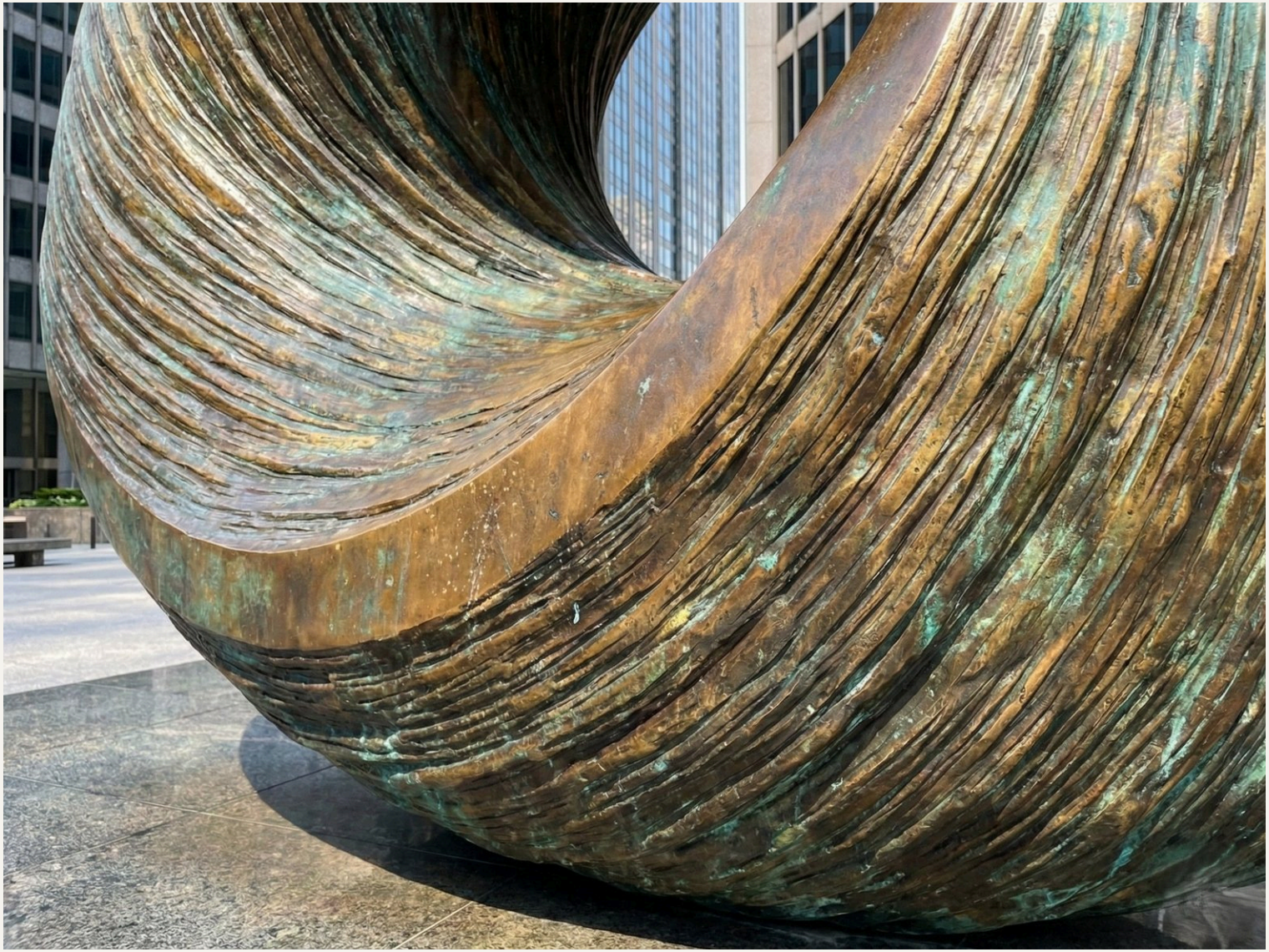
Bronze



043

Untitled

Bronze



044

Untitled

Bronze



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049

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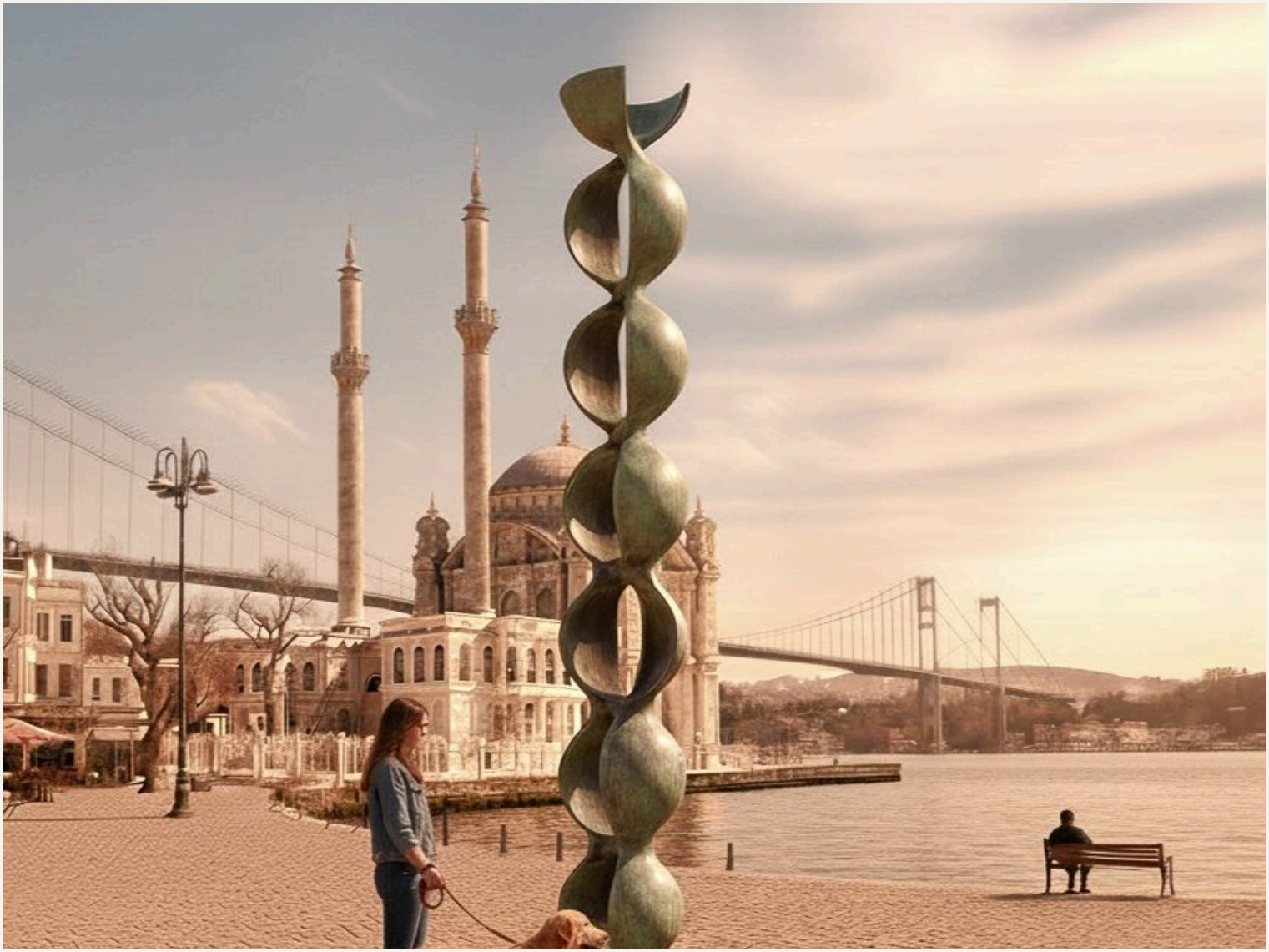
Bronze



050

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058

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059

Untitled

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060

Composition

Bronze



061

Untitled

Bronze



062

Untitled

Bronze

THE ARTIST

Prof. Dr. İlker Yardımcı

Prof. Dr. İlker Yardımcı is a sculptor, designer and academic whose practice centres on sculpture for public space. A graduate of the Department of Sculpture at Dokuz Eylül University's Faculty of Fine Arts, he completed his master's degree (2007) and his Proficiency in Art (2011) at the same university's Institute of Fine Arts. He is a professor in the Department of Sculpture at Düzce University's Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, where he teaches sculpture in the urban environment, digital sculpture and computer-aided sculpture design.

"Confusion of Prism", selected for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and "Lyrical Message", one of 15 international sculptures selected for the Olympic Park of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, are among the works that define the artist's position in international public art. His works stand in squares, parks and collections in Türkiye, China, the USA, Ukraine, Argentina, Taiwan, Luxembourg and the Czech Republic. Exhibitions include the International Beijing Art Biennale (2012, 2017), the Lih Pao Biennial (Taiwan, 2014) and the Esch-sur-Alzette European Capital of Culture Sculpture Exhibition (Luxembourg, 2022). In 2024 he received the Excellent Award at the Wuhu Sculpture Thematic Exhibition "Carving the Renowned City of Jiangdong · Shaping Wuhu of the Era", organised by the China Sculpture Institute and the Wuhu Municipal People's Government.

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Images are digital visualisations of public-space proposals.

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