

Exclusive Interview with Anna Chromy by Milan Fogel, Chief Editor, The Most Magazine (The Bridge), Israel
Hotel de Paris, Monaco, April 2019.

I was extremely honored and pleased that in Monaco, where her permanent residence is, I was given the chance to interview Anna Chromy, a world famous sculptor and painter, in the presence of her husband and manager Wolfgang Stein. Not only in his presence, but he is also a man who has a lot to say in his own right.



Anna and Wolfgang

The motive of the interview was the inauguration of Anna Chromy's sculpture, "Cloak of Conscience", a polished gold-bronze sculpture, donated to Hospital Hadassah, EinKerem, University Medical Center Jerusalem.

On the occasion, a symposium was held, a colloquial discussion, entitled "THE HUMAN SPIRIT: BEHIND THE CLOAK IT'S ALL ABOUT CONSCIENCE"



The catalyst of this gathering was the sculpture of Anna Chromy

The Jerusalem Post

“THE HUMAN SPIRIT: BEHIND THE CLOAK IT’S ALL ABOUT CONSCIENCE”

The speakers represented all three Abrahamic religions, and were remarkably similar in their ethical approaches.

MARCH 28, 2019.



‘CLOAK OF Conscience’: Former deputy president of the Supreme Court Elyakim Rubinstein and artist Anna Chromy
Chromy stand in front of the newly inaugurated sculpture

The title and subtitle of the article published in the Jerusalem Post themselves speak a lot about medical ethics, the similar attitudes of representatives of all three Abraham religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which could shortly be summarized in the sentence: It does not matter whether the patient is a Jew or a Palestinian, Arab or anyone else, everyone has to be treated in the same way.

Conscience and Medicine are two concepts that cannot be separated.

For us, this was the reason to get to know the extraordinary personality of Anna Chromy, the artist, better.

Who is Anna Chromy?

Anna was born on 18 July 1940 in Boehmisch Krumau, (Cesky Krumlov), today in the Czech Republic. Mother, Maria Chromy, was a true Czech, but the family language was German. Anna’s father was Karl Weber, a Sudeten German, whose family roots in Bohemia go back for hundreds of years.

Upon the completion of the Second World War, the family was forced to leave Czechoslovakia and moved to Austria.

Editor: Why were you forced to leave Czechoslovakia and go to Austria?

"This above all raises the question of whether all Germans deserve punishment because of the imposed responsibility for the evil which someone else carried out in their name", Wolfgang Stein explained to us the causes of Anna's family departure from Czechoslovakia. "You have given us your book "Righteous Among the Nations" about the human beings of goodwill who risked their own lives and the lives of their loved ones to save even one Jewish life. Jad Vashem honored over 27,000 people from all over the world. Recognized Righteous from Germany are among the top 10 of 51 countries in the world. However, at the end of the Second World War, with the arrival of the Red Army, from the Sudet district, former Bohemia, then the Czechoslovak Republic, more than three million Germans, including Anne Chromy's family, were deported. Nobody asked them whether they were responsible for the evil they had not done; that can be a great injustice, but also an incentive, as in Anne Chromy's case, for the universal values expressed through her art work."

Wolfgang Stein was born on 23 May 1939 in Berlin, and he has been for almost half a century a leading figure in marketing events. After a rich business career, multilingual (English, French, German, Italian), in recent years he has used his experience to create and promote projects centered on the artwork of his wife Anna Chromy.

"For the first time I will publicly raise the suspicion that I have not succeeded in overcoming for decades," Anna Chromy continued her story. "Namely, there is an indication that my grandmother was a Jewess. This explains in part why my dad put in so much effort to keep my mother, me and my three sisters as far away from Nazi evil, the crazy ideology of destructing an entire nation, as possible. I am Catholic, but I still live today, although it is not by origin, according to Jewish ethics, the Jewish rules of life," Anna Chromy told us.

There are those who claim that everything is written in our DNA, and Anna Chromy seems to be governed, as it were, on that concept of Judaism which says "to go beyond the letter of law," meaning that if we do good and that is not in accordance with the law, then that is something else, that is our conscience, a divine message for all time. Anna's father was a musician, a German, he was not a Jew; still, he did not report the origin of his wife, which he was bound to do by the Nazi laws, but which would certainly have led his wife, along with Anna and her sisters (Anna was the youngest), to death. Even after the war, when they came from the Sudet area and settled in Austria, Jewish origin was a taboo topic in the family.

Before we devote ourselves to "Cloak of Conscience", we have to say something about Anna Chromy's life and her art work.

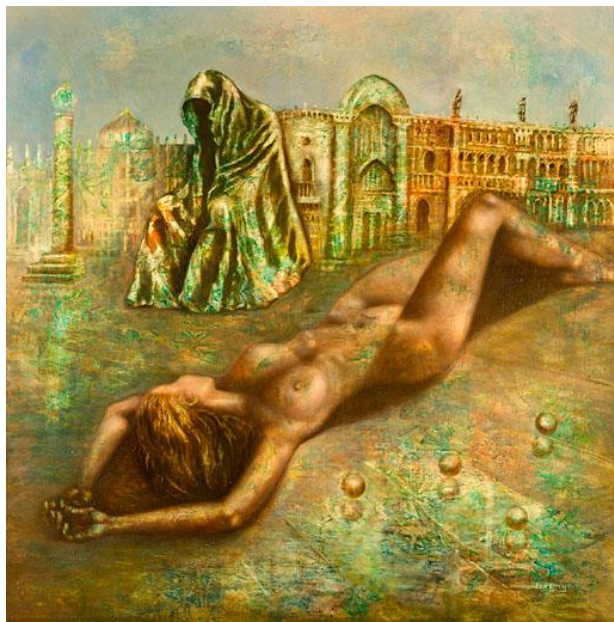
Although she was still a little girl when they were forced to leave the Czech Republic in 1945, Anna kept her memories of the Renaissance Chateau and the Baroque church with its many sculptures. Český Krumlov Castle was proclaimed UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992. Anna is the only one of four children who inherited an artistic talent from their father, who was a musician. After leaving for Salzburg, and later in Vienna, besides the artistic impressions of painting and sculpture, Anna also absorbed the harmony of the music of Mozart, Schubert and other composers, which would be especially emphasized in her first paintings. However, her parents did not see Anna's future in art school.

After Ana and Wolfgang were married in 1965 in Salzburg, they went to Paris. Today, Wolfgang and Anna have been residents of the Principality of Monaco for a long time and spend most of their time in France and Italy, with whom Monaco shares its borders. This is a relative term, since there are practically no boundaries in the European Union, and Anna and Wolfgang have passports of the European Union.

After their wedding, when Anna and Wolfgang moved to Paris, they found themselves in the environment of the world artists like Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso, who also selected the "City of Light" for their place of residence, as well as the philosophers - existentialists, among them Nobel Prize winner Albert Camus. Anna finally realized her wish to study at the Academy of Art. Salvador Dali was the mentor of Anna Chromy. "Dali, my first great love in painting," says Anna Chromy.

"I was not always ready to accept Dali's attitude towards women artists. Still, he greatly influenced the development of my artistic maturity. Also, I did not care about Dali's political affiliation, Dali was and remains a great artist, "Anna told us about her first impressions when she started studying at Academy of Beaux Arts and Academy de la Grande Chaumiere, on the left bank of the Seine.

"Because of my three-dimensional painting, my professors unsuccessfully tried to guide me to sculpture. However, when my mother got sick, I stopped painting. For six years I did not take a paintbrush in my hands, and when I returned to painting, in 1980, my fears and dilemmas concerning my mother's illness were transferred to the painting, the picture 'To be or not to be'. Then the idea of the Cloak of conscience first began to form," said Anna.



In the background: Cloak of Conscience

While living in Cap Martin in France, a place close to Monaco, Anna, having resisted for a long time to follow that path, began sculpting in marble at the studio of Massimo Galleni in Pietrasanta and Carrara, Italy, as well as at Franco Barattini, Studio Michelangelo.

In 2002, Anna's sculpture, "The Heart of the World," was presented to Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican.

In 2008, Anna received the "Primo Michelangelo" which is the highest award for a sculptor in Italy. And not only one, but more than I can present in this text, which you can see on Anna Chromy's website.

In the same year, 2008, Anna presented a model of "The Cloak of Conscience" to Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican to mark the opening of the Conscience Institute, an organization devoted to the development of the arts. "The Cloak of Conscience," a statue of an empty, draping cloak, whose true essence is hidden, has become Anna's motivation and inspiration. Anna has sculpted this invisible hero standing against corruption, this symbol for hope, love and peace, from a 250 tons block of marble cut out of Cave Michelangelo in Carrara.

From this huge piece of marble a chapel was created, I would not know how to call it any other name, with a height of 4.70 meters, with space enough for an entire family to enter; for example, two adults and two children.

"The Cloak of Conscience" is Anna's most monumental sculpture; it is her legacy. The unbending strength, courage and loyalty to this meaningful sculpture extended over five years of hard work.

"It was not easy to find co-workers for such a great undertaking," Anna Chromy told us with smile on her face. "Some did not last long, but in the end, with my three colleagues, I managed to express what I wanted," Anna remembers.

It has become common that the sculpture " The Cloak of Conscience " in Cave Michelangelo is called a chapel. A lot of people enter it and stay there for a short time.

"Conscience is not a material matter, but it affects the material world. I had the opportunity to watch people entering the chapel in Mikelangelo's cave. When they come out of the chapel, a relaxed smile spreads over their faces. Whether it is due to facing up to their own consciences, or simply enlightenment, I do not know, but I have seen on their faces the pleasure of having experienced a kind of catharsis," Anna told us.

We would need a lot more space to fully introduce Anna Chromy, the winner of many awards for her art work, but we can mention at least some places around the world where her sculptures and paintings have obtained a permanent place.

The list is too long, as well as the list of prizes, but to start let us mention the Prince's Grimaldi Palace in Monaco, where the Cloak of Conscience installation sculpture is located, and then in the park dedicated to PRINCESS GRACE, Grace Kelly's title in Monaco.

Sant Tropez, where more than 10 sculptures are located throughout the town; Museum Athina, where the permanent exhibition of Anna Chromy stands; then "Peace On Earth", three drawings for the United Nations in New York, 1985; Creation of "Equus Trophy", Munich, Germany, 1993; Painting exhibition at Vasarely Museum, Aix-en-Provence; Karolina University, Prague; and Michailiwska Trapezna Museum, Kiev, Ukraine, 1991; Exhibition "Mythos Europe" at "Prague European Capital of Culture", 2000; Installation of "Sisyphus" at the Scuola Superiore di Sant'Anna, University of Pisa, Italy, 2004; Installation of "Ulysses" on "Espace Cocteau", Menton, France, 2004. In several cities, a Cloak of Conscience installation was installed under various names, such as the "Piétà" in front of the Salzburg Cathedral in 1999; Comendatore in Prague 2000, in 2001. Installation "Herbert von Karajan" at his birthplace in the center of Salzburg, Austria, and inauguration with the Vienna Philharmonic, Riccardo Muti, Eliette von Karajan, etc.

We must also say this: it is human nature for a man to return to his roots, regardless whether he has taken along fond or painful memories. In the nineties, after the Velvet Revolution of 1989, Anna Chromy and her husband found themselves in the Czech Republic. She was received with the highest honors an artist can get.

Also, I have to mention one of the great projects of Wolfgang Stein, namely, the founding of THE CONSCIENCE INSTITUTE in year 2000 in Luxembourg. At that time the Chromy Award, a prize for personalities blessed with an exemplary conscience, was established.

The Chromy Award

A PRIZE FOR PERSONALITIES BLESSED WITH AN EXEMPLARY CONSCIENCE



Former Supreme Court Justice Elyakim Rubinstein (center) is shown receiving the Chromy Award. Prof. Yoram Weiss – Director Hadassah Medical Center Ein Kerem (left), artist Anna Chromy (right).

But this is not where the story about Anna Chromy ends. Known throughout the world, Anna Chromy received an invitation from China. Confucian philosophy and modern world, returning to the roots.

In Anna Chromy's "Cloak of Conscience" sculpture, the Chinese have discovered yet another aspect of deep humane relations towards human values of the world. Anna had the opportunity to address the Chinese public, and her installations were given an honorary place in Beijing, Shanghai and some other cities in China. In 2009 Anna Chromy received a professorship at the National Academy of Sculpture in Beijing from the Chinese Minister of Culture.



During the conversation: Anna Chromy and Editor Milan Fogel

I've done a lot of interviews, but whether because our views on the world are the same or we simply understand each other as human beings, I have to say, this is one of the rare interviews

that were conducted in a completely open, friendly atmosphere. I wish to thank Anna and Wolfgang for this interview.