

A Special Art Presentation of the
Proposed Monument to be called "The Choice"
By Nikos Korkantzis
As part of the Observance of the Bicentennial
Of the United States Constitution

INTRODUCTION

There is no better time to praise the Western World than this time related to the forthcoming 200th Anniversary of the Constitution of the United States.

The Choice, basically, is a proposed monument for the observance of the Constitution which became effective on April 30th 1789, when Washington was inaugurated as the First President.

The thematic nature of the Choice prompted me to decide on this unusual presentation, and in this instance, I wish to thank you for honoring this event with your presence and giving me your valuable time and consideration.

I am aware of some wise man's saying: Do not promise something you can not deliver! ... And of course, as an artist and not as a jurist, how could I possibly qualify to introduce you to the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution! Well, I do not! I only wish to introduce you to an art project, speaking of the Constitution!

So, taking poetic license, with the help of the librarian and the brainy contribution of such friends as Dr. Rao-Shantha, Will Brady, Dr. Alfred Lilienthal, John Byrnes and Kostas Nikolopoulos, I made up my mind as to what to include in my project and then I started working. After collecting the necessary data, I drew a composition with personalities representative to the enlightenment.

The Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, with delegates from 12 states, not 13 (Rhode Island wasn't present) was, and still is I believe, the most important period in the history of the world, for unity withstood the destructive separatism or radicalism of the few, who are always there to impose their will in any progressive plan.

Changes have always occurred: Great scientific discoveries and wars! But what are the initiatives for these changes? There are two basic things responsible. Two basic factors. These two basic factors are: The Search for Power, and The Quest for Happiness!, the latter, being in the long term, the winner because it tends to fulfil the purpose of life which is happiness.

But first, let us see what is a fair definition of happiness and what it must include: Freedom? Of course! But that's not enough. Wealth? Also! But that alone is not enough either; the combination of both freedom and wealth bring us closer, but still not up to the target! Because happiness, in order to be true, should fulfill the time element, meaning it should withstand any corrosion caused by time, remaining integral; being perpetually there!...

However, with the man attached through his mind to the two very complicated worlds, which are the realistic and the abstract, happiness may still be unachievable unless discipline is present.

In any case, a good degree of happiness can be achieved through that certain disciplinary method which implies the least possible restriction of freedom!

This can be realized through an organization with democratic balances, where the two blocks, Demos or publique and Cratos or state are amalgamated into one society; where groups and individuals can move, act and exchange with a will which is both independent and interdependent to each other; for a peaceful progress toward the highest goal: the complete-perpetual happiness and freedom. The Constitution of the United States advocates these virtues and provides the standards for such progress.

But why a monument, people would say? I will try to answer this question: I believe in staying in contact with the enlightenment of the past while seeking to build a better future. The quest for happiness seems to me to be groundless without the quest for enlightenment and probably weak without the knowledge provided by those who worked and contributed to enlightenment.

As we know, in freedom all kinds of movements and expressions take place. In times of depression, happiness may be replaced with melancholy; and melancholy is as contagious as enthusiasm if only we are persuaded that this state of mind is all right to live with! Unfortunately today, due to melancholy, Diogenisses and vagrants are increasing rapidly. So, far from kinesis or action, which is a trait of the Western World, we lately see a turn to cynicism or apathy, which is rather more an Eastern trait, related to a misunderstood nirvanacism...

May we consider the question of how this lack of discipline grows? I have one answer. I believe stress along with our disassociation from the past, limits our capacities and capabilities; especially when we look for enlightenment while cut off from our sources ... It is like going fishing in a swimming pool ... We cut off ourselves from the representatives of the enlightenment, then we adopt cynicism as our way of life and thereafter we look for happiness. It just doesn't work. Disassociation from the sources will not bring us the results we are looking for. No matter how strong the sunlight outdoors may be, it will not be enough to bring us back the enthusiasm for life so long as the respect for the applied wisdom of the past is missing. Healthy progress is based on fundamentals and an ever progressing appreciation of immutable values.

The purpose of the composition, "The Choice" is to reconnect our association with the enlightenment by bringing back to our view many of its representatives, because with happiness as a basic purpose of life, it certainly is wise to absorb the vibrating energy pulsating in those who worked for it.

This proposed monument will be the connecting link between America's glorious past and our hopeful future.

Now, we shall proceed with a reading of the proposal and give some biographical information on a few of the personalities who, as Professor Wright once said, "Today are virtually unknown," men such as Jacques Burlamaqui, Samuel Pufendorf and James Harrington, who in the eighteen century enjoyed much fame and international renown. I will be glad to provide anyone who is interested in further studies with additional information, kindly leave your mailing address with me.

"This introduction by Nikos Korkantzis has been used in the series of presentations regarding his sculpture, "The Choice".

PROPOSAL

TO ERECT 'THE CHOICE'

A monument honoring the world's best instrument to
happiness: THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE OUTLOOK:

There is a concentration on personalities directly
connected with the U.S.A. constitution, or the
democratic ideal:

- a. Main figures are GEORGE WASHINGTON and PERICLES.
- b. Portraits of other persons are embodied on a starfull
construction which consists the background supporting
theme. This includes representatives to the Convention
in Philadelphia, from the 12 participating states, patriots,
writers and philosophers, influential to the democratic
movements resulting the birth of the Constitution in 1787.

The support design with the stars permits further extension,
to include more of the personalities, in the future, if
further funding will be available.

SUGGESTED LOCATION, (S):

- A. Philadelphia. (The birth place).
- B. Washington D.C. (The U.S.A. capital).
- C. The Kennedy Airport. (This port is best suited to
introduce domestic and foreign tourists to the West's
best castle of freedom and happiness).
- D. Any other well suited site.

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Photograph or Blue Print.

INTRODUCTION/DESCRIPTION

Time: 1787. While the most distinguished Americans, including Franklin, Hamilton, and Madison among others, joined their efforts for the preparation of the Constitution of the United States, the overall spirit, the representative of the People, Justice and Freedom, is the great George Washington.

In his search for the right choices, he is depicted together with the builder of the Acropolis, Pericles, who in the past achieved a democratic system and created the Golden Age of Athens. Like Washington, Pericles was a soldier who respected and served the will of his people. His 'epitaph' is the greatest memorial of the governing system that made Athens, like the U.S.A. today, the happiest society of the time.

We see a great difference in the expressions of the two men: Washington moves in tension, with austerity, because we see him during an epoch of great creation: much more remains to be done, lots has yet to be accomplished. Pericles, on the other hand, is in a relaxed state, for he has no remaining obligations. He has come simply as a mentor and friend, with these few words from his epitaph, obviously approved of by Washington: "We are lovers of the beautiful yet simple, in our tastes." (The English translation appears, more appropriate than the original, since if Pericles were alive today, he would certainly have spoken in English.)

Washington's decisiveness is illustrated in the firm pointing of his forefinger. At the same time, the first words of the Constitution - "We the People..." - appear on the base, emphasising his "choice" of government. Other elements such as the eagle, symbol of the West, set the tone and introduce the spectator to the scope of the sculpture.

The highly energized background suggests the turbulent spiritual dynamics of the period, with its rows of stars portraying the philosophers and patriots whose spirit participated in the making of the Constitution. Personalities including the representatives from all participating states to the Convention in Philadelphia, as well as patriots such as John Adams, important absentees such as Thomas Jefferson, Chief Justice John Marshall, and philosophers and writers associated with the Democratic Ideal, such as Cicero, Thomas Hobbes, James Otis, Pufendorf, James Harrington, Montesquieu and Burlamaqui are there to enhance the stars.