



## **Man and Woman by Tamara Kvesitadze**

### **Article written by Lorenzo Enrietto**

Lorenzo Enrietto is a brilliant student attending the last year of the linguistic high school "Chiabrera", Savona, Italy. He has recently taken part in a national competition where he was asked to comment on a contemporary work of art.

Lorenzo chose "The Lovers" by Tamara Kvesitadze, which allowed him to deal with the theme of love in artistic, literary and philosophical terms. He showed confidence in the use of English and remarkable intuitive skills in developing this issue, which contributed to the creation of high profile school work.

Here follows the unabridged text of his work as it was presented on the prestigious occasion in Florence.

Petrollini Mariella, teacher

## WHAT IS LOVE?

Love is a feeling, some people say that love is a condition of well-being with another person, others say that it is a prison, while other people even believe in it being a miracle.

Notwithstanding *love* has a lot of definitions, as it is felt and seen differently from person to person.

Love is a strong feeling of affection for another person.

But this is a cold definition which can be expanded and really understood through art.

Love is a smoke and is made with the fume of sighs.<sup>1</sup>

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, and therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.<sup>2</sup>

## TAMARA KVESITADZE

*Tamara Kvesitadze* is a Georgian artist, whose works are shown and appreciated all over the world. She was born in Tbilisi (Georgia) in 1968; as she got older she studied at the *Architectural Department of the Tbilisi Technical University* and then she got a MA in 1990. She is considered one of the most important artists in whole Georgia and now we get to see some of her artworks all over the world (in France and China, for example).

## MAN AND WOMAN

**Man and Woman**, also called *The Statue of Love* or *Ali and Nino*, is one of her most important artworks, which best describes the definition and the message of love. It is a 8-meter-tall statue composed by two different sculptures that represent two different characters: *Ali*, the man, and *Nino*, the woman. This artwork was designed in 2007 and then installed in *Batumi*, a seaside town in Georgia, in 2010. It was realised using the style of, at the same time, Realism and Abstractism and it is made up of steel discs which are able to unite in order to become an only statue.

Even though the artwork is completely made up of a cold material, such as steel, it deals with a really touching story which makes those two scary and cold robots visible through a new light which improves them and makes them more human. This represents, indeed, a revolution in the way the machines are seen, transforming them from frightening to loving creatures.

The statue springs to life every evening at 7 pm in the public square in Batumi, which overlooks the sea, but its movement only lasts for about ten minutes; the statues then stop moving to operate again the following evening.

The two characters are sculpted in a way which makes them look like the ancient Greek and Egyptian ones, concerning shape and posture; this is a way of linking the

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1 See WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 1, Scene 1.

2 See WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act 1, Scene 1.

artwork to the past and, at the same time, a way of elevating the two characters to a higher social level, as if they were monarchs.

## THE BACKGROUND

This masterpiece refers to an Azerbaijani novel, written by an unknown Azerbaijani author called Kurban Said, which narrates the story of these two young characters, Ali and Nino, who fell in love even when society tried to stop them. Ali, in fact, was a Muslim boy, while Nino was a Christian and Georgian Princess. Given that they were different, they had to cope and struggle against several troubles during their life, but it seemed that nothing could tear them down.

The novel (entitled *Ali and Nino*) can be described as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Renzo and Lucia* of an oriental battlefield, characterised by millenarian symbols. Hence, its main topic (apart from war, religion and tradition) is the one of love, which is present during the whole plot. *Said* managed, therefore, to show the reader's eyes a brainstorming reality where the families' destinies and the populations' aims form an Azerbaijan at the same time close and far from the flourishing and independent one we know nowadays.

## THE MOVEMENT

So, as the statue moves, we are able to see some parts of the story by it narrated: firstly the two characters meet, then they get closer and fall in love, they unite becoming an only person and soul (their union also represents a sort of *universal harmony*), but then they separate. That ending is meant to be considered as the invasion of Soviet Union, which led Ali to his death. In fact he was a soldier and he died during a battle, while he was fighting for his country. But as the masterpiece says, not even death was able to separate them because their love was really strong and powerful.

The two characters, in fact, share an embrace before getting separated: it symbolises their feelings, but according to me, it also symbolises a promise: the promise of getting back together once again, even after what would happen to both of them, so that neither death could keep them away or take them apart.

## THE MESSAGE

This sculpture carries with itself a lot of great messages:

1. **Love is difficult and painful, but it is stronger than anything else.**
2. **Love is so strong that it can break every barrier**, such as those *Ali and Nino* had to cope with (religion, culture, historical events and ethnicity).
3. **There are no differences amongst people.**
4. **Love is the only thing that carries equality with itself**: it doesn't pay attention to the social, religious, or economic conditions of the two lovers; they just kind of stop existing. We have to live peacefully with other cultures and try to get the best from them, in order to create a better and stronger one.

## OUR MODERN REALITY

I personally find that *Man and Woman* carries with itself a great message that reflects many problems we nowadays have to cope with. In fact, we live in a society which is not equal: men have more opportunities than women have, there are a lot of differences between white and black people, prejudices spread all around the world, etc.

We need love, we need equality, we need to get back to what we were before and improve ourselves.

These are the lyrics of a song, written and sung by Sofia Carson (an American singer and songwriter), which perfectly explain everyday life.

All these words, starting wars  
Over who can hurt who more  
Gotta, get back to beautiful.<sup>3</sup>

With the expression *to get back to beautiful* she means that time when we were all the same, when no ethnicity existed and when there were no differences among people. She means that era when we were not *white, black, male, female, heterosexual, homosexual*; she means that time when we were just human beings, that time when the only word that existed was **equality**.

So we can see that our reality is directly linked to the one of *Ali and Nino*, the one which is narrated and explained by *Man and Woman*, which is a reality we must get rid of, in order to improve ourselves and the whole world. So I wonder, on behalf of myself, of Ali and Nino, on behalf of us all and of the whole world: *will we ever get back to beautiful?*

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<sup>3</sup> See SOFIA CARSON featuring ALAN WALKER, *Back to Beautiful*, Warner/Chappel Music, Inc, Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Hollywood Records, Inc, 2017

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