

2017

Carved Stone: Maine Artists

University of Maine Department of Art

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CARVED STONE: MAINE ARTISTS
LORD HALL GALLERY

CARVED STONE: MAINE ARTISTS

EXHIBITION

October 6 - November 17, 2017

Essay by Justin Wolff

Afterword by Kelly Littlefield

LORD HALL GALLERY

University of Maine



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COVER **Stone Light**. 2012. Allan Stubbs. Photograph.

PREVIOUS **Stone**. 2014. Allan Stubbs. Photograph.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
ESSAY BY JUSTIN WOLFF	11
MATTHEW FOSTER	16
MARK HERRINGTON	18
KAZUMI HOSHINO	24
HUGH LASSEN	28
RICHARD REICHENBACH	34
JESSE SALISBURY	38
TIM SHAY	42
GLENN SWANSON	46
AFTERWORD	49
CREDITS	50
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	51

CARVED STONE: MAINE ARTISTS

Sculpture

The twenty-six sculptures in this exhibit present a glimpse into both the creative spirit and the artistic processes of the artists who created them. One of the greatest challenges for an artist is to find a seamless connection between their personal and discreet vision and the work they create. The exhibition *Carved Stone: Maine Artists* offers the viewer an insight into how each artist has come to terms with this challenge—carving, forming and arranging stone in sensuous and distinctive ways.

The inspiration for this exhibition took root more than two years ago as a collaborative effort to bring the work of these artists together in order to pay homage to Maine's stone sculptors. We invited a number of internationally recognized sculptors, many of whom were critical to the success of the Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium. In addition, we invited several emerging artists who have come out of the Studio Art and Art Education programs here at the University of Maine. This combination of artists represents not only the vitality and innovative nature of contemporary stone sculpture in Maine, but also the rich potential of its future. The resulting exhibition is a colorful diorama of soft intimate shapes interspersed among angular towers and rugged pillars. The sculptures in this exhibit are sometimes exciting, with complex and colorful elements, and sometimes soft with minimal hints at elemental concepts. Despite the variations in form, all of these works are deeply rooted in nature, from the materials out of which they've come to the inspiration and insight associated with and revealed through the artists' processes.

This catalog is a tribute to stone sculpture in the state of Maine and to the artists who continue to honor and further the traditions of stone carving through their work. It also acknowledges and honors individuals, such as Jane and Kelly Littlefield, who, through their efforts and support, help keep these traditions alive.

As you look through the work presented in the exhibition and on the pages of this catalog, we invite you to remark upon and wonder at the details of each work and how these artists manage to elicit such movement and feeling from a material that is by its very nature unyielding and unpredictable.

Laurie E. Hicks
Professor of Art
Curator of Lord Hall Gallery

Greg Ondo
Assistant Professor of Art
University of Maine



MAINE STONE

Essay by Justin Wolff

Basalt, marble, slate, alabaster. Absolute Black granite from South Africa and Jonesboro Red granite from Downeast. Though the stones featured in this exhibition come from all over the world, the talent is local. Maine is a rockbound state: igneous rock fringes our coastline, granite rings our many islands, and stone walls enclose our pastures and properties. And just as Maine's landscapes have been formed and populated by the rock debris of glaciers, so has its economic, social, and cultural history been shaped by stone. Thousands of years ago the region's earliest inhabitants moved large rock chunks and manufactured chert scrapers and points for practical purposes. The area's early colonists designed plotted cemeteries where carved gravestones marked the dead. By the time it became a state, in 1820, Maine had a reputation for quarrying exceptional granite coveted by architects and sculptors. Today, of course, Maine artists use stone from everywhere to produce remarkable sculptures, ranging from small slate abstractions to massive granite installations.

Humans have always worked with stone in this region. A 10,000-year-old rock meat cache in northwestern Maine is among the oldest surviving human-built structures in North America. The cache, discovered in the 1980s on the eastern shore of Aziscohos Lake in northern Oxford County, kept bears from stored meat. After digging a deep cavity in the silt, the builders likely dragged and rolled the large 225-pound stones to the site and fit them together to form a seal. The cache could store the flesh of a dozen caribou, likely deboned with the fluted projectile points and quartz scrapers found nearby.

Engineering, craft, and stonework also came together in the region's Puritan cemeteries. In the 17th and 18th centuries Puritans, who rejected churchyard burials as papist, prospected for secular plots suitable for leveling and draining. They then fenced the burial grounds and erected carved stone slabs to mark

the dead. Anonymous artisans such as “The Stone Cutter of Boston” and the “Charlestown Carver” produced some of the most haunting objects in American history. Cutting into slate, granite, and marble, each gravestone carver fashioned distinctive takes on a standard iconography: willows, urns, skulls, and winged death’s heads. Whether located by highways or in deep woods, these tilting gray slabs are poignant reminders of both long-lost lives and our common fate.

Some of the stone in this exhibition is Maine granite, which has a particularly important role in Maine’s industrial and cultural histories. By 1812 Blue Hill quarries were exporting granite for use as ship ballast, and in 1820 Hallowell quarries produced key structural elements for Boston’s Quincy Market. The granite industry in Maine soon exploded and during the decades after the Civil War, when Beaux-Arts classicism was the nation’s official architectural style, Maine quarries produced granite for the foundations, façades, and décor of the New York Custom House, the White House, and the Brooklyn Bridge, among many other iconic structures.

New England granite originates from deep within old mountains and is exposed by glacial erosion. As Maine historian Lawrence C. Allin has explained, the major quarrying regions in Maine—the Hancock County coast, Vinalhaven, Deer Isle, and Hallowell—contained granite with coveted color, durability, and “readiness to receive a polish.” Some quarries were reputed for a “gray and green granite,” others for “pink-gray” stone, and “the best sites contained fine-textured stone, lying in well-defined, even sheets ranging from one to thirty feet thick” (276-77). Among other advantages of the state’s granite industry were the relatively shallow depth of the desirable rock and the proximity of the quarries to shipping harbors.

Needless to say, quarry operations and labor were intensive. Allin paints a vivid picture of a bustling workforce employing creative ingenuity and brute strength to get the stone. “At first,” he writes, “the rough stone was cut with hand-held drills or split free with steel wedges and sledge hammers. Pinches, or long iron bars, were used to carry the blocks about the quarry, and workers shaped the stones with hammers. Eventually, quarry operations employed blasting powder and later dynamite to dislodge the stone; steam engines to run the water pumps, cranes, pneumatic drills, and jackhammers; cable cars to move granite to the cutting and polishing sheds; and locomotives to carry the finished stone from the sheds to the wharves” (277).



Quarry workers included skilled artisans who cut construction stones, day laborers who handled the rough blocks, and sharpeners and blacksmiths who maintained the tools. The work was demanding. To manipulate a stone’s cleavage (also called “rift” and “grain”) required intimate knowledge of rock jointing, technical and mechanical expertise, and artistic instincts. And quarry work was dangerous. “Workers were surrounded by huge, moving blocks of granite, highly stressed steel cables, and frequent blasting... Moreover, work in the polishing sheds was accompanied by a fine granite dust that resulted in a debilitating condition called ‘white lung disease’” (279). But to the industry’s customers—the government agencies, insurance companies, architectural firms, and millionaires—the beautiful stone was worth any price. Upon visiting a quarry in Penobscot Bay in 1872, the Scotsman Robert Hall remarked, “The stone is all cut to perfection ... and fitted with an exactness that was not surpassed even in the day of Solomon’s Temple. The columns, caps, pilasters, architraves, are all carved and embellished with the most elaborate designs.”

Maine’s granite industry declined steadily after 1900, when architects and engineers started using more versatile materials, such as steel and terra cotta. But Maine stone, especially granite and slate, has found new life in the ingenious collaborative constructions of dedicated artists. As this exhibition testifies, the

expressive and monumental characteristics of Maine stone—now quarried in only a few locations, including Crotch Island in Stonington, Jonesboro, Orland, and Sullivan—are sustaining a diverse contemporary art scene. The Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium, developed by Jesse Salisbury, fomented this renaissance. From 2007 to 2014, five symposia brought together local, national, and international artists to collaborate on a single piece of public sculpture produced from Maine granite. The finished works now form the Maine Sculpture Trail, an outdoor exhibit of 34 sculptures spanning over 273 miles of Downeast coastline. Equally important to the development and sustenance of Maine’s contemporary sculpture scene is Greg Ondo, Assistant Professor of Art at the University of Maine and co-curator of Carved Stone. For years Professor Ondo has maintained a vibrant sculpture studio on campus; mentored hundreds of students, several of whom are featured in this exhibition; and produced his own monumental work.

Much of this work would not have been possible without the generous support of patrons such as Jane and Kelly Littlefield, owners of Littlefield Gallery in Winter Harbor, Maine. This exhibition extols the cultural benefactions of the Littlefields, the Schoodic Symposium, the Department of Art’s sculpture programs, and the industrious creativity of Maine’s contemporary sculptors.

Justin Wolff
Associate Professor of Art History
Department of Art, University of Maine

Works Cited:

Allin, Lawrence C. “Creating Maine’s Resource Economy, 1783-1861.” In *Maine: The Pine Tree State from Prehistory to the Present*. Edited by Richard W. Judd, Edwin A. Churchill, and Joel W. Eastman. Orono: University of Maine Press, 1995, pp. 262-88.

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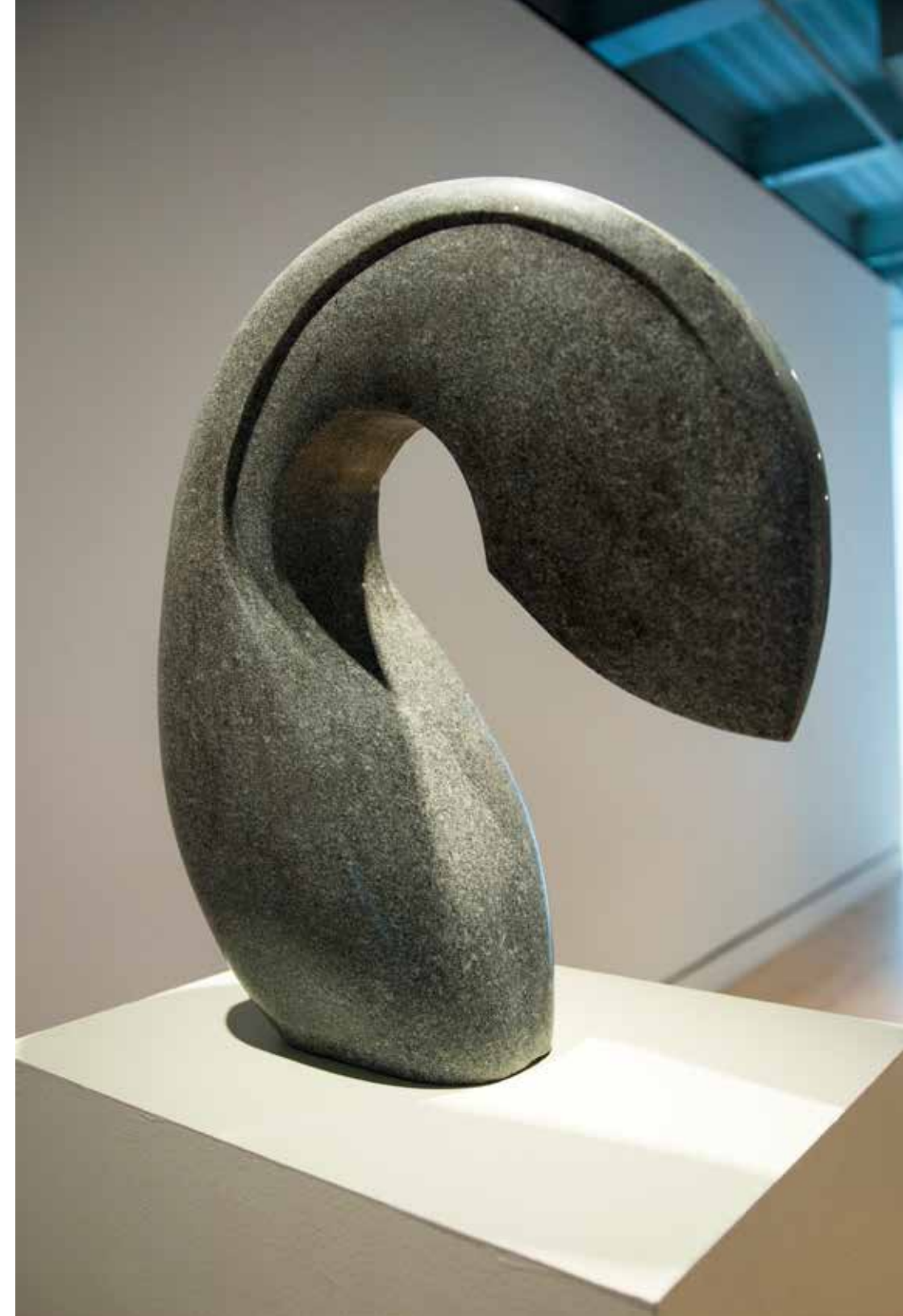


MATTHEW FOSTER

My work explores the fundamental desire of growth. There are parallels, between this essential need and the motivation of the artist to determine action without restraint. I make aesthetic decisions for each piece based on my own conventions.

My work evolves from each piece to the next; all playing upon the piece before. I choose to work in an abstract style, in order to reach a broader audience and understanding. While my aesthetic decisions are based on my own biases and life experiences, the viewer is allowed to bring to recollection their own life experiences, altering their perception of the work and freeing themselves from my own motivations.

Samara, 2013
Gabbro
26 x 28 x 26



MARK HERRINGTON

The act of creating is an attempt to understand connections. They can be between the conscious and the unconscious, personal and public, intellectual and emotional, or almost anything, perceived or not perceived.

There is also the relationship between idea and concept, mind and body, body and tool, tool and technique upon medium and project to place, which are constantly layered over the reasons for creating within the process of doing.

Artists work through these connections to give themselves and the world glimpses of possibilities as to how things fit into our world.

For me that process is important. Having a plan that allows for discoveries to be made and acted on along the way that will enlighten and enliven the result, is one of the reasons I find great joy in my work. It is also a tool to keep me present within the process. I believe creation happens only in the present. The past and future are only tools to help us fully focus on the here and now.

Passage, 2014
Granite
62 x 12 x 9 inches





Outlook, 2013
Granite
58 x 9 x 23 inches



Glimpse, 2015
Green stone on granite
12 x 9 x 6 inches



Rhythm and Melody, 2007
Epidote
16 x 9 x 7 inches



Six Squares, 2016
Granite
60 x 10 x 10 inches



Tether, 2009
Basalt on granite
16.5 x 18.5 x 7 inches

KAZUMI HOSHINO

In recent years I have been working on the series *Composition* which comes from combining simple forms. Variety and complexity are derived from a simple form. I was born and grew up in Japan, where I raised with a traditional Japanese sense of the beauty of simplicity. The circle is one of the most simple of symbolic forms which we can see everywhere by observing nature, and life. I want to show the dynamic interplay between simplicity and complexity within the outer form.

Stone is made over time and the surrounding environment creates its distinctive character. I like to use stone as the medium of my expression and to explore my ideas. Carving stone is an exploration of time and self-discovery and a way of opening myself more.

In the Carved Stone Exhibition, two sculptures *Warm Wind*, and *Composition Elements* are originally models for larger pieces. One of the pieces, *Composition Elements*, is the model for the sculpture installed in the lobby of the New Balance Recreation Center at the University of Maine in 2017.



Composition Elements, 2017

Peruvian granite and basalt
13 x 10 x 10 inches



Warm Wind, 2011
Jonesboro Red granite
12 x 6 x 6 inches



Composition 5, 2017
Black granite and
Jonesboro Red
11 x 11 x 11 inches

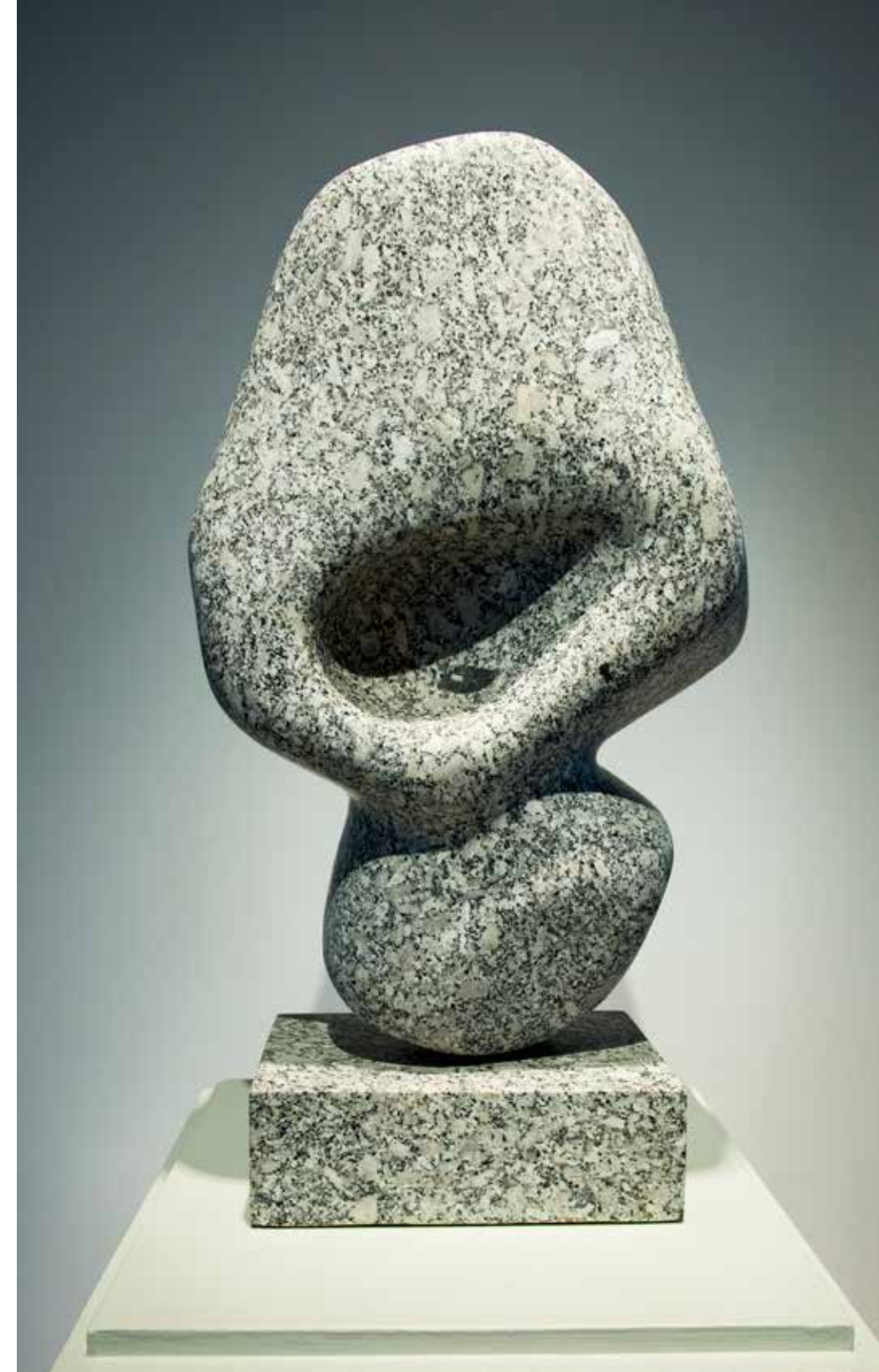
HUGH LASSEN

I find that my own sculptural aims revolve around mass, bulk, weight, in a phrase, ponderable form. For many years I've studied the figure using a range of exercises to develop my sense of touch. From these efforts and from my experiences carving, I realize that, despite being an abstract sculptor, my work is founded on human and animal forms.

The subtle, quiet forces that inspire us are perhaps better left unstated but broadly, my aim is to create vital, life-enhancing forms. Often an idea will emerge from a drawing and will provide the beginning for a sculpture.

One of the striking things about 20th Century sculpture is this insistence of working directly in stone. For centuries a sculptor would work in clay and have the final sculpture jobbed out to craftsmen to enlarge into marble or bronze. By carving directly in the stone or wood the idea will be refined until, hopefully, it works in the round.

Archaic Form, 2015
Granite
30 x 12 x 8 inches





Crab, 2015
Slate
29 x 26 x 15 inches



Figure, 2017
Cambrian Granite
20 x 8 x 4 inches



Figure, 2017
Granite
25 x 10 x 10 inches

Crocodile, 2017
Soapstone
20 x 48 x 12 inches



RICHARD REICHENBACH

I have always had an interest in art; however, like most people, I felt that I was not born with the ability to paint, draw or sculpt. In 1990, I met Louisiana Artist Henry Neubig, who convinced me that a person is not born with the talent to create art, but that it is learned. I took drawing lessons from him and a decade later, I returned to school to study art and earned my degrees in art and art education. In 2006, I started working with stone, learning through my mistakes, and at times it seemed that all I created was dust and after continued work, things steadily improved.

What fascinates me about working with stone is the connection it brings to the distant past. The stone was created millions of years ago, well before humans existed, and somehow I feel connected with this ancient past, especially when the piece is finished.

I never have a plan when I sculpt and at times maybe just a general idea. I enjoy the freedom of figuring it out as I go and following a plan makes me uncomfortable. I will first study the stone looking for the place to start and then work off each carved area like a puzzle. I only use hand tools since they give me greater control and a better feel of the stone. It takes greater time, but it has taught me to slow down and be more patient.

I try to present an organic feel, a sense of flow, movement, or rhythm, which is inspired by nature. The earth is filled with this invisible movement and rhythm, nothing is ever still, and stone is not what we perceive it to be. I want to make visible this invisible movement (force) in each piece, bringing it to life. I first realized this while living near the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska. Through the years, I witnessed the evidence of its movement, but never seeing it move, the ground beneath my feet was slowly rising, never feeling it rise.



Nature's Womb, 2017

Alabaster
10 x 8 x 3.25 inches

Window to the Soul, 2017
Alabaster
12.5 x 9 x 4.25 inches



Pale Blue Dot, 2017
Anhydrite
7.5 x 7 x 5 inches

JESSE SALISBURY

My current work fuses landscape architecture with sculpture installation. My sculptural forms are inspired by the natural geological potential of stone as observed in nature. The splitting of ledge, the smoothing of beach stones, the natural sculpting potential of water over time and the delicate balance of massive weight are the points of departure for a sculpture.

Starting in 2015 together with my wife, Japanese sculptor Kazumi Hoshino, I started working for several months a year on Kitagi Island in the Seto Inland Sea of Japan. This island is famous for granite quarrying and production since the castle building era in 1600. It is now suffering from depopulation and an aging population. The dramatic granite mountains and quarries next to the sea, the fascinating and dramatic history, and the abundance of unused industrial infrastructure make it an ideal and inspirational location for a self-directed design and production residency for hard stone sculpture.

As a team we are working with local island organizations and those that remain in the stone industry to develop an art lab with potential for international collaboration with other Maine artists, educational institutions and organizations as well as creating a local home base for ourselves, where we can design and produce large scale public art projects for Japan and mainland Asia. Several sculptures in this exhibit by each of us are new pieces designed and created on Kitagi Island.



Wind Swept, 2017
African absolute black granite
12 x 24 x 9 inches



Shima (Island), 2016
Japanese basalt (Datekanmuri)
8 x 6 x 4 inches



Nami (Wave), 2008
Jonesboro Granite
16 x 36 x 12 inches

TIM SHAY

The concept of Line Totem comes as a design with no preliminary sketches or modeling, it is done with total spontaneity of line. There is no measurement of the lines. The lines are cut into a rectangular stone on the flat surface to create shadow in combinations of parallels of twos and threes diagonal, vertical, and horizontal. Once I have gone from top to bottom around say all four sides we have a work that cannot be recreated except by measurement or a casting process.

This concept reflects the power of line not just in art but in our world as we know it today. For example in how we use line in our language: power lines, toe the line, line of thought, lines of speech, continue on and on. We have had food lines of the great depression and unemployment lines that continue to grow. Border lines that tell us where we can and cannot go, not to mention a question of how many wars have been created over lines. Which brings to mind, where do we draw the line? Let us hope not at the end of the line.

Line Totem shows me the power of creativity as its own entity to say that we as a species have the ability to recreate ourselves in a way that reflects outward, that we may make the world a better place to just be and to be just.

Line Totem, 2004

Tennessee marble
30 x 2.5 x 3 inches





Line Totem, 2016
Granite
26.5 x 4 x 2.5 inches



Celestial Line, 2016
Granite
9.5 x 11 x 11 inches



Many Paths to God, 2004
Tennessee marble
24 x 3 x 3.25 inches

GLENN SWANSON

Stone was the furthest medium from my mind when working on my Studio Art degree at UMaine. I had been very content making large mixed media sculptures out of post-consumer materials until my senior year when Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium co-hosted an elective sculpture course. My work suddenly shifted from additive to reductive and got a whole lot heavier.

Stone carving has evolved into a practice of mindfulness and patience for me. In an era where gratification is often immediate and manufacturers are producing at record speeds, I find I am able to truly slow down and be deliberate with each motion when I am carving. I am most fascinated by the transformation the stone takes, and use the final product as a visual reminder of the preceding creation.

My approach is to create forms that are soft and suggestive to nature in an effort to challenge the cold and hard associations we often make with stone. With this sculpture, I incorporated curves and fluid lines to suggest the seamless transgression of the stories our dreams are made of. Perhaps my work generates confusion, but I hope this glimpse into what my inspiration is can steer focus away from objectivity and encourage the viewer to discover their personal response to this vision.



Dreams Were Wild Last Night, 2016

Marble
14 x 14 x 8 inches



AFTERWORD

by Kelly Littlefield

What do we have on the Schoodic Peninsula? Rocks. We don't have people, we don't have activity, we have rocks: pink granite and basalt. When you live in this area there is a sense of the durability of stone, living with it brings a calmness or a transcendence, at least to us, in a world that is constantly changing. We like that calmness. So many generations of Maine are represented here, and this stone has a connection to the heritage of Maine, from the quarrying, and the building, to the craftsmanship that these artists bring to it. It is different than the mass production of today. We feel that it connects us to that nature, and that it is our personal story.

We hope to bring more sculpture to this campus, to promote and encourage support for it, and we are unabashedly going out to encourage people to embrace this idea. We think the University of Maine is extremely well placed in sculpture and in particularly stone sculpture, and that we should see more of it on this campus. In doing so, the campus itself is promoted.

We had the idea three years ago to have this exhibition, an artist-in-residency and other activities. The goal was to encourage people to engage enthusiastically in a conversation in the hopes that maybe the so-called third phase of expansion might culminate in a new sculpture building. Creating energy in that conversation, keeping it in the forefront of people's minds, is what we have been attempting to do for three years and we will continue to do that in the future.

Thank you to Laurie, Greg, and everyone on the University campus.

Kelly Littlefield

CREDITS

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Michael Grillo
James Winters
Alan Stubbs

NOTES

COVER. *Stone Light*. 2012. Photograph by Alan Stubbs. Coring marks left from splitting the stone are visible on this piece of basalt.

PAGE 4. *Matt's Stone*. 2014. Photograph by Alan Stubbs. Matt Foster's stone in progress during the final Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium.

PAGE 10. *Split Rock*. 2014. Photograph by Alan Stubbs.

PAGE 13. *Stone*. 2012. Photograph by Alan Stubbs.

PAGE 15. *Hand*. 2014. Photograph by Alan Stubbs.

PAGE 48. *Schoodic*. 2014. Photograph by Alan Stubbs.

CATALOG DESIGN & LAYOUT

Tilan Copson

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