

# Sculpture NorthWest

July/August 2016

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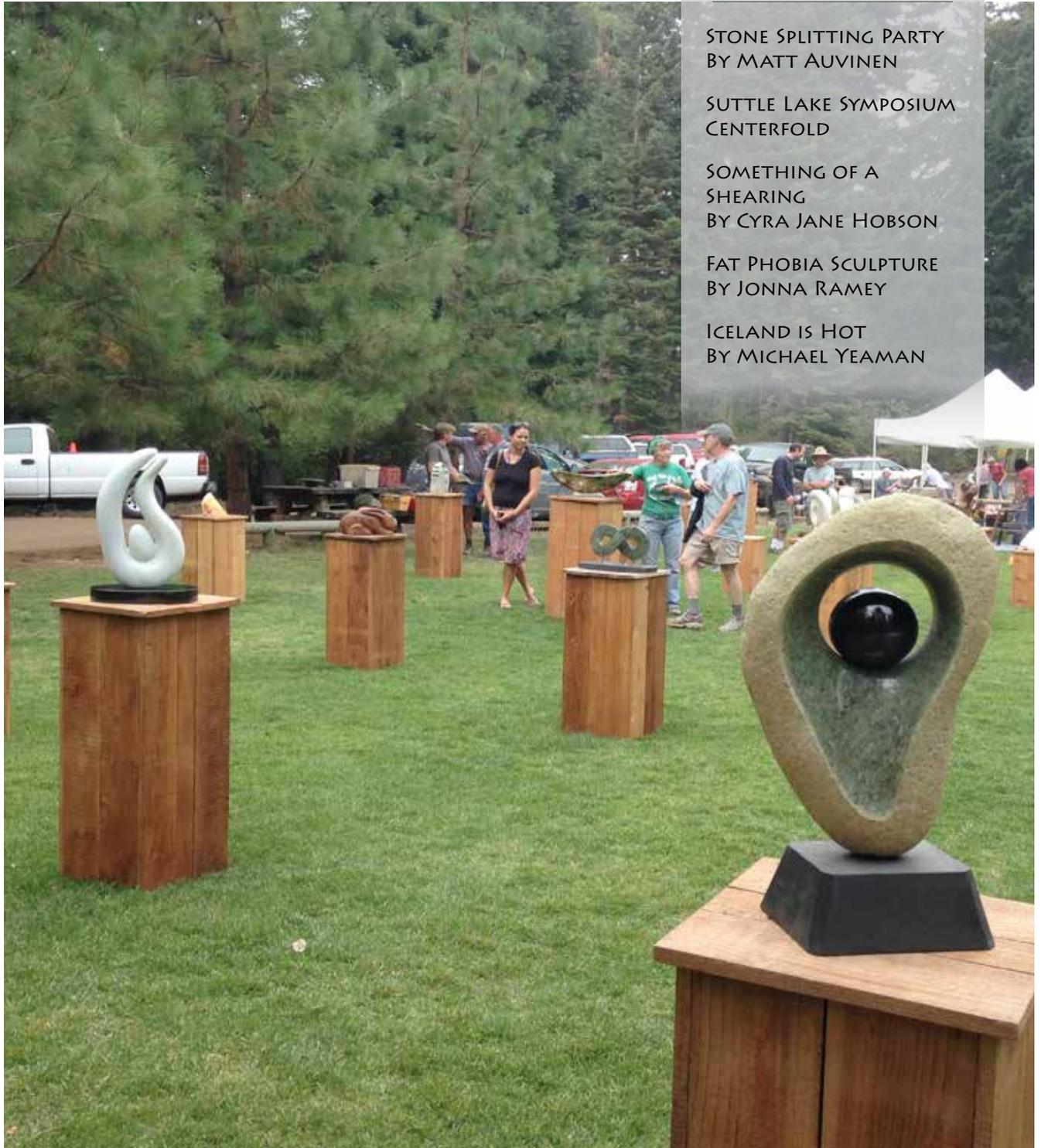
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SUTTLE LAKE SYMPOSIUM AT SISTERS, OREGON

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the NWSSA's *Sculpture NorthWest Journal* is to promote, educate, and inform about stone sculpture, and to share experiences in the appreciation and execution of stone sculpture.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT...



One of the many things I've learned about the creative process, is that you have to be flexible. For example, the Association was notified in May that the Treacy Levine facility, where we hold Camp Brotherhood symposium in July, would be put up for sale in June and would close August 31st. Therefore, the board formed a search committee and began the creative process of finding a new location. We had many suggestions from members,

and our search committee turned up a dozen or so possibilities. To evaluate them a check list was created so we could make certain our needs were covered and we were consistent. We did a lot of phone work and had five site visits narrowing it down to two possible sites. The plan was to have the board, while at Camp B, decide which facility to use.

The week before Camp B started, we found out from the Treacy Levine staff that the property had sold and it was likely the new owners would continue to rent the facility

## FROM THE EDITORS...

This summer issue of Sculpture NorthWest will show you raw stone direct from the quarry; how it's turned in to a finished sculpture; where to go to learn how to do that and what sculpture is like in a foreign country.

Starting with the quarry, Matt Auvinen will give us some of the details about a one hundred and fifty six year old marble quarry in California and the lucky NWSSA members who got to go along on his recent fieldtrip.

Two of our members talk a bit about the personal journeys that resulted in the pieces shown in this issue. Cyra Jane Hobson shares her innermost thoughts about carving a lighthouse on legs and Jonna Ramey shows us her Fat Phobia versions of the 25,000 year old Venus of Willendorf.

Our Centerfold will have all the information you need to head for Sisters, Oregon to learn and share so much about carving stone on the fabulous shores of Suttle Lake in the high Cascades. Yes, our Second Annual Suttle Lake Symposium is ON. August 21 through 28. Register now.

And if you're up for a trip to a frozen foreign country that is actually quite hot, come on along with our intrepid Roving Reporter, Michael Yeaman, as he introduces us to some of the sculpture of Iceland.

... Lane and Penelope

to NWSSA for its symposium. And indeed, on the first Sunday after the start of the symposium, the founder and family of the purchasing organization stopped by to see our symposium in full swing.

They all confirmed wanting to have NWSSA continue to hold its symposium there, but had to work with staff to confirm dates and prices. Given the complexity and lead times, we need to make a decision no later than next month. Here is where the flexibility part comes into play. With the new owners now working to give us dates and pricing that will work for us, we should be able to make our final decision then.

Look forward to more info in the next issue, until then...

Learn much, Share with many, and Carve Proud

...Carl

**Look for the money saving offer  
on the Suttle Lake Symposium  
elsewhere in this issue!**



*It is a great privilege to be able to work with, and I suppose work off, my feelings through sculpture.*

*(Louise Bourgeois)*

# EDDIE ONETO'S "STONE SPLITTING PARTY" MAY 20, 2016

**Editors' note:** Carlo A. Dondero came to America as a boy with his Italian parents. By 1858, he owned a print shop at 417 Clay St San Francisco. Soon thereafter he bought the quarry land from a distant relative of Eddie Oneto's and in SF he met Leland Stanford who put up \$50,000 to open up the quarry.

Off and on from the 1880's through the 1920's the stone was shipped to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco where the Musto marble company cut and polished it for buildings in the City. Some of it was used on the museum building at Stanford University. The quarry has been virtually unused for the last 80 years.

By Matt Auvinen

Through the network of the NWSSA emails I heard that Eddie Oneto, having bought the property, was hoping to introduce his forgotten marble to the world. Eddie had recently widened the old road to an abandoned marble quarry on his property. He pulled out some blocks that had been split from the mountain by the Italian workers and left behind a hundred years ago. Eddie kindly sent me some pictures and I was immediately curious about how useful this material might be for our carving community. After a couple phone conversations Eddie invited me to Jackson to visit the old quarry site.

Just off of HWY 55, Eddie has a beautiful ranch a few miles from Jackson, CA. The drive just east of Sacramento offers some of the most idyllic views of the foothills that lead to the Sierra Nevada Mountains. As I drove up to the ranch house I saw that Eddie had already prepared his ATV in a trailer behind his pickup. He was cordial and generous with his time as we discussed the old quarry.



▲ MATT AUVINEN EXPLAINED WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE VEINING AND HOW ONE MIGHT APPROACH SPLITTING THIS BLOCK.

The drive to the quarry took us through several winding tree lined roads until we had to unload the ATV to drive the final mile on a single lane gravel path to the quarry. From the narrow and tree shaded path a light grey monolith of stone appeared in stark contrast to the pines and underbrush. Most apparent on the stone wall were the parallel drill marks spaced at 3 inch intervals where the blocks were split from the marble outcropping.



▲ THREE OF THE TYPICAL QUARRY BLOCKS MADE AVAILABLE TO US.

▼ A COUPLE OF LOCALS DRILLED HOLES AND SET FEATHERS AND WEDGES TO SPLIT THIS BLOCK. AFTER A HUNDRED YEARS OF SETTING OUT, THIS BLOCK WAS SOLID AND SPLIT CLEAN.



▲ MATT AUVINEN IN WORKING SMOCK AND EDDIE ONETO IN FULL ROMAN SENATOR REGALIA.

We loaded several small pieces into the RTV and I took these home to Chico. The next day I carved a simple capital with curved surfaces.

The marble has large crystals that resemble Greek marble. There are extensive dark grey veins throughout the material with occasional straight brown veins. Small oval pockets of very translucent calcium carbonate can be found as well as very hard dark quartz crystals.

This material will hold an edge from a grinder and takes a good polish.



▲ AL SIERADSKI AND DOUG WILTSHIRE WATCHING LEE IMONEN CUTTING THEIR PIECES OF MARBLE.

After the quarry visit, and after some discussion about the future of this marble, Eddie decided to organize a BBQ and "splitting party." For a fee of \$200; participants were offered a tour of the abandoned quarry, a lunch and steak dinner, and a minimum 200 lb. block of this rare Californian marble.

Fifteen stone carvers showed up for the festivities from all over the west coast. The generous spirit and friendly atmosphere was just what I was accustomed to from attending all of the stone carving symposiums in Washington, Oregon and California.

As part of the entertainment Eddie asked me to demonstrate some old tools and techniques for carving stone. I showed how the pointed and toothed hammers were used in antiquity to flatten rough surfaces as well as some point chisels that were recovered from old quarries in Carrara, Italy.

The food was GREAT! Everyone went home with a smile and a block of rare marble. Eddie has indicated that he is interested in repeating this party in May of 2017.



# SOMETHING OF A SHEARING

By Cyra Jane Hobson

In late 2013, I found myself lost. I was carving outside a metal sculptor's studio in downtown Seattle, but it wasn't mine and I knew it was time to start searching for my own workspace. I had a place to live in a building downtown, but I had never wanted to be there and while I didn't want to stay, I also dislike change and find it very hard to tear away from security. On a work front, my paying jobs were mostly about how much stress one person could hold, and I was putting every last bit of energy left into a large burning man collaboration with an awesome, but too small, crew. And the very last bit of my innocence was being destroyed in a bare-threaded and desperate relationship on its last strands. This all culminated in a serious breakdown in August. I went underwater, my light extinguished. And so, in September, I began moving.



▲ I INKED MY VISION ONTO A STUDIO WALL.

And so I carved the foundation of the lighthouse, quit all my jobs, and began ripping myself off the ground to start wandering in search of home. I was hurt, I was stressed, and blindly determined.

With legs of stone, especially so unformed, I moved very slowly. I was invited to help set up a bronze foundry on Vashon Island and began commuting from my apartment in Pioneer Square, Seattle. I left the downtown studio. I started carving outside the Quonset hut destined to be the foundry. I worked a little on the lighthouse. I tried risky job propositions, each a lifting of feet. I joined NWSSA and began attending stone carving symposiums, and the light started to shine again, just a little.

At the Silver Falls symposium that summer, I spent five days straight shaping the lighthouse itself (it's a separate piece from the base). I lost myself in the rhythm of filing down the body and rebuilding this form anew among new friends. I liked the focus I found in that group, and the ease of character. They felt like what home could be.



▲ I BEGAN TO CARVE THE STRUCTURAL DETAILS.

In late 2014, I started a business that allowed me to rent my own studio space at the same complex of abandoned greenhouses turned artists' studios where the foundry will be. The business promptly failed, but I had that studio and I loved that studio. And I kept that studio. I started the detail carving of the lighthouse face. Slowly that year, plans began to come into focus. Progress was slow, as I was stretching thin, still tethered to that old apartment and unable to break away entirely.

2015 found me wading in the river. I finally pushed off the foundation, relinquished the apartment and went peripatetic. Homeless. The day I found out that was to happen, the day after returning to my studio from Camp B, Rubble was cast as the foundation broke off entirely. A fit of ink projected the lighthouse onto a studio wall.

Splashing forward, I crashed on couches in a constant state of discomfort with the unknown, traveled to Arizona to work with a lapidary crew and there tackled the toes and the meaning of mobility. There, in the depths of isolation and in, by all accounts, terrible circumstances, I missed home, dreadfully. Not just my studio but my communities.

I came back to my studio for just a few days before a next journey to Vancouver, BC to be the artist in residence at Studiostone, a carving studio with a vibrant community. Touching ground so briefly in my own space was powerful and I did not want to leave, and I had to leave again, so soon! In B.C. I was homesick. Not that my experience there wasn't wonderful, it was. And in many ways, I was at home among other stone artists. But my own lens had finally focused, and though I had a whole studio full of stone and tools to play with, I worked diligently instead on the lighthouse carving its lens, sanding and painting, brazing the river, assembling

Continued on Page 8 ►

# SUTTLE LAKE SYMPOSIUM

Dear friends,

Another year has passed and I still think about our last meeting together as if it were yesterday. What an amazing group of people every year!

This year our old friend Kazutaka Uchida will once again be attending. We will also be welcoming an adjunct professor from Tokyo's Zokei University of Design and Fine Arts along with a graduate art student from Hiroshima City University.

Deborah Wilson, from B.C. Canada, will be offering a Jade carving experience for the entire week. This is Deborah's first time to Oregon and I am sure it will be the first of many. Our list of instructors and presenters is what makes each year so unique from the last. This year will prove to be one of the best yet.

We now have full access to the entire camp for our Oregon symposium so we can make all of the noise we want. I am increasing our Laser light firesides to another level.

I am excited about the list of people who have signed up for our student work studies program, many of whom should prove to be serious carvers and attendees in the future. And I would like to personally thank all of our attendees for their generous support of our auction to make this program possible.

We are working on an American/ Japan student exchange in the near future, which will make our symposium one of the most comprehensive academic programs in the country. I look forward to seeing you there!

Doug Wiltshire, Suttle Lake Symposium Director



# AUGUST 21 - 28, 2016



# SOMETHING OF A SHEARING... *Continued from Page 5*

the pieces, making plans, yearning for Seattle and for the island and the chance to pull in my feet and let down the walls. This was the seventh workspace I and the lighthouse had worked in together and by the end of March, all that I could do outside my own studio was done. All that was left to make was a wooden oval base and to have the light turned on.

I wanted to have the base before returning to Vashon, so I detoured for a few days to visit a friend on another island with a studio surrounded in forest. I took the lighthouse out into this eighth workspace to cut and laminate a solid base of old, repurposed mahogany. By now I was savoring the last drops of my homesickness. I still had no plan and no specific place to lay my head, but that didn't matter so much. One foot, a few toes, were still in the river, and the rest of me had pulled up onto a new land.

And so the return to the island and the finishing work. Lots of little details and readjustments that fell into place swiftly. A shearing of



▲ THE STONE CARVING ALMOST FINISHED.

reality as the chronicled character of the monomyth became someone else, an entity unto itself and no longer an aspect of my internal visualscape. And now he ambles over there, quite alive. His path remembered in a wash of golden light. His lens bright with intent and determination. He delights me. I never thought he would exist; I never thought the feeling of home would again either.

I did not necessarily intend for the sculpture to be so literal, and there is a lot of backstory about the quest for home that began far longer ago than this particular lens. But that is how it works and I'm grateful to have been awake for this part of the journey.

*Something of a Shearing first appeared on April 28, 2016 in Cyra Jane's Blog: The Spaces in Between (cyrajane.com/blog)*



▲ AT LAST, THE LIGHTHOUSE PAINTED, WITH BRONZE RIVER AND WOODEN BASE.

"TO BE AN  
ARTIST  
IS TO  
BELIEVE IN  
LIFE"  
~ HENRY MOORE

# FAT PHOBIA

By *Jonna Ramey*

## *Venus in Two Views for the Fat Phobia Gallery Show*

The Venus of Willendorf is an iconic Paleolithic image of woman. To anyone familiar with the female body, this small sculpture is not a fertility goddess per se, she is young and she is fat. Gloriously, unabashedly fat. Roughly 4.5” tall, she was carved from oolitic limestone 28,000 to 25,000 years BCE.

As a feminist, this figurine has spoken to me for decades. She is a primal, strong, personal image of women—fat women. As a direct stone sculptor, I have both yearned for and shied away from the possibility of making my own Paleolithic figurines. Recently, for the exhibition *Fat Phobia* shown at Art Access Gallery in Salt Lake City, I carved two stone Venus figurines, but on a larger scale. My works are each approximately two feet high, carved in African or Utahan stone. One piece is my fairly literal take on the Venus of Willendorf, the second is a more abstract portrait. Together, they frame a conversation on body image and celebrate large women’s bodies from earliest humans to our present society.

‘Venus at Middle Age’ reflects on the Willendorf figure, envisioning her as a woman a few decades older. Older, wiser, still strong and vibrant. Of the two sculptures, I carved her first, using a piece of Zimbabwean opalstone.

I started the process by studying all the images I could find of the original Willendorf figurine online. The figurine has been photographed in many angles through the years and the source material was rich. Studying these images, I came to some personal conclusions and observations. First, the original sculptor loved his subject. Yes, I think the Venus of Willendorf was carved by a man and he was smitten. He loved her breasts, her vulva, her fat, her youth. But he posed her with her face cast down or hidden, and he rendered her arms as a late afterthought. To survive 28,000 years ago, a woman needed strong arms and she needed to look directly at the world. My sculpture, I decided, would show her in a different light.

Sketching on paper, I found I was creating an older, more mature woman. Her breasts would have fallen with age, and her arms would hold them up to relieve pressure on her back.

She would look out at us, but like the original, her face is not detailed, making her everywoman. Her hair thinned with age, her hairline receding. While I roughed in a shape (a cocoon really) in the stone, I also worked on a small Sculpey maquette. Clearly, my sculpture was not going to be a replica of the figurine. I worked the stone entirely with hand tools in some quirky homage to the maker of the original. She was hand-sanded to 2000 grit and finished with Butcher’s wax. The piece took about 120 hours to complete.

‘V Kicks Up Her Heels’ imagines the woman who may have inspired the original Venus figurine in a playful manner. From the beginning, I knew she would be sculpted with Utah onyx (honeycomb calcite) to provide a strong counterpoint to the opaque blue-green opalstone. Honeycomb calcite’s translucency and vibrant color dictated that the sculpture



▲ THE CLAY MAQUETTE FOR ‘V KICKS UP HER HEELS’



▲ ‘V KICKS UP HER HEELS’ (IN HER YOUTH)

could not incorporate subtle or fine detailing. It would have to be created with bolder gesturing. Where ‘Venus at Middle Age’ had a solid, composed dignity to her, ‘V...’ was always an active, dancing figure in my mind. A quickly composed maquette led me in a direction, but the stone had other ideas and I was willing to compromise. Instead of both arms flung out akimbo, one was raised and the other just dropped by her side. One leg is planted on the ground, though we only see the thigh,

# FAT PHOBIA ... *Continued*

and the other leg is kicked back. Honeycomb calcite does not take hammer and chisel well. This piece was created using angle and die grinders. Finishing included diamond pad hand-sanding followed by buffing out with Italian Craftsman Polish. This piece took half the time of the other to produce.

The exhibition Fat Phobia was the brainchild of artist Carol Berrey and was curated by her and Sheryl Gillian, Executive Director of Art Access. Fat Phobia has been a great success. The opening drew 400 people. The audience was receptive to all the work shown, discussing the pieces, asking each other questions, commenting. Connected to the exhibit has been a

series of talks and workshops ranging from author Jasmin Singer speaking on 'Body Positivity' to a writers' workshop and subsequent poetry reading in the gallery. All events were well-attended. High school and college art students have paraded through the exhibit to look at the art, complete onsite assignments and then talk about body image and art. And, the artists have met each other, spoken about what they do and the content of their work.

For an in depth critique of the show, go to Scotti Hill's article in 15 Bytes e-magazine at <http://artistsofutah.org/15Bytes/index.php/fat-phobia-at-art-access/>

For me personally, these two pieces have pushed my work into new realms. Exploring a playful, active form has kindled an interest in making more active figures in stone. The physical sculpting has for some reason made me more fearless

when approaching a stone. And as a Euro-American woman, it's been empowering to artistically embrace my paleo roots. How this all plays out in my sculpture... we'll see. But, it's given my work a fresh perspective and verve that is personally appreciated.

***I sculpt stone. It gets me up in the morning. Every day. My work is often abstract, sometimes figurative but rarely literal. Making sculpture is a way for me to examine thoughts, emotions, cultural concerns, myths and taboos. I live and work in Salt Lake City, Utah.***

*All photos by Jonna Ramey.*



▲ 'VENUS' (MIDDLE AGED) IN THE FAT PHOBIA GALLERY SHOW.



▲ 'VENUS' (MIDDLE AGED) IN THE FAT PHOBIA GALLERY SHOW.



# ICELAND IS HOT!

By Michael Yeaman

Don't be fooled by the freezing winter weather and its propensity to lead the world in financial crashes, Iceland is hot property when it comes to culture. Whether its mid-Atlantic rift-walled Thingvellir valley serving as the dramatic backdrop for sex and blood in the Game of Thrones or its rightful position as the literary home of the Vikings for its 10th century Sagas of the Icelanders, Iceland is a land of artists.

This is certainly true when you consider the island's sculptural history. From the "Sun Voyager" of Jón Gunnar Árnason to the modern bronze work of Gerður Helgadóttir, Iceland has produced cutting edge art, especially in the 20th century. One artist with a strong history of stone sculpting is the Ásmundur Sveinsson (1893-1982). During a recent trip to Iceland, I had a chance to mispronounce every proper name in the country and to visit the Ásmundarsafn Museum in Reykjavik. The Ásmundarsafn (<http://artmuseum.is/asmundarsafn>) was formally opened in 1983 and is dedicated to the works of Sveinsson, one of the pioneers of Icelandic sculpture. His works are often strikingly modern explosions of action and passion inspired by Iceland's dramatic landscape and literature. Many of his early pieces are simplified biomorphic forms with his later work becoming increasingly abstract. Sveinsson studied in Paris in the 1920's where he worked under classicist Charles Despiau (1874- 1946). However much of his work reflects the revolutionary changes of Picasso and Lipschitz, with whom he must have shared more than a few drinks.



▲ MICHAEL WITH SVEINSSON'S LARGE WORK 'TROLLWOMAN' 1948  
(photo by Michael Yeaman)



▲ THE ÁSMUNDARSAFN MUSEUM BUILDING. (photo from Wikipedia)

SVEINSSON'S STUDIO AT THE ÁSMUNDARSAFN MUSEUM  
IN REYKJAVIK. (photo by Michael Yeaman)

The Museum is housed in a unique building, once the artist's home and studio, and which he donated to Reykjavik City along with a large collection of his work. It is surrounded by an elegant sculpture garden, boasting around 30 sculptures by Ásmundur.

The building was in most part designed by the artist himself in the years 1942-59. He built a curved building behind the main house that was conceived both a studio and exhibition space. The form concepts of the house are inspired by the

Mediterranean, the round houses of the Arab world and Egypt's pyramids. Inside you will find many of his original works and elements of his studio preserved in a similar manner as the Centre Georges Pompidou has preserved the original studio of Brancusi.

This combination of modern sculpture and architecture makes the Ásmundarsafn Museum in Reykjavik a special place for sculptors to find true inspiration for their own work. It is a must see stop if you ever get to Iceland.





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### 2016 CARVING CALENDAR

#### **Camp Brotherhood**

Mount Vernon, WA

July 9-17, 2016

#### **Suttle Lake**

Sisters, Oregon

August 21-28, 2016

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And don't let us forget our friend Peter Becker who brings us stone ideas from around the world in the monthly, online [stone-ideas.com](http://stone-ideas.com).

<http://www.stone-ideas.com>