

Sculpture Northwest

NORTHWEST STONE SCULPTORS ASSOCIATION

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020



INSIDE

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT –

Eirene Blomberg

SEAF EXHIBITION AND

CALL FOR ARTISTS –

By Cyra Jane

KING COUNTY PUBLIC

ART IN THE PARK –

By Benjamin Mefford

EIRENE BLOMBERG: 'OFFERING', 2013, LIMESTONE, 12IN TALL

Sculpture NorthWest is published every two months by NWSSA, NorthWest Stone Sculptors Association, a Washington State Non-Profit Professional Organization.

CONTACT

P.O. Box 27364 • Seattle, WA 98165-1864

Website: www.nwssa.org

General e-mail: nwssa-office@nwssa.org

NWSSA BOARD OFFICERS

Ken Barnes, President, (206) 328-5888

Benjamin Mefford, Vice-President, (425) 943-0215

Kirsten Rayhawk, Treasurer, (503) 419-8637

Ellie Hochman, Secretary, (206) 419-3499

NWSSA BOARD

Constance Jones, (206) 799-4827

Rick Johnson, (360) 379-9498

Julianne Kohn, (253) 282-9618

Steve Sandry, (425) 830-1552

Doug Wiltshire, (503) 890-0749

Michael Yeaman, (360) 376-7004

PRODUCTION STAFF

Benjamin Mefford, Editor

Maya Kilmer, Copy Editor

DESIGNER AND PRINTER

Nannette Davis of QIVU Graphics, (425) 485-5570

WEBMASTER

Carl Nelson

carl@mostlyrandom.info

(425) 252-6812

Membership.....\$50/yr.

Journal only/Gift subscription.....\$35/yr.

Please Note: Only full memberships at \$50/yr. include voting privileges and discounted member rates at symposia and workshops.

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.

© 2020 NWSSA

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the consent of NWSSA.

In This Issue

Letter From the President ... 3

From the Editors ... 3



Artist Spotlight: Eirene Blomberg ... 4



SEAF Exhibition and Call for Artists ... 8



King County Public Art in the Park ... 10

Classifieds & Carving Calendar ... 12

FROM THE PRESIDENT...



Dear Sculptors,
I'm sitting in a warm house looking at snow-covered ground outside as I write this (not in Seattle). By the time you get this the holidays will be over and our post-holiday party will be approaching (February 8th, 4pm at Marenakos – see our website for details).

We had a nice time at a get-together in my studio a few weeks ago. We talked about textures and had a few examples in front of us plus a bunch of images to discuss. I like textures as much as the next person, but the best part was seeing my carving friends in December.

Many members have complained that they do not get notices of these events and would have liked to come. If you don't get these email notices you aren't in our listserv. Look at our website and click the "join the listserv" button in the lower right corner of the front page. We do not spam you and you will get notices of these events and other random interesting stone topics on an every-now-and-then basis.

If you have an idea for a fun get-together when the symposiums are not in session, drop me a line.

Carve well, have fun, and wear a good respirator,

... Ken

From the Shelley...

*I met a Traveller from an antique land
Who said, "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed.

And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings,
Look on my works ye Mighty, and despair!"
No thing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that Colossal Wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

...Percy Bysshe Shelley

FROM THE EDITORS...

Happy new year! The days are starting to get longer and that means more carving time every week. This issue we are highlighting NWSSA member Eirene Blomberg, who shares with us how her work as a sculptor has been developing and becoming a more central part of her life.

There are several exhibition opportunities to be aware of, whether you just want to see colleagues sculpture on display or would like to exhibit work yourself. See Cyra Jane's article about the Seattle Erotic Art Festival (SEAF) to learn about how to get involved. If you would like to have a sculpture considered for the 2020 exhibition, get in touch with Cyra right away; she is still accepting submissions to be juried up through January 25th, 2020. Over the longer term, we expect to need large works for exhibition in our new rotating public art exhibit at Marymoor Park. See the article about the launch of our King County Public Art in the Park to learn more.

Last but not least, the 4th annual Women's Hand Carving Weekend and Show will be the weekend of June 5th, 6th, and 7th this year. It will continue at its usual venue, the Old Alcohol Plant in Port Hadlock, WA. If you have any questions, please reach out to Ellie Hochman by phone/text at 206-419-3499.

Be well, read about art, talk to other artists, and make something to soothe your soul. See you soon at the Winter Gathering on February 8th.

... Benjamin & Maya



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: EIRENE BLOMBERG

I am a maker and creative being to the core. I have painted, woven, felted, sculpted, sketched, and more, but still hadn't thought of myself as an artist. I knew that I needed to create in order to stay balanced and centered in my life. Art was more of a by-product of what I was doing — whether that was cooking, baking, gardening, or basket-weaving, art would infiltrate in as a driving philosophy, both consciously and subconsciously. Growing up in California, I took art classes in high school and entered college as an art major. Intimidated by the art world, I quickly switched majors and ended up getting a degree in Cultural Ecology with an emphasis in agriculture and became a gardener and herbalist by trade.

I spent the next few years working on Organic and Biodynamic farms in Indiana, New Jersey, and Tennessee. Eventually I landed on 150 acres in the backwoods of



▲ 'TRANSFIGURATION', 2012, CARRARA MARBLE AND BLACK ONYX 18.5IN TALL 2ND



▲ EIRENE SKETCHING ON STONE

Tennessee where a lifelong dream of homesteading with a small community of friends was brought to fruition. Five years later, yearning for the waters and mountains of the Pacific Northwest, I ended up settling in Washington State on Lopez Island. I still live there today with my husband and daughter in the home we built. I did a lot of exploring and creating during this period but I didn't do much classic 'art.'

It was not until I was dealing with a medical condition in 2012 that I really opened up to art again. In the process surrounding my condition I thought a lot about the finite reality of life, and the dreams I still wanted to manifest. Sculpting stone was high on that list, so I contacted Tamara Buchanan, a local stone sculptor and long time NWSSA member. We scheduled a class a few weeks out. As soon as I put chisel to stone I was hooked, and have been carving stone ever since. Tamara has been my teacher, mentor and dear friend, sharing her studio, tools, and wisdom. Working with Tamara Buchanan, taking classes, participating in

Symposiums and being a member of the NWSSA have all played very key roles in my development as a stone sculptor.

In March of 2019 Tamara, Sue Taves and I traveled to Italy where we rented studio space and carved side by side for nearly five weeks. In Italy, I found it fascinating how the appreciation for art is so deeply infused in the culture. As some locals pointed out, it doesn't even need to be good art to be appreciated; the experience of the creative process - making it, sharing it - that is what is important.

Plants, rocks, moss, and trees are the first thing my eye is drawn to in a new environment. I am an earth centered person, and have always preferred to work with natural materials and plants. This is what first drew me to working with stone, as it is such a basic natural material.

The first stone that I started carving was a piece of limestone. Carving forced me to dive into my essence and find the form which could express my inner self. Of course, this was much easier said than done. I worked on it for a few months, only to realize the finished carving I saw in my head was way beyond my skill level at the



▲ 'VISAGE', 2014, LIMESTONE - CARVED WITH HAND TOOLS



▲ 'LEAF', 2014, LIMESTONE, 20X10X5IN

time. It wasn't until January of 2013 when I was at the King Tut exhibit in Seattle when one piece in particular caught my eye. It was a sculpture of Hatshepsut, carved over 3,000 years ago. Hatshepsut was depicted kneeling, offering a bowl to the gods. It was nearly the same form as the idea that I originally had for my limestone. The similarity between this ancient carving and what I had begun floored me. I loved the idea that I was tapping into an ancient archetype. Inspired by this experience, I was able to re-engage with my limestone sculpture until it was completed. Originally I had felt that the bowl in my carving was one of burdens but as I started carving on it again it transformed into a bowl of light. I decided to line it with copper leaf to accentuate the effect. The piece is titled "Offering."

While taking a break from "Offering," vessels became my focus. Exploring the concept of the feminine as a vessel was

inspired by the ancient metaphor of the chalice and the blade. I explored this concept in various sizes, ranging from hand held to about 12 inches. For larger vessels I used soft stones like alabaster, and for the smaller ones I used local granite. The idea was to create an everyday item that reminded and inspired us of the sacredness of life in the four elements: Earth, Water, Fire and Air.



▲ 'SHATTERED LIGHT', 2016, ONYX OR LOOKS LIKE CALCITE - PART OF HER VESSEL SERIES

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT *continued*

As I've gotten to know my sculptor-self better I have found that I like to have balance in my creative process as I work and often have multiple pieces going at once. There is always at least one piece I am working exclusively with hand tools, often in limestone. The basic hammer and chisel are my favorite. It is something I can pick up at any time and sink back into the fundamental relationship of stone and sculptor. On the flip side, I fully enjoy grabbing a power tool and grinding away. There is nothing like gearing up and diving into my own personal world and shaping some stone.



▲ 'PURPOSE', 2016, AZTEC MARBLE

Moving with the form of a stone to create curves and undulations that flow together inspires me. The sensual experience of fingers flowing across the finished sculpture, guided by the created shape; this becomes a major focus when finishing a piece. Texture, color, play of light, how the eye moves across a piece - all those basic elements of sculpture dominate my own personal carving experience.

I believe in the power of beauty to make the world a better place. I feel that beauty and function should go hand in hand. My work isn't precise. My garden beds aren't perfectly organized, and I weave with a "rustic" style. But rather than



▲ 'FACE', SOAPSTONE, 2019, 8X6X5IN

see these as less-than-perfect, I prefer to see my work as a process of the integration of beauty and function. I tend to create objects that are more solid in nature; stronger, and able to withstand everyday life, while still holding a beauty about them. I endeavor to share the beauty that I see in nature through creations that have a place in everyday life.

In the sculpture "Purpose", living moss is a part of the evolving sculptural form. This is a concept I look forward to integrating more deeply in future pieces. Combining plants and stone keeps inspiring me, and another idea that's been dancing around in my mind for a while is to combine the sculptural elements of willow and stone. Down the road, I'm



▲ WILLOW BASKET 2019

looking forward to sharing the physical manifestation of these concepts. Along with combining natural materials, I am also excited to carve some larger figurative sculptures with the marble I brought back from Italy.

All my life I have struggled to label and own myself as an artist; it wasn't until I was in my mid 40's working in the studio with Tamara that I finally was able to say it. I am a maker, an earth-centered creative person, and now, thanks to my explorations in stone I can confidently say that I am an artist as well.



▲ UNTITLED VESSEL, ALABASTER, 2019,
10 x 9 x 5 IN

◀ 2019, LEFT TO RIGHT:
SUE TAVES, EIRENE BLOMBERG, TAMARA BUCHANAN, THE
ITALIAN STONE IS ALL PACKED AND READY TO SHIP



▲ TORSO BACK



▲ IN PROGRESS TORSO, 2019



SEAF EXHIBITION AND CALL FOR ARTISTS

By Cyra Jane

Touch Gallery – Call for Artists

The 2020 Seattle Erotic Art Festival (SEAF) will be featuring the Touch Gallery, curated by Cyra Jane and populated with many stone carvings and other sculptures that are sensual and fun to touch.

This curated gallery within the larger festival premiered in 2018 and featured 17 sculptures by NWSSA members Cyra, Markos Weiss, Sabah Al-Daher, Ben Kimura, Tom Francis, Julie Pitman, Ed Salerno, Steve Sandry, Steve Rabago, Wakey Nelson, Woody Morris, Bob Olander, Mark Andrew, and Jocelyne Dodier. Ed Salerno and Sarah Tanksley were instrumental in helping organize and run the gallery as festival viewers were invited to don blindfolds and explore the sculptures by touch, guided either by one of the artists or by someone they trust. Our part of the show was a huge hit! Thousands of people interacted with our artworks and the Touch Gallery was hands down one of the favorite installations that year at SEAF. The show resulted in at least one sale.

In its 17th year, SEAF has grown from an afternoon exhibit in Seattle's Town Hall to a three-day extravaganza that attracts over 4,000 art lovers to view 300 works from local and international artists. In addition to the open gallery hours during the day, Friday and Saturday evenings feature lavish galas with music, performance art, and a thousand people each all dressed up, feeling good, and talking about the art surrounding them. While much of the work is explicit,



▲ TOUCH GALLERY

much is also subtle, humorous, and sweetly sensual. You can find out more about the festival on their website: www.seattleerotic.org. This year SEAF will be April 24, 25, and 26th.

I've been attending SEAF since its first year, and it is one of my favorite events specifically because I've never seen another art show where people are so excited about the art and spend so much time with it. At the galas, most everyone spends hours circling the exhibits, picking out and voting on favorites, sharing their opinions and discussing artwork with both friends and strangers. In my history with SEAF, I've been part of a team of invited installation artists in 2010 (we won the People's Choice award that year for our peek-a-boo dollhouse), a juried artist for marble works in 2016, and an invited installation artist with Touch in 2018. This year I'm officially a Guest Festival Curator and will be partially curating the Touch Gallery with NWSSA members and partially jurying from SEAF submitters. We are limited to 12 pieces this year, and I encourage you to be a part of this!

If you want to have a sculpture in this show, you can email a photo of the work and the vital details to me at sirenicity@gmail.com by January 25th, 2020. Sculptures with interesting textures, nice curves, intriguing details, or exciting imagery are all encouraged. Figurative and abstract are both welcome. Because they will be handled, nothing too small or fragile



▲ ED SALERNO - 'OF THE SEA'

will be accepted. Artists will be invited to guide participants through the gallery and will receive free entry into the festival. This year we are expanding out of just stone to include other materials - so bronze, steel, fibers, felt, and/ or anything that delights and intrigues.



▲ WOODY MORRIS - 'REFLECTIONS IN TIME'



▲ JOCELYNE DODIER - 'MURMURE'



▲ SABAH AL-DAHER - 'ANCIENT EXPRESSION'



▲ BEN KIMURA - 'THE TORSO'

KING COUNTY PUBLIC ART IN THE PARKS

Marymoor Park gets its first two stone sculptures!

by Benjamin Mefford

December 2019 marked the culmination of more than four years of work to bring stone sculpture to the King County Parks system. It is with pride that I announce the installation of our first two sculptures for a rotating Public Art in the Park Exhibit managed by NWSSA. You should all recognize Seedling by Kirk McLean since we featured it on the cover of our latest November-December issue. If you've been to Freeland Studios on Whidbey Island you will also recognize Three Faces by Sue Taves, carved in red granite.

What is the Public Art in the Park exhibit?

These two plinths and sculptures mark the first step in a pilot project for NWSSA to manage a rotating public art exhibition in King County Parks. It has been developed with support from 4culture.org, and from the Community Partnership and Grants (CPG) program at King County Parks.

What is next?

This is a new project and we have designed it carefully for flexibility. We have moved slowly and maintained the ability to pull the plug at any point. Should this stage continue to be successful, in 2020 we expect to add five more plinths and sculptures for display at Marymoor Park. The locations have been pre-approved, and the concrete plinths are built and waiting on-site for installation. The main goals of this project are to provide the public with better access to stone



▲ 'THREE FACES', SUE TAVES, INSTALLED

sculpture (thereby building sculpture appreciation), support stone sculptors by creating a new exhibition venue, and to help artists sell work and gain public art experience. We anticipate rotating the exhibit every 1-2 years to keep it fresh and energetic.

How did we get here? What was the genesis?

Recognizing significant overlap between the goals of NWSSA and the goals of local parks, I embarked on a mission to combine our efforts on a mutual project. We saw many possibilities, but the one that kept gaining momentum was the idea of putting monumental stone sculpture in King County parks. As I aspire to build a career in public art, I realized that there are limited exhibition opportunities for large stone sculpture, that some NWSSA artists already had beautiful sculptures sitting in storage at their studios, and that we might be able to create a low-cost rotating public art exhibition by borrowing ideas from similar programs.

In 2015, I was in my second year as Symposium Director for Camp Brotherhood. I had invited King County Parks to send someone to see what NWSSA



▲ 'SEEDLING', KIRK MCLEAN, INSTALLED



▲ STEEL AND CONCRETE PLINTHS

is all about. At the last minute I got word that Scott Thomas, a CPG program manager for the parks, had received our invite and would be driving up to visit for the day. Scott was impressed. He understood what we were motivated by, and he has been a champion of this project the whole way.



▲ KIRK WITH SCULPTURE

In anticipation of eventually signing an agreement, I knew we needed financial support and applied for 4culture grant funding, for which NWSSA has been awarded \$9400 over a period of 4 years. We are extremely grateful for this support since it has allowed us to confidently move forward with development at Marymoor Park. As we steadily worked towards a signed agreement, receiving the 4culture funds helped launch other vital projects such as the Kubota Garden partnership, which to date has provided 300 youth with free stone sculpting experience. The Marymoor project was further made possible with direct financial support from the CPG program, which approved up to \$8000 for the anticipated material costs to build the steel topped concrete plinths. We borrowed advice and ideas from the Arts Council of Lake Oswego from their Gallery Without Walls rotating public art program, where we acquired knowledge about insurance and contracts and also got the idea for the steel plate tops. These tops will give our artists considerable flexibility when installing, requiring only that the sculpture arrive with an attached steel base that can be welded into place.



▲ SUE WITH SCULPTURE INSTALLED

Let's keep up the momentum!

This new venture offers the benefit of highlighting NWSSA members, promotes stone sculpture as a living medium, and enhances the community that we are a part of. There are several park managers interested in this project, and it was only due to its many advantages that we started with this one; Marymoor Park in Redmond is a beautiful venue with 640 acres and many accessible flat areas with good visibility, and it has a shocking 3 million visitors annually. In the long term, we hope to make sculpture sales and use the commissions to support program expenses and expansion.

I am so grateful to our many supporters in getting this project put together. Special thanks are due to Scott Thomas from King County Parks, Norah and David H. from Marymoor Park, and the Friends of Marymoor Park advisory committee. Ken Barnes and Pat Barton often joined me for site visits, meetings, and more to make this happen, and the rest of the NWSSA board has cheered us on. Ken did some additional work by getting an engineering consultation donated, and ordering the steel and welding anchors to embed in the concrete.

Of course, we owe an enormous Thank You to the contributing artists and installation helpers! In addition to Pat and Ken, Craig Breitbach was a big help on the site-prep and installation days, and Lloyd Whannell helped deliver Sue's sculpture. We put Sue's ample welding experience to work, and after all the sculpture shuffling we finally let Kirk take a break - at which point he promptly sat down and took a nap (pictured on back cover).





NWSSA
 P.O. BOX 27364
 SEATTLE, WA
 98165-1864

PRSR STD
 US Postage
PAID
 Bothell, WA
 Permit # 145

“If you can accomplish it by yourself, you aren’t thinking big enough”



▲ GOOD TEAM: LLOYD WHANNELL, KEN BARNES, KIRK MCLEAN, SUE TAVES, CRAIG BREITBACH

STONE SCULPTORS SUPPLIES SEBASTOPOL, CA

Pat & Karen are continuing their discounts on purchases by NWSSA members. 15% will be taken off all tool orders, BUT you must use Coupon Code: “NWSSA” when ordering either by phone or online.

This coupon cannot be used with any other discounts.

707-869-1021 or 707-869-1666.

Info@stonesculptorssupplies.com

YULE MARBLE FOR SALE

Large pieces of YULE MARBLE FOR SALE, irregular shapes, up to 2 tons each.

50 cents/lb. better deals on the larger pieces.

Tom Urban, tfurban@uoregon.edu

or text/call 541-912-2197

2020 CARVING CALENDAR

NWSSA Winter Party

February 8, 2020

Seattle Erotic Art Festival

April 24-26, 2020

4th Annual Women’s Hand Carving Retreat

June 5-7, 2020



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://www.stone-ideas.com>