

M.J. Anderson

acqua
pietrificata



Società Editrice Apuana



"I think of the stone as petrified water...

...water, life source, the well,

the well of a woman,

woman as vessel..."

In her most recent work, MJ Anderson has moved from the figurative to the metaphorical. Taking influence from the classical tradition with its literal depictions of the female form, much of her earlier work focused primarily on the torso.

Now Anderson doesn't so much as force her imagery on the stone; rather she uses a lighter hand to meld a marriage between the material's particular qualities and her imagery. She writes, "I think of the stone as petrified water...water, life source, the well, the well of a woman, woman as vessel..."

Having watched her work evolve over many years, I find this current body of work fuses her imagistic intent with a deep respect for the intrinsic characteristics of her material. There is a reason why an artist chooses a particular medium, not something neutral but one with which she can work in concert, each informing the other. Here, Anderson has chosen onyx as her medium, a departure from her earlier use of marble. Its natural transparency creates subtle shifts of color in different light, moving from green to gold. This characteristic lends itself perfectly to Anderson's aesthetic interpretation.

Her current work demonstrates a delicate balance between superimposing her will on the medium and a level of restraint which allows the potential of the stone to remain dynamic. Anderson's earlier work, which was more visceral and sometimes confrontational, stands in contrast to the fluidity and subtle beauty of these understated vessels. This new body of work quietly but powerfully invites the viewer to absorb it. With the exception of a few of the more obviously figurative pieces, those in this group are allusive. Although the titles are suggestive, the pieces engage the observer's imagination. In Anderson's earlier work the imagery itself was the focus, and in some cases the aesthetic properties of the stone were less obvious.

Now the work shows a confidence that allows the beauty of the stone to emerge. Their simplicity creates a powerful presence and evokes the feminine that this iconic shape suggests.

The variable coolness of color and the warmth of the striations throughout the stones remind me of the fluctuations in light and air and the fluid beauty of the North Oregon Coast where Anderson lives and works in her studio.

Susan Keizer,
January 2015



Artist Statement

Working in outside studios for 30 years on the Oregon coast and in Carrara, Italy, I am affected by the weather, time of day and seasonal changes. The drama and nuance of light are my constant companions and collaborators.

Similar to my approach with the figure, I am just as concerned with what a sculpture evokes as with how it appears. When I first encountered the striated layers of green onyx, I saw and felt water-- petrified water. As I cut, grind and polish the onyx, I am allowed to not only give form to the elements of air and water, mists and rain, but to connect with the ineffable, the cosmos within. As changing light combines with the translucency of onyx, an ethereal dynamic is at work. Just as the sea or river changes color with the weather or time of day, a sculpture may at times seem to glow from within or show itself as a bold opaque silhouette.



Acqua Pietrificata I
2011, Onyx, 9 x 10 x 6 inches



Acqua Pietrificata II
2011, Onyx w/ gold leaf, 9 x 7 x 7 inches



Acqua Pietrificata III
2011, Onyx, 9 x 9 x 6 inches



After the Rain,
2011, Onyx on rusted steel base, 15 x 10 x 5 inches



Per il Buco del Mare
2011, Onyx on rusted steel base, 15 x 9 x 7 inches



Profondo
2013, Onyx, 17 x 11 x 10 inches



Nebbia
2014, Onyx, 5 x 18 x 3 inches

Eyrie
2013, Onyx, 13 x 20 x 8 inches





Lightning Strikes Twice
2014, Onyx w/bronze leaf, 18 x 18 x 9 inches



When Water Was Sacred
2015, Onyx, 12 x 13.5 x 12 inches



Taking on Water
2015, Onyx, 10 x 26 x 9 inches



Vessel
2014, Onyx 16 x 10 x 9 inches



Embryo of Time
2015, Onyx, 22 x 12 x 11 inches



Cradle
2015, Onyx, 12 x 21 x 10 inches



The Whole Shebang
2015, Onyx, 17 x 17 x 15 inches

Bacino
2014, Onyx on marble base, 16 x 12 x 8 inches



The Last Oasis
2015, Onyx, 32 x 13 x 8 inches





M.J. Anderson *Born: 1953 in Portland, Oregon, United States of America*

Sculpting stone for over 30 years, M.J. Anderson selects marble, travertine and onyx from quarries and stone yards of Carrara, Italy, for her iconic figurative and abstract sculptures.

In addition to her pieces for gallery exhibition, Anderson works with designers and architects on public art commissions, as well as private and liturgical commissions. Recent projects include a pair of marble figures flanking the entrance to the Justice Center on Capitol Mall in Salem, Oregon, and a five ton marble sculpture, *Witness: Women of the Resurrection*, for Church of the Resurrection in Solon, Ohio.

M.J. Anderson has won numerous awards including a Pollack Krasner Grant, an Oregon Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship and The Ford Family Foundation Opportunity Grant. She has participated in symposia in Japan and Australia, has taught design and sculpture at Marylhurst University, Sitka Center for Art & Ecology and the Northwest Stone Sculptors Association. Her work is included in the collections of Providence Portland Medical Center, Museum of Northwest Art, and The Hallie Ford Museum, among others.

M.J. Anderson is represented by the Elizabeth Leach Gallery, Portland, Oregon.



www.mjandersonsculpture.com

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