

Sculpture Northwest

NORTHWEST STONE SCULPTORS ASSOCIATION

MAR/H/APRIL 2020

INSIDE

THE MONTANA
SPECIAL ISSUE

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT –

Adrian Hoye

Renda Greene

John Thompson



ADRIAN HOYE:
'PENGUIN OUT OF WATER',
SOAP STONE, 5" X 5" X 11"

The stone always said penguin to me, but in my haste - I must admit that sometimes I can be a little too forceful - I broke the feet off. I wanted to cast Penguin away, but my wife loves it. So it remains with us as a reminder that sometimes a softer touch is better.

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In This Issue



Artist Spotlight: Adrian Hoye ... 3



Artist Spotlight: Renda Greene ... 6



Artist Spotlight: John Thompson ... 9

Welcome to the Montana Special Issue of Sculpture NorthWest!

To honor their many contributions to the art of stone carving, we are taking the opportunity to present three NWSSA members in a single issue: Adrian Hoye, Renda Greene, and the ringleader of the gang, John Thompson (www.hobbyhorsearts.com). We are grateful to them for representing the stone carving community in Missoula, MT, and for sharing their work with us here.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: ADRIAN HOYE

I have always been a person who likes to take things apart and find what lies hidden inside. Maybe that is what draws me to carve stone: the idea that there is something within waiting to be released. I have been hesitant to call myself a sculptor. Sculptors are those other people. I do this as a hobby, but by creating sculptures I have slowly been able to accept the idea that yes, I am a sculptor.

This transformation has taken me most of ten years, about 18 sculpture symposiums, and about 30,000 miles of driving. Almost always, John Thompson, my friend and the person who started me down this path, has been right there in the truck helping with driving, loading, talking, and listening. Through the years, going to and coming home from these



▲ HONEY CALCITE, 'HONEY', 8" x 5" x 6"

From the moment I saw this stone it seemed finished. How could I do anything to it other than polish it, so that the fire from inside was able to shine out? Sometimes you can't improve what the stone is.



▲ ADRIAN IN THE NEW SHOP

camp, we have talked and dreamed; how could we start a studio, work stone year-round, feed off each other's ideas and excitement, and maybe even teach others?

Not long after returning from stone carving camp at Suttle Lake last August, the dream came true. This fall, a friend rented us a space. We now rent a two-thousand-square-foot heated space with good lighting, a large air compressor, and a forklift, all at a rate that two hobbyists can afford. It is still a work in progress, as our friend has run a business out of there for 30 years, so he is gradually sorting and moving his items out, but we are in, have started working, and are loving it. The studio has a nice room in the front in which we hope to develop a showroom and meeting area.

The transition into studio life brings anticipation of developing more detail in my work. Working primarily at symposiums has forced me to do sculptures that can be

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: ADRIAN HOYE *continued*

finished during the week there. Now I am looking at taking on more complex things that carving two to three times a week will allow me to finish. Currently, I am working on a piece of Montana marble. I am also trying my skills at facial detail on Colorado Marble. In addition, I have set up a Kansas limestone fence post. It is wonderful to have several pieces available to work on as the inspiration strikes.

This last year I transformed a landscape rock into an elephant and am excited to work more with so-called scrap rock. One of my favorite pieces from my past work is a vase formed from laminated scrap granite countertop. I hope to do more of this and even work on a water piece out of stacked countertop material.

I know that I would not be where I am today without all of the time spent at NWSSA stone carving symposiums. The friends I have met and learned from offer words of advice and the gifts of time, tools, and equipment. The process of carving is full of surprises, whether it is John Fisher teaching the art of profile carving, or MJ



▲ CARRARA MARBLE EEL, 'CALIFORNIA EEL', 12" x 3" x 8"

This was a shard from a sculpture that John Fisher carved at Cambria. We were asked to take a piece home and make something. At the point where the tail leaves the body you can just see the drill hole from that first carving session at Cambria.



▲ PYROPHYLLITE RABBIT, 'MOTHER AND BUNNY'

This is my second rabbit, very similar to the first, but much more demanding. The first was from a stone that was shaped like a rabbit. This one came from a rectangular stone, and I had to find the rabbit inside and then I realized that the baby was there also.

taking the time to stop my carving and have me put my tools aside, close my eyes, and place my hands on my sculpture to let my hands teach me what my eyes could not see. Try it—you will be surprised.

The future promises endless possibilities. Just imagine going from carving one or two weeks a year to carving two or three days a week! Ending the day of carving with a craft beer and a great friend—it doesn't get better than that.



▲ LIMESTONE FLORAL RELIEF, 'FLOWERS FOR NANCY'
10" x 10" x 1.5"

My first try at relief carving and it was fun. I still want to try more of this, but find myself carving in the round instead.



▲ KANSAS LIMESTONE FENCE POST, 'MUMMY', 9" x 8" x 34"

Sometimes you see something in a photo and say, that would be a nice statue. Also I felt that I was at a point that my skill would allow me to complete it. I did need some advice along the way, "Put your tools down and let your hands tell you if it looks right". Thanks MJ.



▲ LIMESTONE, 'CROC', 4" x 12" x 2"

This started as an off cut of a large piece that I was working on. After looking at it I decided that my grandson needed a croc for his bedroom, and to liven it up some I played with painting the eye. I loved it and want to do some more of this on other Limestone pieces.

KANSAS LIMESTONE POST, 'ADDRESS POST', 12 " x 8" x 32" ►

Friends asked me to carve an address post for their ranch. They have a brand and wanted that incorporated. This piece required me to free-hand the lettering. I also wanted to add the rope around the outside, and found that design to be quite easy... not so with the numbers.



▲ TEXAS LIMESTONE BIRD, 'PELICAN/BLUE HERON', 6" x 10" x 18"

This is my lesson on, "Knowing what you are carving, prior to carving". I wanted to carve a blue heron, but at a certain point realized what I had carved was much more like a Pelican. Sometimes the stone just has something else in mind.



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: RENDA GREENE

I can't remember a time when making art has not been a part of my life. My dad commented once that I was born with a pencil in my hand, and he did so much to keep those "pencils" around me.

In kindergarten, my favorite place was at the mini easels, spreading brightly-colored tempera on large sheets of newsprint. I wasn't satisfied with a single-colored finger painting, and insisted on three or four colors that I would mix and blend, and I would use more than just my fingers to find different textures. Sandbox time would have me creating large piles of packed, damp sand that I would carve into turrets, towers, and moats, using popsicle sticks taken from the art corner. My kindergarten teacher was a very tolerant woman.

All through school, I gravitated to classes and projects that allowed for my need to create. This was difficult sometimes, as we moved almost every year during my middle school and high school years. I was able to take art classes the last two years of high school and got my first taste of stone carving when I released a small seal from a block of soapstone.

It was no surprise to family and friends when I entered college as an art major. Finances dictated that I would



▲ RENDA WITH 'A GIFT FROM THE SEA-SHELL'



▲ PHOTO 1: 'HOUSE HUMPER', 12" x 8" x 9"



▲ PHOTO 3: 'A GIFT FROM THE SEA-SHELL', 28" x 9" x 11"
attend the local state school, though my father regretted that I didn't get training of a more classical nature. I worked on the basics. Drawing: walking into that first class was an eye opener—my first exposure to drawing nudes; Painting: we did not make our own paints, but we did stretch our own canvases; Ceramics: my preference was hand building, a choice that was encouraged by the instructor Rudy Autio; and Sculpture: stone was not part of the curriculum—the teacher was into "found" and "performance" pieces.

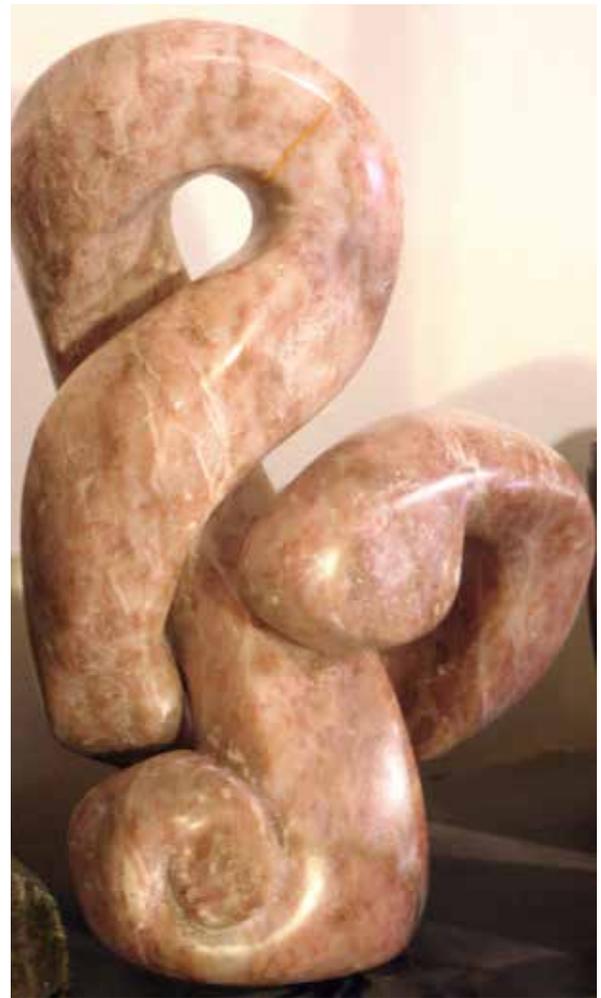
It was an Art for Elementary Education Teachers class that influenced me most in my philosophy about my art. The class

was not a required course for art majors, but it was taught in a space next to the painting studio, and I was fascinated listening to the lectures by the instructor, Richard Reinhardt. When I had the opportunity to take a few electives, I signed up.

Imagine sitting in a room with a bunch of young adults who probably hadn't picked up a paint brush since grade school. In walks a normal-looking guy in a sport coat, and the first thing he does is jump up on a table and tell us to do the same (this is 1984, mind you, long before Robin Williams and "Dead Poets Society"). As I already knew where this was going, I was the first up, and I gazed down at our soon-to-be teachers of children. Mr. Reinhardt told us to look around, and then asked us to take a seat on the floor and do the same. "Children," he said, "see from all perspectives and use all of their senses, a process we lose as we become adults." He then invited us to move about the area, viewing the space in different ways. Many students were still tentative, but over the next fifteen minutes, some were able to get over "looking stupid" and being uncomfortable and get very inventive with their "seeing". Over the semester, supported by several more insights from Reinhardt, most of these folks bloomed in their creativity. On the day of finals, we presented projects we had



▲ PHOTO 2: 'KITTERS', 18" x 6" x 6"



▲ PHOTO 4: 'IMPERFECT HARMONY', 16" x 9" x 11"

worked on in small groups. It was heartening to see so many ideas and so much diversity in one space.

I moved to Wyoming after graduation, with degrees in Fine Arts and Elementary Education and found myself unable to get a job in my chosen field, as I was overqualified. So I became an emergency medical technician and worked as a ward secretary in the local hospital. Both jobs kept me very busy. Still, I did find time occasionally to work on my art, and since the hospital was in a rural area with long drive times, my ability to think outside the box came in handy on difficult emergency calls. I did this for ten years and was beginning to feel the first twinges of burnout—not unusual in the profession. As often happens in life, an opportunity to move back to Missoula arose, and I jumped at the chance.

During a random perusing of an adult education course book, a beginning wood carving class caught my eye. I knew some carving techniques, but what really piqued my interest was that the class was taught at A Carousel for Missoula, one of my favorite places. The course was taught by Dick Withycombe and John Thompson, and after the completion of the ten weeks, I joined the Ponykeepers, the volunteer force

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: RENDA GREENE *continued*

behind the Carousel. As time went on, John reintroduced me to stone carving when he invited us to the studio in his home to see what he was working on (if you ever get the chance to do this, jump on it—pretty amazing space). It was John's enthusiasm for the stone carving symposiums that had me signing up for my first symposium at Silver Falls.

I did carve at that first symposium—honest, I did. But mostly I immersed myself in the senses of carving, reflecting back to that class in 1984. I watched others carve using so many techniques it was almost overwhelming. I learned the sounds a stone makes when it is nearing the breaking point during the splitting process. I smelled and tasted stone dust on a daily basis, and mostly I touched, feeling a variety of stone in various stages of carving. I became “hooked”. I even purchased a piece of soapstone, the first of many, to be carved at home in my backyard.

That first piece of soapstone became 'House Humper' (photo 1)—a play on words from a TV program I would watch occasionally. I had no clear plan other than that I wanted a small grotesque. I just listened to the stone as it told me what it wanted to be. If I found a curve to be pleasing to sight or touch, I expanded upon it and moved on. The filing, rasping, and sanding process helped to bring out more of the form, and when I did the final polish using bee's wax, the colors of the stone were much deeper and intense than the water test had shown. This piece was entirely handwork, and I still run my hands over it, feeling its essence and adding mine to its polish. It is important to me that people are able to touch my sculptures as I believe that they add to the work when they do.

My next piece, 'Kitters' - named by the present owner - (photo 2) is a basalt crystal. Kitters declared himself when I was walking through a landscaping stone yard looking for a piece of basalt to test out my new diamond cutting/grinding blade and polishing pads. I used a 4.5" grinder to do all of the work, but the final buff was done by hand.

'A Gift from the Sea-Shell' (photo 3) came about when I

became enamored with the colors and patterns in a piece of Italian leopard marble I discovered on Tom Urban's stone trailer. I sweated on this piece—quite literally. I used a myriad of tools, hand and powered, to bring out the shape the stone told me was within. As usual, the sanding and polishing process brought out far more color and nuances in the stone than I had observed in the back of the trailer, and at the finish of the project, so many people commented about how “hard that stone is”. Y'all couldn't have warned me earlier? Still, I wouldn't have done anything differently—it was a good stone to work with as I was healing from my heart surgery: A test to my resiliency.

My most-recently completed piece is 'Imperfect Harmony' (photo 4). I had a piece of alabaster sitting amongst my stone pile. The shape of a treble clef in a mobius form kept invading my thoughts, so when it was time to go to the 2018 Suttle Lake symposium, I brought it along and got started. It was pretty slow going, mostly because I was fighting health issues. The incomplete form came home with me to finish. I had a sense of urgency to complete it before November, because I was looking at heart surgery. Maybe that's why I wasn't listening to the stone and when one tap broke it into three pieces,

I put my hammer and chisel down, and walked away, leaving it on my carving table. There it remained, while I moved on to getting through the surgery and the recovery afterwards. I passed it several times a day, working on other projects. Recently however, it called to me, and the stone told me to get on with it. I decided to use kintsugi to complete it. I found some gold “dust” and mixed it into epoxy and fit the pieces back together. Once they set up, I was able to file, rasp, and sand the stone into its finished form. After I polished

it, the gold seams are barely visible, but they are there, and I'm ok with that.

I look forward to the future. John Thompson and Adrian Hoyer have opened a stone carving space. Perhaps one day I'll be able to join them. I feed off the energy of other carvers, locally, and at NWSSA symposiums. It's all part of the process— so much stone to carve, so many lessons to learn.

Renda Greene



▲ 'JOY', 9" x 6" x 7"



▲ ROOMMATES AT CAMP - SHERI TANGEN, RENDA GREENE AND SUE QUAST.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: JOHN THOMPSON

AND NOW THERE BE STONE.....

For the last 25 years I have been sculpting and carving almost daily, but I came to this via a love of art and rocks in my childhood and then intaglio etching. I did the formal education thing, getting a Bachelor of Arts. I tried many things: drawing, painting, ceramics and photography. I have a 2000-pound etching press that was my artistic outlet, and for several decades I was a printmaker. Then an opportunity opened up, and now the press sits with dust on it and I am a dedicated and happy sculptor.

My introduction to sculpting came through wood carving. I began by drawing the horses that were to become the wooden ponies for the Missoula Carousel Project in 1991. I was the carousel "artist" with the opportunity to help design the more than forty carousel critters. I couldn't resist the lure of carving and joined in the efforts to create the horses as well as designing them. I was hooked. Great carousels always have a ring machine to allow the riders to get the brass ring, and I decided ours needed to be a dragon. Since the carousel's inception, I have added a 6' x 6' square Indiana limestone relief sculpture to the outside of the carousel building.

In 2008, I attended a stone sculpture symposium in Marble, Colorado and put a chisel to a piece of marble. WOWZA!! Since then, I have participated in a number of other symposiums—Silver Falls, Suttle Lake, California Sculpture—where I have taught wood carving and learned more about stone carving. Through these events, the NWSSA has been a great connection to amazing folks with a vast treasure trove of knowledge and skills. It is a wonderful gift that these people are all willing to share their knowledge and love of stone work.

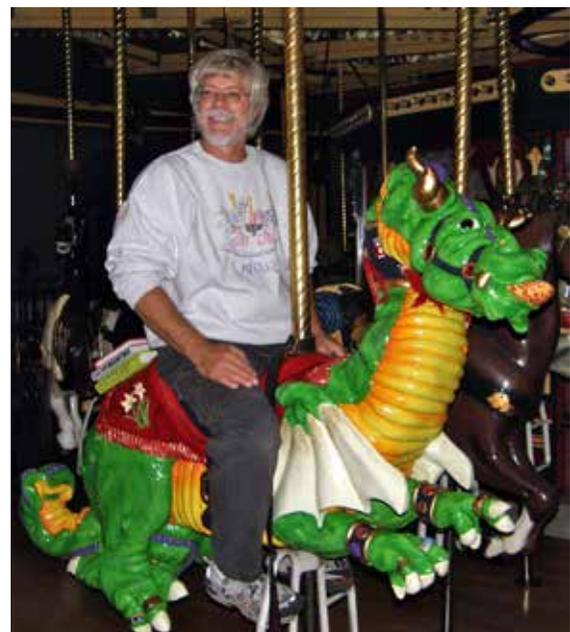
To sculpt year-round in Missoula, Montana requires an indoor space, and so the Stone Studio came to life. My good friend and fellow sculptor Adrian and I found a space that was perfect for the need. With some great tools acquired (thank you Rick), we are busy making stone dust. I have discovered that my wood carving skills are applicable to stone. I go back and forth between marble, limestone, alabaster, and soapstone and am not sure which is most enjoyable. I have a love of hand tools, but find the air hammer and Dremel are my preferred methods at this time. I'm currently using the Dremel for detail carving.

My work with the carousel influences my stone carving. I love whimsy and humor. I like to make fun critters, real or imagined, and my wood carving has morphed into dragons and funny birds and funky creatures. I carve rocking critters for family, and upon commission, am now going to try to make a marble rocking critter from Carrara marble (thank you Carl). I don't lack for ideas. I move from project to

project. Some are simply to learn a skill and will not ever be a finished piece. There is always something either to learn or that needs to be created, and I "art" daily.

The work I did for and on the Missoula Carousel is my legacy to my children and grandchildren. As the first hand-carved wooden carousel created in the United States in 60 years, it is the largest public art project in the state of Montana. It was the inspiration for over fifteen other new carousel projects across the country. It also has been a tremendous inspiration to hundreds of people that they too can create and be artistic.

I enjoy teaching and sharing the skills I have. I have had the privilege to teach at many workshops and schools and have passed on the skills and wisdom from others who have taught me. I want everyone to see the value and joy of art in the world. It is my belief that if we are making Art, we will be happier and better people.



▲ 'SCAFI AND ME' ACTUAL SIZE (I AM ABOUT 5'7")

Scafti was designed and carved for the Missoula Carousel. It is the last critter I carved that will ride the carousel in Missoula. It was created after I had carved the dragon for our ring machine. The ring machine dragon is about 9 feet long and sits in a hand carved tree so that the riders reach for the brass ring as they are riding. As I was carving the ring-dragon, kids would want to know when they could ride it. Well who wouldn't want to ride a dragon? Thus, Scafti happened. Scafti was carved from laminated basswood, all with hand chisels and gouges. It was painted by some of the carousel's other great volunteers. I am proud to say it soon became one of the favorite critters on the carousel.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: JOHN THOMPSON *continued*



▲ 'GUTTER GOYLE'
L 29" X H 8.5" X D 10"

This was carved from a piece of Kansas limestone fence post. I cut a channel in the bottom for the gutter with an angle grinder and chisels. I then roughed out the critter with an air hammer. It was "finished" with hand chisels, files and scrapers. It sits proudly in the flower bed waiting for rain.



▲ 'COLUMN FRAGMENT' L 10" X H 8.25" X D 7.5"

This is carved from Wenatchee soapstone. I try to convince folks that it is something I found on one of my trips to Europe and managed to bring it home hidden in my carry-on. I really enjoy looking at all the fragments and minute carvings that all of our previous stone artists have left us to find. The critter design on this piece is from a sketch of some carvings I saw on a cathedral wall in France. It was carved with hand chisels and files.



▲ 'STONE HINGE', L 9" X H 6" X D 5"

This was carved from a piece of Wenatchee soapstone as a demo-piece for one of my workshops I was teaching in Washington. It of course happened after a trip to England—not sure what the inspiration was. The hinge is painted with acrylic, and the stone was painted with a clear wax and a tinted floor wax.



▲ 'SLEEPY DRAGON-BORING BOOK'
L 22" X H 14" D 14"

This is a piece of Colorado marble. I was able to attend the symposium at Marble, Colorado last summer. I actually had a plan of what I was going to carve. Yep—registered late and the stone I needed was not available. I chose a different, smaller stone, and after an afternoon of playing with my air hammer, this critter started appearing. This stone was in the truck with us as we drove to Suttle Lake a couple weeks later. So I worked on it there too. It followed me to our new carving studio in Missoula. I have been carving and finishing it up in our new digs. I am working with air hammer and using the Dremel for detail carving.



◀ 'CAROUSEL LIMESTONE PANELS'
L 6' X H 6' X D 2.5"
AND RELIEF

Photo of me working on the panels at the carousel. Life size. I am 5'7" tall (taller when I am on the ladder, shorter when I am sitting down)

▼ LIMESTONE RELIEF 'CRITTER'
L 12" X H 12.25" X D 1.25"

This was a practice piece out of Indiana limestone started before I was to carve the relief carving for the carousel. It was carved using my small air hammer and hand tools. I am finishing it up with the Dremel and some scrapers.



I was able to convince the other folks on the carousel advisory board that we should have a "small" limestone panel on the outside of our new addition to the carousel building. I thought something about the carousel might be good. I told them we could probably find someone willing to do the carving. Yep! I roughed out the six individual panels (Indiana limestone) in the garage studio using my air hammer and chisels. We then installed the panels on the building and I "finished" carving them in place. This was to let folks watch and advise (tell me what I was doing wrong). It was carved using air hammer and hand chisels, files, scrapers. It was a very enjoyable project. I could pick my and my grandkids' favorite critters from the carousel to carve. It is also very humbling when I walk by the building and see where I could improve and tweak the carving. Well who knows—I still have my tools and may do some after-hours work.



In April, I will be getting a 3600-pound piece of Carrara marble delivered (thanks Carl). That should help keep me off the streets and out of trouble.

◀ *We are pretty excited and are now carving stone about three days a week. It is a work in progress but already proving to be a great space. We are not sure where this is going, but it sure is going to be fun.*





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▲ JOHN THOMPSON - 'PROMETHEUS DRAGON'
L 12.5" X H 9.5" X D 7.5"

This was carved from Wenatchee soapstone using hand tools and files. This was carved as a sample for a workshop I was teaching. I wanted to try to get more detail in the soapstone carvings folks were doing.