

About the sculptures by Don Porcaro that are exhibited at RagARTz 2021 and his full bio

“My work over time has consistently explored the nature of human interaction with the physical world through references to architecture and man-made objects. Tools, utensils, buildings and machines eventually become artifacts, archaeological sites and cultural signifiers. I have been inspired by ancient ruins, but equally inspired by the whimsical qualities inherent in animation and contemporary culture, which stand at the cusp of what I refer to as “the monster and the child,” something purely fictional and innocent that informs our youthful imagination. My *Talisman* and *Everybody Knows* series brings together many of these interests, but with an emphasis on totemic iconography and the human form through the building up and layering of stones. This layering alludes to the accumulation of geological time as well as cultural history, while the feet firmly place the sculptures in the realm of figuration. The brass fixtures make up a complex array of visual associations that bring to mind everything from Venetian perfume atomizers, to Buddhist stupas and African jewelry.

I cut and carve the stones in my studio in New York. Each layer you see has been cut on a water saw, and then polished by hand and stacked one on top of the other to create the final form. It's a long and laborious process, but one that allows me the flexibility to remain open to adjusting the piece as I go along. This is something you cannot do when carving from a single block, which is reductive rather than additive. There are steel rods that hold the layers together and they all come apart and are re-assembled in place in order to make transportation easier.

I work with marble and stone from around the world, including the United States, Italy, India, Brazil, Israel, Spain, Portugal and China. But the marble I like to work with the most comes from Carrara because of its fine granular structure and its ability to hold a defined edge. It's easy to understand why great carvers like Michelangelo chose to work with Carrara marble.

But I am not a stone carver in the traditional sense. I am more aligned with an artist like Bernini who as a builder and architect, constructed with stone. His la Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi in Piazza Navona in Rome has always been a source of inspiration, not only because of the way he stacked the stone blocks to create mass and form, but the way he combined history with mythology, placing a 3000-year old Egyptian obelisk on top of the figures of the four seasons. In my own way, I use



stone to express my interest in humanity's imprint on nature, the passage of time, both geologic and historic, and the mythologies we ascribe to our monuments.

I always like to include a layer or two at least of a dark stone as a reference to geological sedimentation, just as one would see in a cross section of an exposed cliff. In the newest work, "Everybody Knows #4" I was inspired by Plato's Symposium and our search for our perfect other half. The two halves at the bottom of the piece merge and spiral upwards as they form a singular column that is ultimately crowned at the top. It's a way of articulating our striving ever upwards for unity and integrity.

The other two works, *Talisman 1* and *Talisman 19* have many of the same qualities as the other piece but with an emphasis on whimsy and a sense of impending movement. With their multi-pedaled bases, they appear ready to roam."

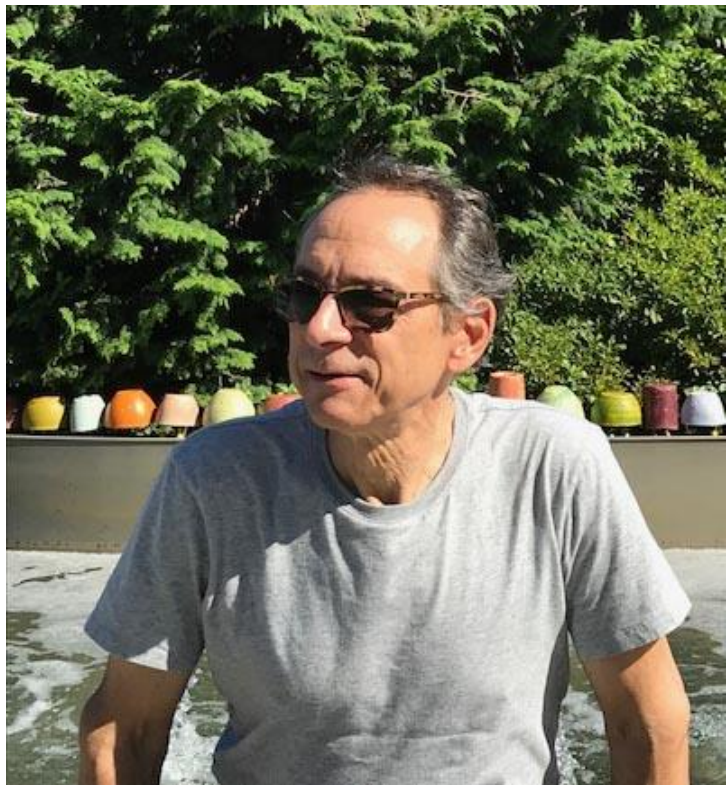
Don Porcaro, spring 2021

Biography:

Don Porcaro was born in New Jersey to an Italian American family. One of his earliest memories is of visiting his mother's uncle and his brother who, after they came to the US opened a stone yard in Connecticut. Seeing all the stones, mostly monuments and grave stones stacked up made a deep impression on him.

This impression didn't find its outlet however until many years later when he took a sculpture class in college and he can say that from the first time he cut a piece of stone, he knew that it felt right. It fed a driving need to work with a material that speaks to tradition and he knew that that tradition belonged to his culture.

Don Porcaro received his BA in Fine Arts. He majored first in music, and then theater and lighting design before finally finding his true passion in studio art. He earned his MFA in Sculpture from Columbia University.



While he was in his final year at Columbia, he was hired by Parsons School of Design to set up a new sculpture facility. He eventually became Professor and Chair of the Fine Arts Department and retired in 2018 to be Professor Emeritus.

In 2011 Don Porcaro was chosen as the U.S. representative at the 50th Forma Viva International Sculpture Symposium in Portoroz, Slovenia. At the end of the 5-week symposium, his piece, Eros, a 3 ½ -meter stacked sculpture carved from Croatian marble, was installed in the center of town along the waterfront.

In 2017 he was commissioned by the New Jersey Transit Authority to build a public sculpture for their newly renovated Jersey Avenue Lite Rail station in Jersey City.

Don Porcaro has exhibited nationally and internationally and was represented in New York City by Kouros Gallery for 19 years where he had 8 solo shows.

Museum exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial, NYC; the Monaco Sculpture Biennial, Monaco, France; D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts in Springfield, Massachusetts; Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art in NY; Visual Arts Center of New Jersey; and the University Museum of Florida in Gainesville; among others.

His work has been reviewed in The New York Times, Art in America, Artnews, Art and Antiques, BOMB, NY Newsday and Newsweek, to name a few, and in 2007 he was the subject of a featured profile in Sculpture Magazine.

In 2018 he was awarded a prestigious Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant, was inducted into The National Academy of Design, and elected member of American Abstract Artists.

Don Porcaro lives and works in New York City with his wife who is also an artist.