



PAGES OF AN EVOLUTION

SCULPTURES BY JON ASLAK FINTLAND

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PAGE 14/07

ABOUT RISING AND FALLING

ARTIFACT

NEW YORK, JULY 8 - 26, 2014

Evolution and Metamorphosis in the Work of Jon Aslak Fintland

As we explore the remarkable stone sculptures by Jon Aslak Fintland, we see that they contain a level of resistance that removes them from merely agreeable work that purports to detail quotidian activities in a sensitive way. The formal qualities, that is the artist's articulation of volume and mass in space, arise out of a primary intention to wed universalizing tendencies and containing impulses. They are engendered through the artist's firm realization of sculptures' expressive capacities. These somewhat antithetical desires lend a note of intensity to his overall oeuvre, which also includes wood sculpture.

It is quite clear that Jon Aslak Fintland has involved himself with the careful scrutiny of the world of nature around him. Hours of meticulous observation have evidently been taken in for the artist to capture natural landscape from various vantage points of his native Norway. His work involves a fragile synthesis: it draws together his powers of observation as well as those of his singular intelligence. Together they re-construct and interpret the world through the creative action of his imagination.



JON ASLAK FINTLAND

What is most evident however in Fintland's sculptures is that while Nature is used as the key source it is also seen as the manifestation of a unifying spirit that precedes and often precludes the observer. It is in a word a transcendent reality removed from the everyday, away from the prosaic. The here and now is made otherworldly and eternal. The tradition of nature inspired art involves the premise that versimilitude or mimetic reality is the basis upon which we experience the sense of self. The eye then is the great Overseer; it lays down the law of what is considered "real" or not. This Law of the Real dominates over the emotions or pure sensations.

One of the keys to appreciating Fintland's work is to see how it courses through these simultaneous and conflicting intentions. The primary qualities of permanence and energy implicit in the artist's realm of the imaginary are no less extraordinary than his commitment to the somber realm of order related to the natural environment. In such works as *Worm*, *Female*, *Zig Zag III* the artist refers to natural shapes and structures which reside in a world of hybridity subject to laws of growth and mutation.

In the artist's vision where the symbolic and the real co-incide in a profusion of engendered space we see patterns that seem to spawn tirelessly as the great powers of abstracted form and the infinite resources of the imaginary. Thus, the artist's artwork can be characterized as a desire to find space by a series of interrogatory, and purposefully contradictory impulses: a setting up of generalized aspects of life of forms within their own space.

Meshed within this overriding motif is the artist's veneration of biomorphic form and texture with visionary minimalism of stone structures which can only be said to emerge out of understanding of the inner workings of nature. But it would also be accurate to say that Fintland's vision has an emotional undertone, which gives the artist's work its edgy feel, its haunting authenticity.

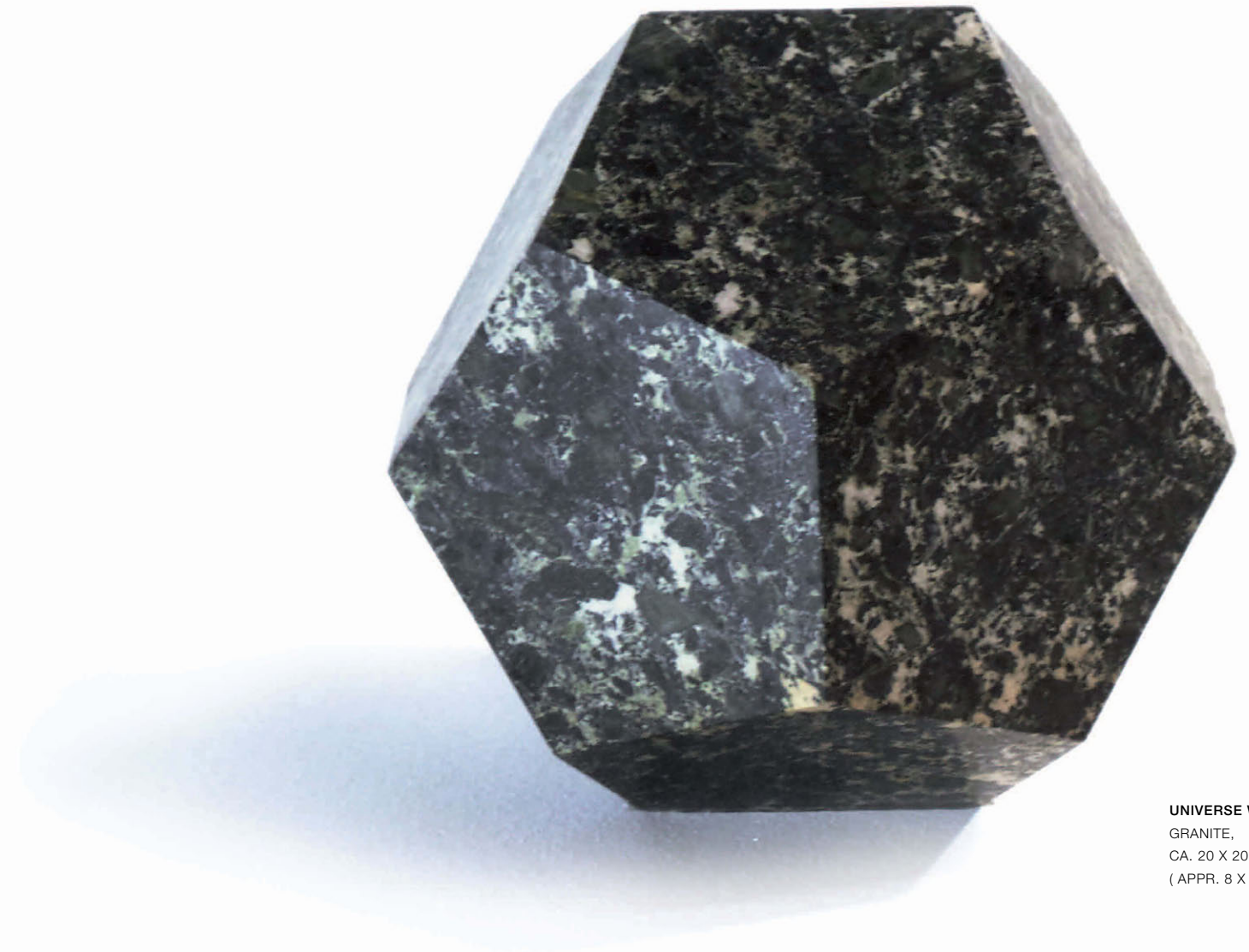
The viewer will also discern through Fintland's visual notations that the artist is concerned with the great theme of mutation and metamorphosis in contemporary art. In the broad sense, the artist uses his material very much as a sheet of paper as a type of

mystic writing pad which, if we are to believe Freud, becomes a model of the psyche. Thus, Fintland successfully mines the principle of juxtaposing two different realities that allow the mind to find integration in dissimilarity, in a dramatic cathartic interchange of natural and man-made worlds that blend the symbolic, the real and the imaginary.

Jon Aslak Fintland's delicate stone amalgamations with their carefully modulated surfaces are the product of a systematic and scrupulous eye. They bear down on two primary impulses. The first is a response to the complex entanglements of the natural world. The second is a celebration of the mysteriousness in the web of intricacies that keeps it together.

by John Austin

EVERYTHING
WAS JUST ONE



UNIVERSE WITHIN A STONE
GRANITE,
CA. 20 X 20 X 20 CM
(APPR. 8 X 8 X 8 IN)

WORMS I (MASCULINE)
BLACK GRANITE, 2007-2012
CA. 60 X 30 X 20 CM
(APPR. 24 X 12 X 8 IN)



WORMS II (FEMININE)
BLACK GRANITE, 2007-2012
CA. 50 X 30 X 20 CM
(APPR. 20 X 12 X 8 IN)



FOR SECONDS ...

FEMALE
RED QUARZITE, 2004
CA. 40 X 50 X 35 CM
(APPR. 16 X 20 X 14 IN)



CAME DUALITY

PHALLUS
RED QUARZITE, 2010-2013
CA. 120 X 30 X 30 CM
(APPR. 48 X 12 X 12 IN)



IN PROSPECT OF

MAMA
ELM WOOD, 2009
CA. 55 X 65 X 45 CM
(APPR. 55 X 65 X 45 IN)





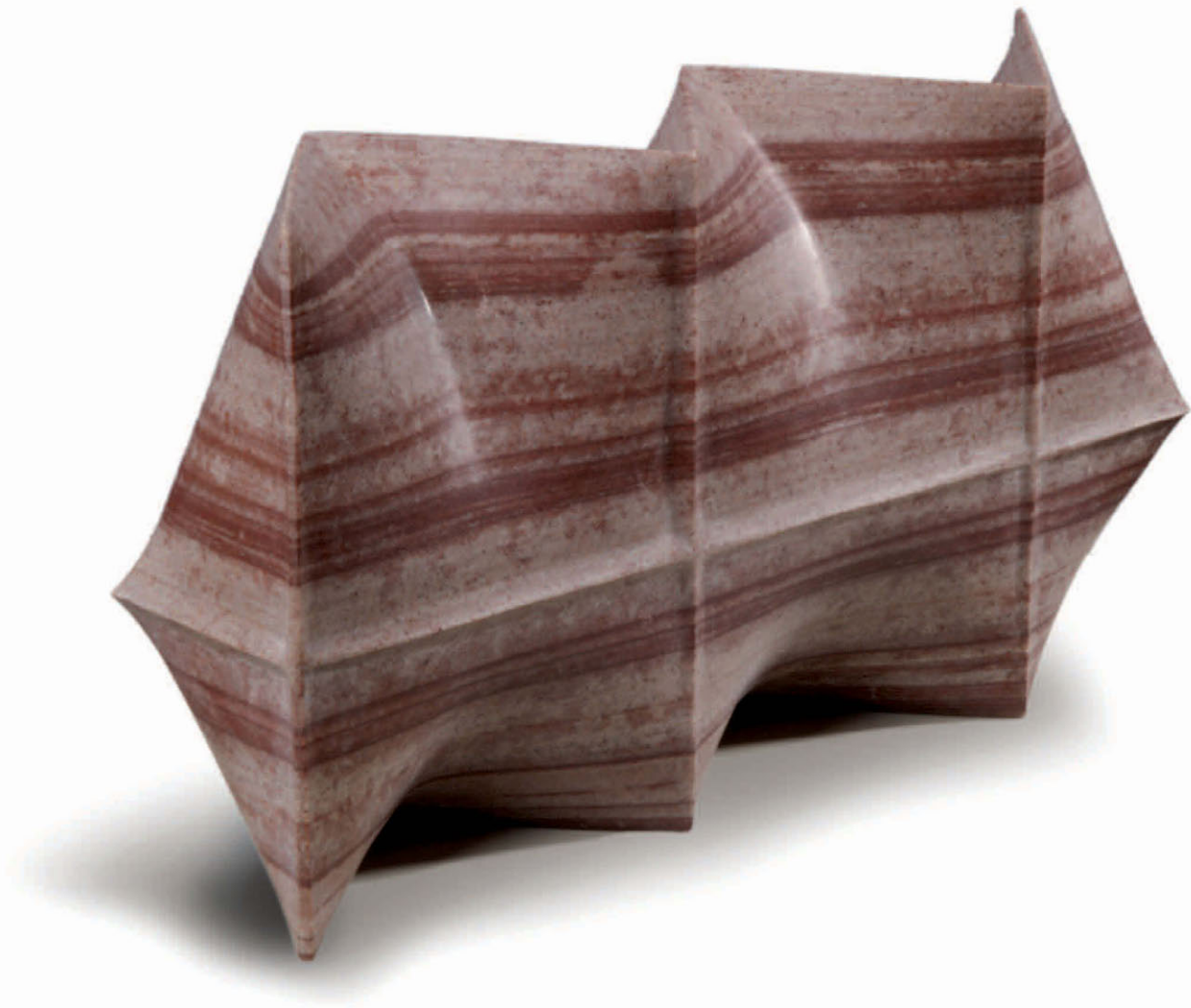
NEST
BLACK GRANITE, 2007
CA. 25 X 40 X 40 CM
(APPR. 10 X 16 X 16 IN)

COME AWAY



STUDIES FOR BIOMORPH THEME
MARBLE, 2008
CA. 10 X 15 X 10 CM
(APPR. 4 X 6 X 4 IN)

A JOURNEY WITHIN A FRAMEWORK
RED QUARZITE, 2004
CA. 40 X 60 X 20 CM
(APPR. 16 X 24 X 8 IN)



ON A JOURNEY



CARAVAN
BEECH WOOD, 2000
CA. 35 X 55 X 15 CM
(APPR. 14 X 22 X 6 IN)

MONUMENTAL FORM
GRANITE, 2005
CA. 75 X 15 X 15 CM
(APPR. 30 X 5 X 5 IN)

MANHATTAN
MARBLE, 2005
CA. 80 X 30 X 30 CM
(APPR. 32 X 12 X 12 IN)

WITHIN ACTIVE TRANSFORMATION



ZIGZAG III
GNEISS, 2014
CA. 25 X 60 X 25 CM
(APPR. 10 X 24 X 10 IN)

NO WAY OUT?



HEAD I
ELM WOOD, 1995
CA. 30 X 80 X 60 CM
(APPR. 12 X 32 X 24 IN)

HEAD II
ELM WOOD, 1995
CA. 30 X 45 X 35 CM
(APPR. 12 X 18 X 14 IN)

ESSENTIAL CORE BE PROTECTED



CORE
BLACK GRANITE, 2005
CA. 30 X 50 X 35 CM
(APPR. 12 X 20 X 14 IN)



SHELTER
GNEISS, 2004
CA. 50 X 60 X 30 CM
(APPR. 20 X 24 X 12 IN)

FATE ...



FATE
GNEISS, 1999
CA. 30 X 40 X 30 CM
(APPR. 12 X 16 X 12 IN)

COMING TOWARDS YOU.



PILLOW
WHITE MARBLE, 2005
CA. 25 X 35 X 15 CM
(APPR. 10 X 14 X 6 IN)

As long as I remember, something in me was always triggered to figure out one single question: *Who am I? – Above the skeleton there is blood and muscles; I am a compact upright organism and almost a thinking organization. Another level of mine is something cellular responding to extroverts. It is not convenient and I might not ask. But I do: Am I just a part of something much bigger moving onwards in space rapidly? Hello; is a anybody out there – god (somehow?) And right now; something definitely invisible to my eyes; are they some kind of parasites crawling around in multitudes eating me up from inside, or from outside? Or is the other way round, am I a parasitic system while my body – but also my mind – is constantly digesting stimulus from the world outside and I can't figure it out – Who am I?*

The world outside my body ...

Who are we? We (so called) human beings who are living on this strange but beautiful planet! And I the artist! Who am I? Very often, I muss confess, I had this most peculiar feeling to be just a rover or vagabond passing by ... So, who am I the artist to ask questions! Have I discovered, in my life, anything at all that gives me a solemn right to present *my point of view*?

Those sculptures I have done over the years ... It might be a contradiction, but I like to put it like this: For me they somehow came out of darkness ... and remain hidden in darkness. Although I know – when I look back – my intense discussion with the material and my passionate commitment is not compatible with this strong *something* inside me trying to reduce it. As if just something subconscious was going on in my mind.

When I look back! Nothing I have experienced is sensational. I just happened to be one of those who could not stop thinking that life on earth could be *a better place* although it surely was true that we were driven out from the Garden of Eden. So what do these sculptures of mine represent? Were they meant to be art, originally created and designed for significant meaning?

How on earth did it all start up? Just a few years earlier in my life it was way beyond my imagination. But then I was driven to it.

I'm sure biographical data to a certain degree can explain *how* things happened, but I very much doubt whether they can explain *why* ...

Spread all along the southern coast of Norway, these small towns once played their important role even in European history. But later! Like tumbling in backwater, I grew up in one of those towns. Today I realize it was a typical one. With all these religious matters playing their part! And therefore – far away from the capital Oslo in the east and light-years away from all that vibrant living in central Europe – there were no reasons that I should have any special interest in art. Ergo, the next years went on in Oslo for the sake of theology studies, not for art. Well, things happened and, to make the story short; the day finally came when I quit that line of study without finishing it. One year later I found myself working on the oilrigs outside the Norwegian coast. It was

a good job with plenty of free time in Oslo during my off days.

But...! Was that my entire future? I asked myself. Had a feeling of being in a wasteland.

Was it fate? Two years later I left Oslo and rented a little farmhouse close to my hometown, and while there, out of the blue, the possibility popped up to study art history at the folk university. My first consideration was: Why should I with no special interest in fine art, study its history? After some hesitation I decided my curiosity was *enough*. And I signed up for the course.

All of a sudden my life had changed. I remember that day very clearly. I was sitting turning pages in a heavy encyclopedia on history of art. Holding the book in my hands, I turned to the *next page*. In the photo, I saw *the* sculpture – and the world was never the same again: It was Recumbent Figure 1938 by Henry Moore. From the very first minute, this sculpture touched me

deep inside – I was stunned, perplexed, overwhelmed, enlightened, illuminated, educated...! (In the long run all words are inaccurate.) But most of all, I was convinced – and it was so obvious what I had to do next. My life had turned into something completely and radically new.

Why this sudden urge to involve myself, with such a dedication, in the making of art! I don't know. I just went on, self-taught, without any heed of the difficulties, sculpting totally on my own. The first years they always came out of wooden materials. Later also stones were used. Sculpture after sculpture. I was haunted by this beast from inside – so I think today – always hungry and very impatient to see development ... A quest for something unknown, far beyond my normal understanding? I don't know. I just carried on and on, full of hunger to see what was around the next corner – what unspeakable saying would the next sculp-

ture shout out by just being there – by coming into evidence ...

Looking back on my earlier works, keeping an eye on those produced most recently, I believe they originate from this constantly shifting observation tower inside of me.

The way I most typically worked was simply to see tiny parts of its shape and structure because it was all inside of me, telling a story without words and still laying in darkness. Step by step, in the process of modeling with test material, I gradually turned out more of the shape – enough to picture the stone or wood I needed.

Or it was the other way round. For example, once I found a very special stone, the process started up. Completely drawn to sculpt this particular stone and to connect to the history I felt within it, I was absorbed and challenged to find – not *a* solution but *the* solution. It was an absolute demand. In contrast to those

working within fields of science, working from theoretical models based on their undeniable and therefore not questionable theorem: In order to solve a problem there might be more than one acceptable solution.

If I challenge myself to tell about the origin of just one work...! When I discovered the stone with its special structure I was convinced that this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity (later proved to be incorrect because this particular sort of stone until then was out of my focus) In principle I had the liberty to sculpt almost anything out of it... So, over a long period of time I tried and I tried by drawing, making models, or simply trying to imagine how the final work should look. Haunted by frustration I was not able to find the solution that gave me the feeling: This is it, go! ... One day, by an impulse, I went down to the basement, fetched the garbage bags containing plenty of old models, and emptied them on the floor. Many of the models were indeed garbage. *Then I saw it*. I immediately recognized this model on the floor. It was originally designed for another occasion but left aside. It was what I had searched for all that wasted time. Then all went fast. Now I had the frame. Within that frame I could fill in the details. And actually, after a few hours I knew how I should carve my beloved stone and thereby bring it to life. And I knew for certain beyond rational reason – it was *the* solution!

One aspect of that particular work of mine has made me think over and over about *one philosophical question*; the relation between the frame we're all inside and our desperate need to feel free. Somehow – out from this work on it's own, and through the way it came to exist – I recognized that real freedom is a pure illusion without existing within its frames. Whatever these frames are, they are dynamic ...

Some time it happens that art gets a reputation of being *real art*. Whatever *that* might be, it seems to spring out from something that cannot be exactly defined; given names like intuition, skill or instinct.

So what is art? At least it is paradoxical.

I had no statistic evidence on my side when I, as artist, put all my

REFLECTIONS : UNFILTERED

effort in finding the one and only solution for a piece of work. And stories parallel to mine – have clearly been used to affix a certain mythology to art. But is it the complete picture? *What is art?* ... This story based on my own, is *both typical and not typical* ... And therefore I ask: Is art the intellectual place where the lines of our human experience cross each other in an exceptional way ...

Because our human soul is paradoxical...! It is an ongoing intersection of unconsciousness, subconsciousness and consciousness. Is that what art is all about? To identify the nature of those crossing lines and work out its body ...

(might it be ... an archi-sculptural human body? Even if ... that Tower of Babel just had to be torn apart...!) (I can't stop asking)

And so I believe: Art is not the only truth. But it is true. As Oscar Wilde once wrote in one of his novels: *All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their own peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their own peril.*

Is it inappropriate to suggest that within my own production there has been development, although not evident by following strict lines of chronology? And therefore – beyond my control, *but also because I deserve it* – can my works nevertheless as art contribute and deliver a meaning! Make a difference to someone just because they were exposed to it ...

pages of an evolution ... works by a vagabond on a journey ... showing page 14/07 in New York

The Americans are different ...

Even though many originate from Europe, they do their own thing. Their hearts refuse to settle down and at least some of them still believe in dreams to pursue. How naive they can be, (we Europeans think) how unwilling to admit that they have something to learn from us about history and culture... (we like to think) Is it better to apologize for them ... (we ask) Because we know that old story, they don't (we believe) ... *Those vagabond souls with two bare hands; when they picked up something on the road, they let go what they had and hoped that what they had found was better.*

Showing page 14/07 in ...

I like to think like that: Some part of my vagabond soul is mixed with the blood that New York's big heart is pumping; in all directions. And although I found that not everything can be achieved through art because it simply is not possible, I found my progress – it is dynamic and unable to stand still. Evolution is the essential heart in all of it ...

I am not in position to judge the value or the potential of my own works. What I do know is that this opportunity provided in a gallery in New York will just provide some limited aspects among others possible. I hope that the final selection nevertheless will enable to exhaust the bigger potential in each sculpture; that they can speak for themselves, whether they will be viewed as singular works or recognized as parts of an entity.

Recognized as parts of an entity...! Then I have to insist that the works to be shown in the gallery in another way as those presented in the catalogue represent *one page*. The exact title in the gallery is: *Page 14/07. (About rising and falling.)* This does not mean that the exhibition must be regarded exclusively as thus indicated in the title, but can be regarded from such an angle. The works presented in the catalogue will hopefully be recognized as *pages of an evolution*, left to the circumstances that they are selected representatives produced over a relatively long period of time.

I hope that this way – this double view – will not be regarded as an obstacle, but instead accomplish this something extra, and be an incentive for the audience to have a closer look on each singular work in the gallery!

Then it might happen that some works will reveal some of their secrets; through stories and knowledge unknown to the artist but not to the visitors?



Jon Aslak Fintland

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