

The Carving of *We Two*



Angela Treat Lyon

The Carving of *We Two*

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Why this ebook?

People ask me time and again how I do my carvings. So - this is to show you one of the ways I carve a piece. It differs according to the type of stone, the tools and the equipment I have on hand.

I hope you enjoy seeing this piece move from a sketch on blank stone to finished and polished sculpture!

Angela Treat Lyon

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Is this ebook printable?

This ebook is meant to be seen and read on your computer or other e-device. You can print it out, but the images are so low resolution I doubt they will look great. And you'll probably use up forty boxes of black ink in the bargain!

PLEASE NOTE: Due to some pretty sneaky tactics by artists in a particular country, who feel that the word 'copyright' means they have the right to copy an artwork, I must include this: only I have the right to use the images and to sell the sculptural work in this book. It does not mean anyone else has the right to copy or sell it!

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The Carving of *We Two*



This is what the finished stone sculpture, *We Two*, looks like.

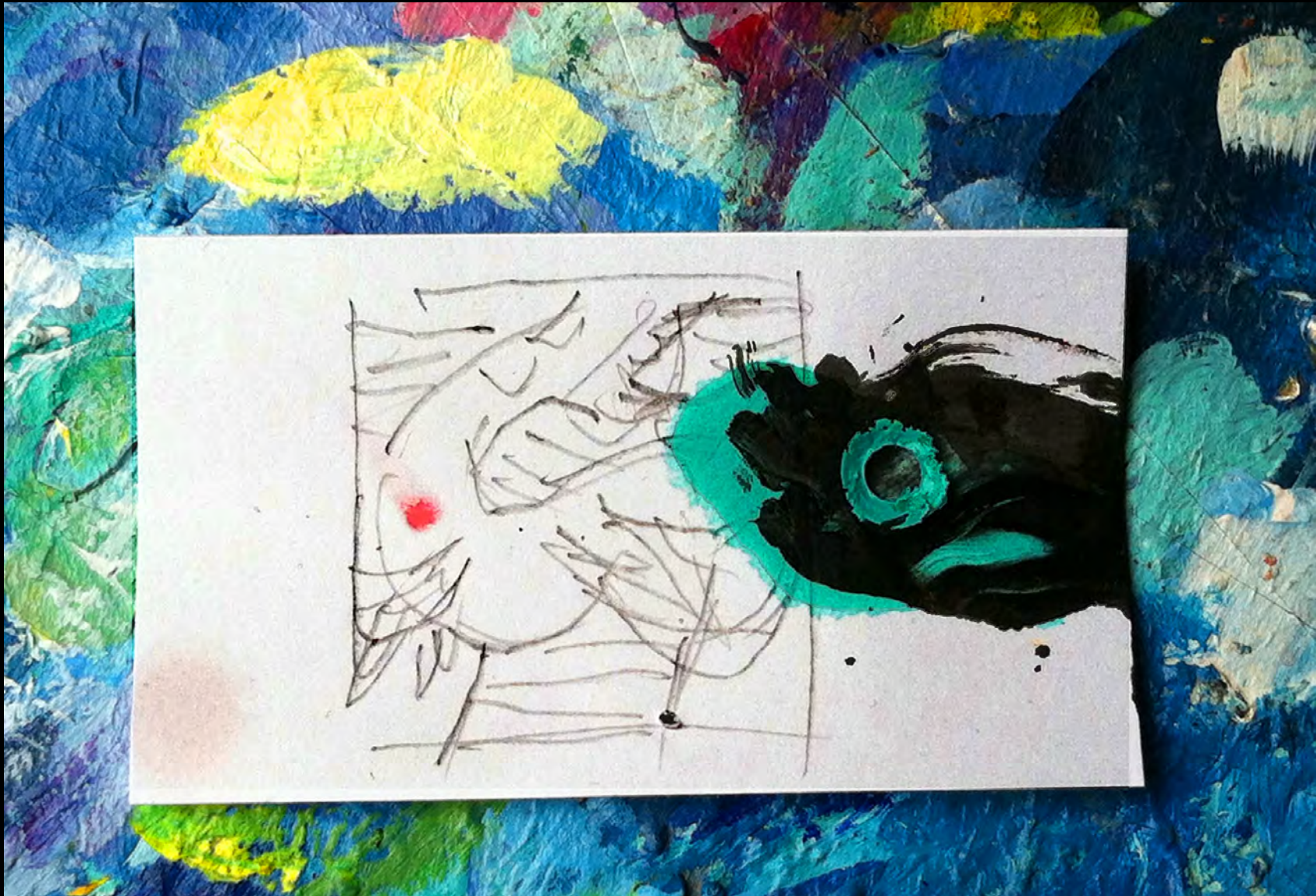
Yes, she is pregnant - maybe I should have called it *We Three*!

We Two is 12" tall by 12" wide by 6" deep, and was carved from a lovely mid-brown shade of California Soapstone.

It was 18 days in the carving, which is unusually long for a piece this size. But that was only because of the inclement weather that had me hiding inside from the rain instead of standing outside carving!

I hope you enjoy this little book showing you some of my thoughts and questions as I carved!

The Carving of We Two



This is the little tiny sketch I did the of the idea. All my pieces - painting or sculpture - start this way, with a simple sketch. As it happens, this was a painting first. I liked it so much I decided to make it into a carving. The messy colors behind the sketch is the surface of my painting table - I use it as my palette!

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This is Hapai x 2 - the little painting I did from that little sketch. “Hapai” means pregnant in Hawaiian - in this case, it’s a woman and a horse, both pregnant. In the carving, it’s a man and the horse.

The Carving of We Two



This is where I carve, out in my yard. No fancy-dancy studio, just my garden. Yes, I live in Hawaii!



I like carving here because I can be close to my all-time favorite plant, the giant Birds Nest Fern I grew from a little pathetic one-leaved almost-dead thing my neighbor gave me. It's over 7' tall! The box under it keeps the lawn mower from cutting off the leaves. The plant in the bottom right is a huge mossy fern, about 4' wide, also a rescued planty-fave! This is Heaven.

The Carving of We Two



Here's how the stone looked a bit after I drew out the idea on the stone. Got a little excited and forgot to shoot the plain stone before I started carving! You can see the handle of my 1/2" chisel to the bottom, and the sand bag on the left that helps me keep the stone still as I carve it.

The Carving of We Two



These are the tools I use to hand carve my pieces - no air or electric tools. The strange looking rasp in the middle is called a Vixen, and has long curved cutting edges instead of little teeth. It's a monster. I always cut the hammer handle down short because I have small hands, and it abrades my wrist if I don't.

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The left end of the piece, with the drawing still on it. I don't go into much detail.

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Kind of hard to imagine what's next once the lines get cut away, but you get used to that.

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Now the planes of the horse's face and body and the man's shoulders and face have to be determined. You have to be gutsy and just whack away the extra stuff. Since I never had any training how to carve, it took me years to understand how to just *do* it without taking little tiny bites out of the stone, little-bit, little-bit. The paint brush is for brushing away chips and dust, since blowing it away makes even more dust.

The Carving of We Two



Still blocking out the planes and important, main areas. See the little lengths of board lying under the bottom of the stone? Although the whole stone is covered with plastic between carving times, raising the piece up like that keeps the base of the stone from absorbing water when it rains. Yep, stone is permeable.

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Now THIS is the fun part! Blocking out the shapes with great big whacks!

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This was going to be a flat-backed bas relief. But then the horse's hair snuck by me...and the man's hair...and then I saw potential for fun in the curves of the back and armpits. You'll see....

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Refining the carving, still using the 1/2" flat chisel. Now you can see more of the basic design.

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Blocking out the right side arm, hair and horse tail.

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Starting the left arm, horse's mane and feet.

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Using the rasps now... Ah! A space appears between the horse and the man! Questions, questions - should I reduce the horse's belly? Shorten the legs? Cut the mane away by the man's shoulder?

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Starting to play with the curves in the back...

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See those red marks? I have a huge red carpenter's crayon for that. I make them at the end of the day as I look at the carving I've done, and want to make sure I remember where I want to remove material the next day I carve.

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Moving those curves around; refining all that wild hair; shaping the man's arms....

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Did you notice that the man's torso has narrowed, and the horse's front legs are shorter? I decided to make it look like he's wearing a kilt by leaving the whole bottom area rough....

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Now the hair and curves are coming into better form! A curly-cue armpit!

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Now for the hand.

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Giving the man a nice neck; starting to define the planes of their faces.

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I had several criteria for their faces. No distinct eyes, so they'd be consistent with the non-detailed bodies. They both had to look happy, even on the edge of goofy; almost kissing. And simplicity had to rule.

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Still playing with curves....accentuating the shoulders a bit, making the curve of the shoulder run down the arm....

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More refinement....

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Kiss me baby! Ew! No, don't!

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Refining those curves more.... Have you noticed how I'm leaving the front legs untouched until almost last? That protects them from being broken off when I move the piece around to carve the other parts of it.

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Now the curves in the shoulder are becoming more congruent with the arm and elbow....

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The hand! Hands are hard for me. I wanted it to hold the horse like it was the most precious thing on earth. See how the area between the front legs is still undefined?

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Getting there - using rifflers (little itty-bitty chisels) now.

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Beginning to like it now. Sometimes I don't like pieces as they form. I really didn't like this one until now!

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Shaping the tail and shoulders...and changing the hands - see how one on the right is curving around the horse's flanks more now? So many little details to think about!

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Yep, I'm a happy horse, I am!

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And I'm a happy, goofy guy!

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Now we get to my least favorite part - sanding!

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I may not like sanding, but at least it brings out the movement of the piece well by accentuating or softening the shadows and curves.

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Polishing! What a surprise the colors can be under all that dust!

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Isn't it amazing how the polish makes it look so rich?

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The hands and faces came out just the way I wanted them to. Very pleased.

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We Two, done. Yeah!

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I hope you've enjoyed this step-by-step journey from raw stone to polished piece!

Angela

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