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March 2024 News



Sullivan Granite Company quarry, 2023. Photo Jesse Salisbury

Maine Quarries: Muse and Material



Nancy Glassman, *Quarry, Late October*, watercolor, 2016. Courtesy Caldbeck Gallery

Last month at an opening at the Zillman Art Museum in Bangor, I got to talking about Maine quarries with painter Nina Jerome. Jerome has gravitated to the subject in recent years and created [a marvelous series of canvases](#) devoted to these remarkable places.

Jerome is part of a line of artists drawn to these locales spread across the state. John Marin (1870-1953) found a muse in [the rock formations on Crotch Island](#); William Kienbusch (1914-1980), in the [granite excavations on Hurricane Island](#); and Lee Hall (1934-2017), at quarries in Connecticut and [Maine](#). More recently, the likes of [Joellyn Duesberry](#) (1944-2016), Hall Quarry; [Lois Dodd](#), Union Quarry; [Nancy Glassman](#), Settlement Quarry; and [Alan Bray](#), Monson slate quarries, have chosen to paint this dynamic subject, enticed by what art writer Suzette McAvoy has called their “rough geometry.”

Where painters find subject matter in quarries, sculptors acquire the actual material for their art directly from them. Who was the first sculptor to work with Maine stone? Some of the [Civil War monuments](#) in Maine are made from granite. The landmark survey *Maine and Its Role in American Art*, 1740-1963 includes only two sculptures in granite: William Zorach's *Reclining Cat*, 1935, and Charles Gordon Cutler's *Maine Lobsterman*, ca. 1940s.



Don Meserve (1938-2010), *Cleat*, granite, 2007, Winter Harbor, part of the [Maine Sculpture Trail](#)

Were that survey to be updated today, a whole chapter could be devoted to sculptors who are using granite and other Maine stones for their art. Thanks to the Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium, college and university studio art programs, and such esteemed gallerists as June LaCombe, works in quarried stone now form a stunning universe of sculptural art.

In the attached informational poster designed for the Schoodic International Sculpture Symposium, Tilan Copson highlights several downeast quarries, which have supplied stone for a number of Maine sculptors. Their geological and working history make for a fascinating exploration of time and labor.

The Downeast Sculpture Projects will feature several pieces created from quarries. The Projects' organizers are actively pursuing different sites across Maine for a future show. Stay tuned: We hope to have news in the next few months.

--Carl Little

Further reading:  
[Granite Quarries, a Natural Resource](#)  
[Maine Geological Survey: History of Quarrying in Maine](#)  
[Made of Stone](#)  
[Carved Stone Maine Artists](#)



William Zorach (1887-1966), *Head of a Prophet*, 1946, granite. Art Institute of Chicago

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- To promote the Maine Sculpture Trail.
- To promote artist exchange and collaboration nationally and internationally.
- To promote education related to public art and sculpture including internships, classes, and professional development opportunities

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