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# Desert Leaf

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Lorraine A. DarConte is a local freelance writer. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.

L'Art Pour L'Art

## Paddi Moyer: Emergence

by Lorraine A. DarConte



Sculptor Paddi Moyer has spent more than a quarter century perfecting her craft, which includes stone sculptures. These days, she's focusing her energies on Desert Stone™, which is a medium of her own creation.

"Years ago," explains Moyer, "when I was working in bronze, I had a vision of 3-dimensional faces emerging out of the wall." She knew she couldn't create the series in bronze because the material was both heavy and costly. For a long time, she put the idea on the back burner because she didn't like the available products.

Eventually, she developed a process that fit her vision. "I started working on the process about 25 years ago and spent years fine-tuning it," she recalls. "Today, I have a proprietary blend of powdered stone I use for my sculpture, that's mixed with water, then cast. I can do pretty much what I like with it."

Moyer likes to work big, and the powdered stone allows her to do that. The style—or method—in which she works is not preconceived.

"I begin with a bag of clay and start building. A face will emerge and dictate

how the rest of it will go," she says. "It's very 'in the moment.' The process is more intuitive than intellectual."

She first creates her pieces in clay, explaining that, "I work in water-based clay, which is like a potter's clay. It can be loose and spontaneous. When it has grog in it—heavy sand—I can carve it. It's earthy and spiritual in a sense." She then makes a rubber mold from the clay original and casts the stone in the mold. Each piece is cast using a different pigment.

"After it's pulled from the mold, I hand-patina it with a variety of pigments, inks and/or iridescent powders. The different patinas make them look like one-of-a-kind sculptures even though they come from a mold. They are limited

editions," says Moyer, "but they are also unique pieces because of the patinas."

**Selective Schooling**

Moyer grew up in Oregon, where, she admits, she didn't know anything about art. "But once I was introduced to it in high school, I lived in the art classroom. I enjoyed painting in my earlier years, and later on, someone gave me a bag of water-based clay and



Sweet Sorora Night, by Paddi Moyer, wall sculpture, Desert Stone, 18 x 22 x 10 in.



Journey, by Paddi Moyer, wall sculpture, Desert Stone, 19 x 33 x 12 in.

that was it." She loved the feel of wet clay in her hands.

She started sculpting and enrolled in a bronze casting class at a community college, where she learned how to create bronzes from the ground up. She recalls that, "It's a very detailed, lengthy process. I learned how to cast, make molds, patinas, etc., which was quite helpful when I started working with a foundry."

Although mainly a self-taught artist, Moyer has studied with some of the country's top instructors. She took many classes at the Scottsdale Art School, after winning the school's Frudakis Scholarship Award in 1990.

"Some of my most valuable time has been spent studying with sculptors Bruno Lucchesi and Richard MacDonald. Recently, I completed a workshop with Russian-born artist Simon Kogan, and I will continue to take classes with top people in the field," she says.

Much of Moyer's work focuses on the spiritual aspect of Native American cultures and their people. "I am a little bit Cherokee," she notes, "though I think much more in my soul than my blood. My work represents timeless themes such as the blessings of life (rain, earth, sun)." She also likes to depict the lines and texture of the earth, in the human face and female form.

Her pieces can take anywhere from a month to several years to complete, as she works on numerous pieces at once and often sets works aside for some time before finishing them. "I have little heads, big heads, and faces everywhere. I sometimes have things wrapped up for years before they're resurrected and finished," she says.

In the future, Moyer would like to create a few more bronzes while continuing to work with the wall sculptures, and she'd like to incorporate ani-

mals into her work. At a place in Washington state called Wolf Haven, visitors can photograph the wolves, and she may do that in April.

She also plans to do more painting: "I love working with color. Although with all of the glorious patinas that I am using [in the wall sculptures], I do get to work with some awesome colors/pigments. Quite frankly, [painting] is a simpler way to relay my vision, and it's a nice break from sculpture as there are so many steps involved in producing a sculpture.

"I would like to go back to my artistic roots, for a change of pace, and so the artistic muse can have a different way to speak. But I would never give up sculpture. It's the love of my life!"

Paddi Moyer's work has been exhibited and collected throughout the United States. Her sculpture "Sun Dances" won Best Sculpture at the Trail of Tears Show, Cherokee National Museum, and her piece "Rain" was accepted into the North American Sculpture Exhibition. To view more of her work and for more information, visit [www.paddimoyer-studio.com](http://www.paddimoyer-studio.com).

