

ARTIST PROFILE

Donald Davis: SCULPTURE GARDEN

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

IN COMBINING THE GEOMETRY of nature with that of architecture, sculptor Donald Davis seeks to create a harmonious balance in each piece he creates.

“It’s really rewarding to see my work in a new context, taken out of the studio and in people’s lives,” shared Davis. “It becomes part of the landscape, relating to the buildings, the surroundings.”

Davis’ sculptures are featured in a solo show at Westmont College’s third annual Sculpture Garden exhibition on view around the grounds by Reynolds Gallery and Kerrwood Hall through December 19th.

Growing up on a ranch in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, Davis was influenced by

the natural, fluid shapes like those seen in plants and the monolithic stones towering above him. “John Muir writes about the granite in Yosemite and King’s Canyon in architectural terms. That’s the landscape I grew up in,” said Davis. “The visceral feeling you get when you stand next to land masses—the sense of density, hardness, and weight—is infused into what I try to create.” The four sculptures in the show exemplify this intensity. *Porta Rosa*, an assemblage-like composition made up of pieces of stone, stands outside the library at Westmont College and is seven feet tall.

It wasn’t until age fourteen when Davis visited Europe with his parents that he wanted to be an artist. This early trip inspired a lifetime of fascination with ancient architecture. “Studying ancient architecture and figurative sculpture fostered my respect for principles of structure,” wrote Davis in his artist’s statement. “I was impressed with the Roman sites, altered by the forces of decay, gravity, and erosion and yet still emanating strength and order. The way these structures were reshaped by nature and even altered by the

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Pendant Vessel by Donald Davis

destructive hand of man is intriguing to me.”

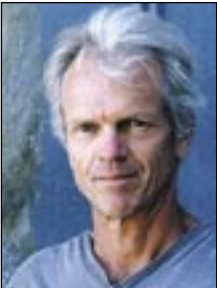
These influences—the architecture of nature and that of human design—have led Davis naturally to an affinity for stone carving. Davis attended the Rhode Island School of Design where he began working with stone. Over the years, he has spent time in Italy living and working, buying tools and materials in the Italian city of Carrara, known for its marble quarries and stone-carving studios.

“I love the process of carving,” said Davis. “It’s a multi-dimensional pursuit involving drawing, planning, and conceptualizing. But when I get to the carving, it’s about getting the form to do what I want. That’s all there is: connecting through the hammer and the chisel to the material. You can disappear into that world. That’s the joy.”

Westmont College is located at 955 La Paz Rd. Davis’ sculpture can be seen on the grounds near Reynolds Gallery and Kerrwood Hall through Dec 19. There will be an artist reception Sept 25 from 4 to 6pm. For more information call 565-7140.



Porta Rosa by Donald Davis



Donald Davis