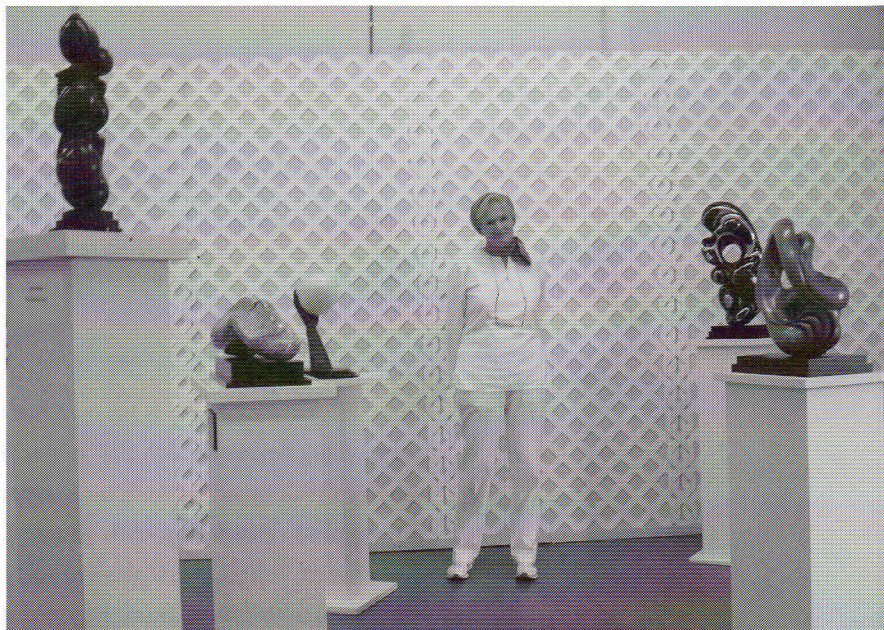


Pamela Soldwedel



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It seemed unlikely that the tall, elegant woman who greeted me at the door of her studio actually gets down and dirty as one must in the making of stone sculptures. But carving and polishing stone is what Pamela Soldwedel does.

Born in New York into a family of artists, she was both surrounded by their art and exposed to art in galleries and museums.



Ocean Born, 14 high, marble and glass

At Bennington College she divided her time between sculpture and drama. And, while the former has become her life work, the latter remains an integral part of her persona. Along the way to a full commitment to sculpture, she was: a necktie designer; fashion show producer; radio disc jockey; radio and television commentator and producer; magazine publisher; and promotion consultant for a major fragrance house. She even toyed with the idea of becoming a belly dancer!

When she finally settled down in Washington, Pamela abandoned thoughts of belly dancing for sculpture, and began studying at the Corcoran College of Art with Berthold Schmutzhart. There she won the Martha von Hirsh Award and the Mary Lay Thom Sculpture Award for the most outstanding work. Now close colleagues, Pamela credits Schmutzhart with not only teaching her sculpture but how to be a mentor,

a role she takes very seriously with her own numerous students and apprentices.

The most formative influence in her career was the ten years she spent at the Cathedral Stone Company. The only woman in a crew of ten stone carvers, she was constantly being tested and challenged to prove her worth. But she persevered, winning the respect of her peers and the company owner, with whom she still has a strong relationship. She emerged from Cathedral Stone not only knowing how to carve stone but how to create a crew, a necessity for the huge sculptures she began producing.

For the past 15 years, Pamela has inhabited a sculptor's dream studio. A 20-foot ceiling caps 4 huge rooms: 2 fully equipped carving and polishing rooms, a show room, and an office. The show room contains many finished sculptures – large and small, stone, bronze and mixed media; and three 12 foot wide landscaped

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Exuberance, 17½' long, bronze



We Are, 10' high, marble

rings to enclose the different types of fountains she is currently planning. The walls of her office are covered with more than a hundred images of finished pieces, as well as surfaces covered with maquettes of past and future work.

A very hands-on sculptor, Pamela has always done her own carving and modeling. When she moved to her current studio she took on an assistant to do the polishing. Her first cast bronze piece, *Fireflower*, standing nearly seven feet tall, was purchased by B.F. Saul's Westminster Investing Co. after being exhibited

at the National Women's Museum of Women in the Arts. The developer of the International Gateway building at Tysons Corner commissioned her to create the centerpiece of their lobby, the eight foot high marble sculpture, *Ishtar*. *Stones, Shells, Waves*, a relatively small mixed media memorial tribute to a client's mother, is the work dearest to her. Pamela's pieces frequently appear in local shows, often winning awards. She has an upcoming solo exhibit, "Rhythm", at 1600 Tysons Boulevard, McLean VA, curated by Richard Suib that will open October 1. The group show "2011 Summer Sculpture", open from July 25 through September 10, 2011, also has some of her works at Watergate Gallery and Frame Design, 2552 Virginia Avenue, NW, Washington DC.

For regular *New Yorker* readers, Pamela's small weekly ads have become quite familiar over the years. While constantly changing, their look is consistent: her signature design of curving fluidity in stone. These ads have brought her many commissions, as do recommendations by happy clients. She has never used an agent, which indeed would seem superfluous considering her many worldwide corporate, private and public commissions.

While her work is always abstract, its connection to nature and humanity forms its core. In her convoluted undulating, curves it is hard not to get downright anthropomorphic and think "enfolding," "nurturing," "embracing." In her own words, "Endings and beginnings, cycles of grief and joy, human instincts

and emotions too basic or complex to articulate in a figurative manner appear to me as abstract shapes. Smooth, swirling, undulating forms, most with harsh-faced or carefully textured accents can suggest more meaning and contain more enigma than the specifically representational."



Rhythm, 25 high, marble and aluminum



Search, 14½ high, bronze