



# CHARLES CLOUGH: THE WESTERLY SCULPTURE

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The 3 CC Studios  
1994

I established my studio in 1971. This followed an epiphany in which my sense of artistic scope, mission and commitment crystallized. I had arrived at the amalgamation of alienation and inspiration necessary for identification as an artist and discovered the rudder of deep desire to navigate my painter's epic. At that point the parameters of "free self-creation" (Harold Bloom) within a culturally productive context became evident.

The studio is the clearinghouse of the impulses and the location of the practice. The impulses are filtered into relatively more symbolic or actual manners of expression as described by Hans Loewald in *Sublimation* (Yale University Press, 1988). Much is handled by way of life but certain impulses are converted into the artist's *modus operandi*. For me, this has focused my concern on beauty. Simplistically sounding and subjective though it may be, it is the confluence of color, texture, configuration and composition that fuels my fire.

The point at which I began my studio practice was a distinct rupture in life as I had known it. I felt transformed from an American student consumer to becoming an enlightened creator. This realization brought a sense of different-ness and estrangement but also of

privilege in understanding creative rather than consumerist values.

My introspection has been guided by many writers. On psychology: William James, Sigmund and Anna Freud, Carl Jung, Otto Rank, Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, Melanie Klein, D. W. Winnicott, Karen Horney, R. D. Laing, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Hans Loewald, and Heinz Kohut, and on philosophy: Immanuel Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, Edmund Burke, Friedrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, A. N. Whitehead, Ludwig Wittgenstein, John Dewey, Suzanne Langer, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gaston Bachelard, Martin Heidegger, Theodor Adorno, Jean Baudrillard, Arthur Danto and Richard Rorty amongst others. Art and literary critics, as well as fiction writers and filmmakers, too numerous to list, have also provided articulations which underlay my sense of being. In particular, to Freud's formulation of the id, superego and ego I sense a fourth category: the *oeuvre*—the artist's body of work. This category is manifested through the formulation of the *modus operandi* and the creation of the art and parallels the ego as a synthesis of the "ought-to-wannado" dynamic but with the expectation of a very different critical reception. Generally, it is in the studio where these processes occur.

My exhibitions have consisted mostly of paintings, however, I also make sculpture, drawings, photographs,

publications and movies. I have come to understand these various activities in terms of The 3CC Studios: The Studio of Broken Color, The Studio of the Woods and the Stones and The Studio of Of.

The Studio of Broken Color refers to my transformation of tidy containers of paint into broken blends of perfect destruction which function as symbols of contingency and creation, and hang on the wall as paintings. See my *Chance and Choice* at <[www.clufff.com/texts/txt14.html](http://www.clufff.com/texts/txt14.html)> for my presentation of method.

The Studio of the Woods and the Stones is where fragments of reality becomes symbols of identity, the housing of free creation, the shrine of amazing grace. A number of categories of knowledge and practice are referred to:

1. The sciences of geology and anthropology.
2. The activities and traditions of finding, collecting, mining, refining, shaping, polishing, stone, metal and wood; aspects of jewelry, furniture and architectural embellishment, certain manner of weaponry, and other workings of materials into tools or symbols throughout time and cultures—that which remains of our predecessors of the past few hundred thousand years.
3. Modern western sculpture, especially Constantin Brancusi, Jean Arp, Henry Moore, the obscure early twentieth century American, John Flanagan, Isamu

Noguchi, Raoul Hague, William Tucker, Lynda Benglis, Martin Puryear, Mel Kendrick, St. Clair Cemin, Abraham David Christian, Andy Goldsworthy, etc.

4. The 2,000 year old Asian tradition of selecting and mounting stones of striking associational properties, known as guaishi or gongshi in China, and suiseki, in Japan, as well as other elements of the Chinese literati tradition including, seals, brush-holders and table-screens, etc.

The well chosen stick or stone surges imagination. You've seen them, the more one looks, the better it seems. It's not difficult to imagine that the earliest symbol-making occurred as these objects were put to use. We are preceded by stone, and it will succeed us—certainly certain longer, but truly transient too (et arcadia ego). The grain of well-chosen sticks and stones is beautiful while representing vast scale of time.

The Studio of Of, is the location of mediation: drawing, writing, photography and digital media. When I consider drawing, I focus on the thickness of the line. In the 1980s and '90s, when I used my “big finger” painting tools, my line was up to three feet thick. The most linear line I know, is the slice of the X-acto blade. Early, as a youth, I learned sharp and tight and how to refresh the blade.

When I inscribe lines, it is usually on 8 1/2 x 11” paper so that it may be readily copied. Some of my draw-



ings are gesturally expressive and some are repressively descriptive and some are yearningly thwarted.

My writing is of the barest sort. The lines are simply thunderclaps of studio revelations, which frequently amount to nothing, but occasionally, seem very important to me.

Photography is a living tradition handed to me from my father. Its ubiquity renders it nearly invisible. I've been releasing my shutter since 1967, and have produced thousands of negatives and transparencies. This work constitutes, by far, the largest sub-group of my oeuvre. Within the sub-group are a number of more or less discrete categories including documentation of my paintings and sculpture, documentation of the work of other artists (a journal of my exhibition viewings—my “virtual” collection), family snapshots, and composite and stereo photos of architectural, natural settings and arrangements of paintings and painted rocks.

“The photographic epic of the painter as a film or a ghost” is how I conceptualized my project in 1976. My photos, like those of so many, are autobiographical—an index of my critical attention and self-reflection. The practice of painting is the enactment of a tradition in which authenticity trumps innovation. By “film” I mean to invite you to consider a flip-book-type animation of each image that I have made. Whether this is ever actual-

ized is moot—it's the thought that counts. Digital media has become the great container—the “ghost” in the project description. Currently (2006) approximately 300 Gigabytes of files at a variety of standards of scanning, editing and data-basing parameters are recorded and available to print.

### The Stereo Solution 1996

I've been doing this since the early 1970s and I think it is one of the coolest things—to shoot two photos, with a couple of inches, horizontally, between the location of each focal plane, and then when they are printed, to place them, correctly, left and right, and cross my eyes and view the illusion of three-dimensional settings and objects in space.

The best type of subject is like a tangle of branches, insofar as clearly defined elements are situated continuously from foreground to back. This offers the best opportunity to spatially peruse the picture. My favorite geography is steepish drainage—Clough means ravine. The gash of rain swept sluice-ways tumbles the righteous detritus. Viny, branching woodsiness and cloven, polished rock suck my swollen eye. Contours, ineffably undulating skins, rivet me. Gnarly gushes seethe. Sheen, shine,

translucence, glow—texture’s seduction draws. Seeing, touching, longing, ravishing (mother?) earth. Being’s glorious ground, meet my painter’s treachery, how grand that we could be...I take the rocks that I can carry and photograph the rest—a measure of the beauty we may have.

My painting is about making a separate reality. In counterpoint to the paintings, my photographs reveal my obsessions. I like to mix my media up with rocks and more paint, and rephotograph them and paint the photos and resurface the rocks with the photos and re-photograph them and crumple the photos into rock-like shapes and repaint etc [this concerns a particular 1995-98 project].

My motif is the biological imperative (do be do be do) and my *modus operandi* is natural selection. Naturally, my own. Naturally, some perversion rooted in the bifurcation of symbol and reality, if not also that of binocular vision and the hemispheric brain. Sixty times two exposures or substantially less than one minute spread across a few of years and some hundreds of miles.

Look at each pair. Choose any sharply defined, conspicuous feature in the center of each frame. Slowly cross your eyes. Notice the “features” coming together. When they come together “lock” the images by superimposing the “features”. Hold the “locked” position and notice, peripherally, three frames—one to the left, one

to the right and one in the center. Concentrate on the center image and sharpen your focus and adjust it as you peruse the image and you will observe the illusion of three-dimensional space. (See [www.stereoscopy.com/faq/freeviewing.html](http://www.stereoscopy.com/faq/freeviewing.html))

Certain Matter  
2001

The psychoanalyst, D. W. Winnicott’s theory of the transitional object—that the infant’s blanket or stuffed animal becomes a substitute for the mother’s breast, doubtlessly underlies my interest in objects. My intense regard for my blanket evolved, seamlessly shifting to my special stuffed animal, other toys, scale model cars, guns and watches and eventually art.

Rocks have fascinated me since childhood. I continue to be drawn by the quality of mysterious interiority displayed by transparent crystals and by knowing that the stone is a fragment of the earth’s edge and may be viewed and considered in myriad ways.

Whittling as a kid and chiselling as a teenager became a love of wood that went into remission from 1975-1990 but revived in buying manzanita roots for vacation recreation. Finding balance and the “faces”, “character” and/or “figure” of and within the wood and

## The Westerly Sculpture 2005

I am the branch manager of boughs blown down and boulders heaved up by the frost—the very stuff of our place, the essence of *genius loci*. I play with these things and work them into repositories of attention. They signify the fulfillment of the yearning for something mysteriously beautiful and compelling.

My interest is rooted in my youthful experience of museums of art and science in Buffalo, New York, where I grew up. Anthropological and natural objects of extraordinary beauty inspired me to collect sticks and stones which I have modified by various carving techniques to enhance the object's aesthetic quality. After a 15-year period of concentrating on painting, when my children were old enough to go hiking, I resumed my old habit. On annual family vacations to the Adirondack Mountains in New York State I would gather roots and cobbles which I would take along to my family's other annual holiday at Misquamicutt Beach in Rhode Island, where I would work them with grinders, chisels and saws.

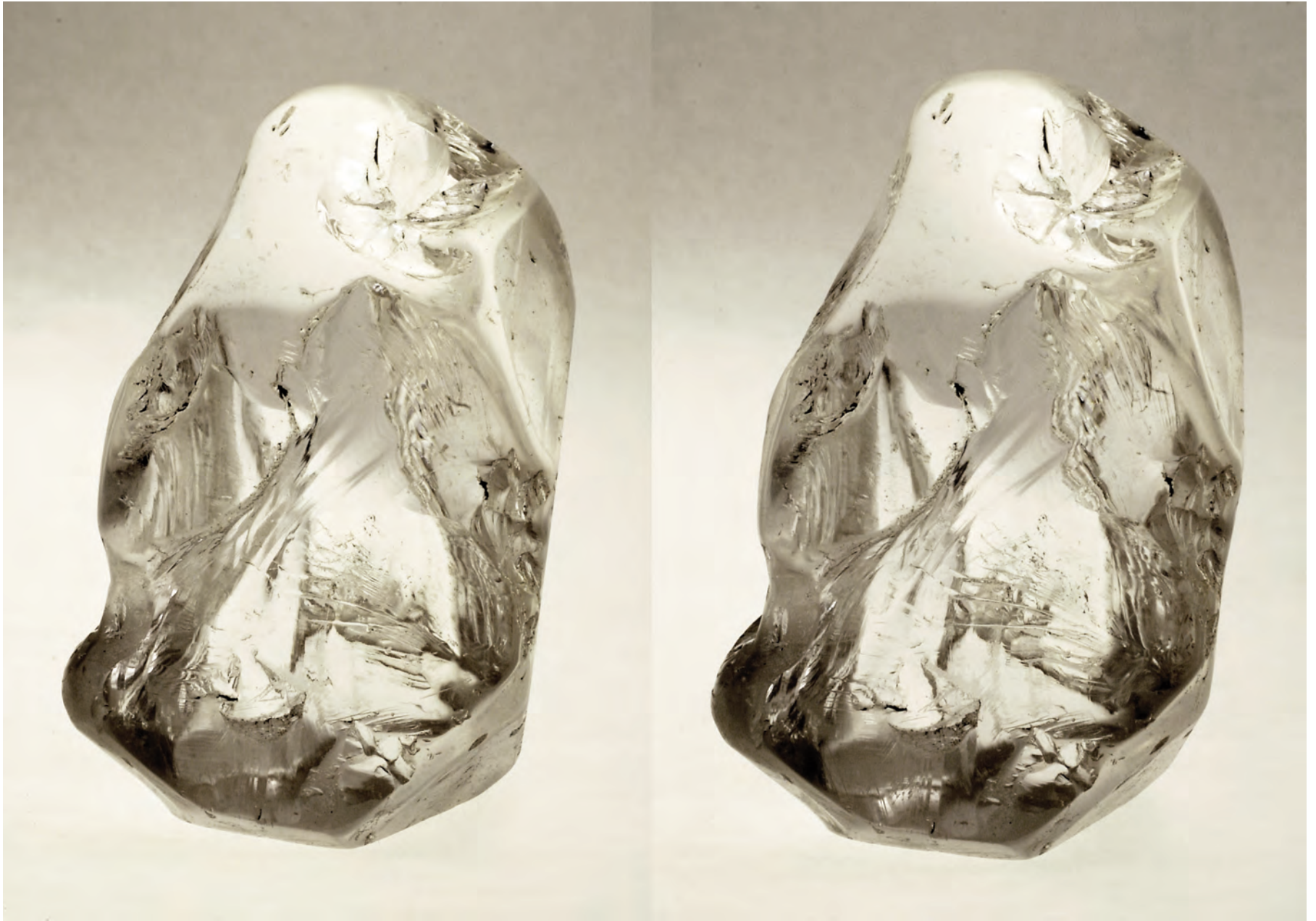
In 1999 my wife, Liz Trovato (whose father grew up in Westerly) and I bought a home in Westerly, Rhode Island, to which I moved my studio. In the garden I was pleased to find a trove of new material. While removing

yew shrubs I cut the top branches level so that the shrubs could be stood upside down, roots in the air, with great figurative suggestion. The garden includes nearly a dozen of these upside-down branches ranging up to twelve feet tall. Taking the project further, I carved the branches so that they were square in cross-section and presented a refinement of natural curves inherent in the branches.

The traditions of sculpture, quarrying and memorial production that are part of Westerly's history fascinate me. I have a vision of a large studio employing young and old, identifying and nurturing talent while producing distinctive sculpture for homes and gardens that would become identified with Westerly, in counterpoint to the funereal memorials of the past, as celebrations of life and creative transformation.

This could be a significant cultural and economic force for the enhancement of the community. Consider the value-added by Matisse to Nice, de Kooning to East Hampton or Twachtman to Cos Cob. Here are presented 46 works of The Westerly Sculpture.

Charles Clough  
[www.clufff.com](http://www.clufff.com)



*Diallican*, 2002, quartz, 6.6 cm. high





*Floyd I*, 12 feet tall (right) and *Floyd II*, 9 feet tall, 1999, maple





*El Diablo I, 2004*, iron meteorite, 4.3 cm. high



*Laksupag I*, 2005, agate, 4.5 cm. high





*Wanaque, 1998, limonite, 2.8 cm. high*





*Cedariv*, 1995, chalcedony, 3.7 cm. high



*Calmwood*, 2002, calcite, 9.5 cm. high





*Maura, 1992, willow, 16.5 cm. high*



*Yewcud*, 2000, yew, 26.5 cm. high



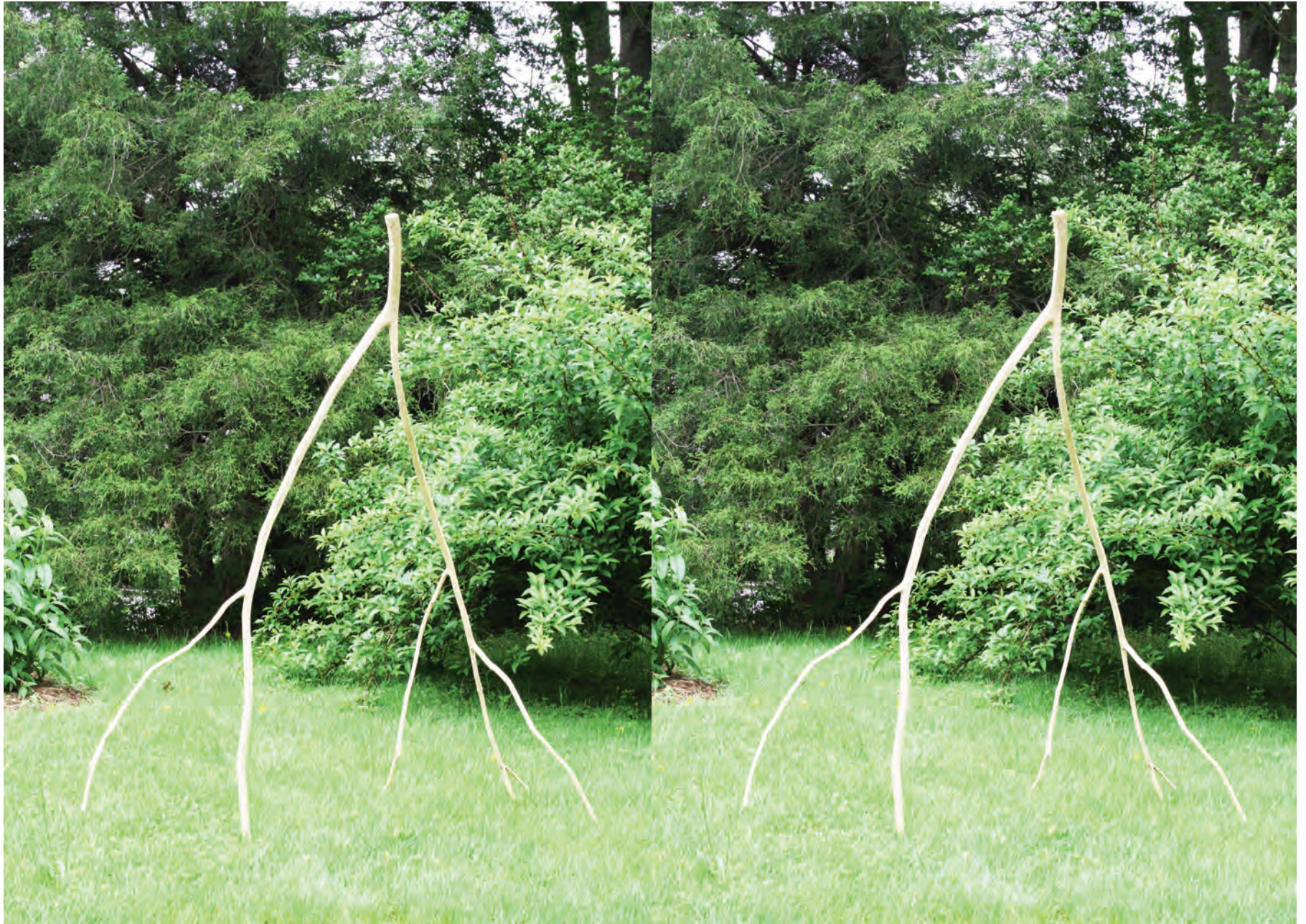
Group, 1992-2005





*Horicon, 2006, anorthosite, 21 cm. high*





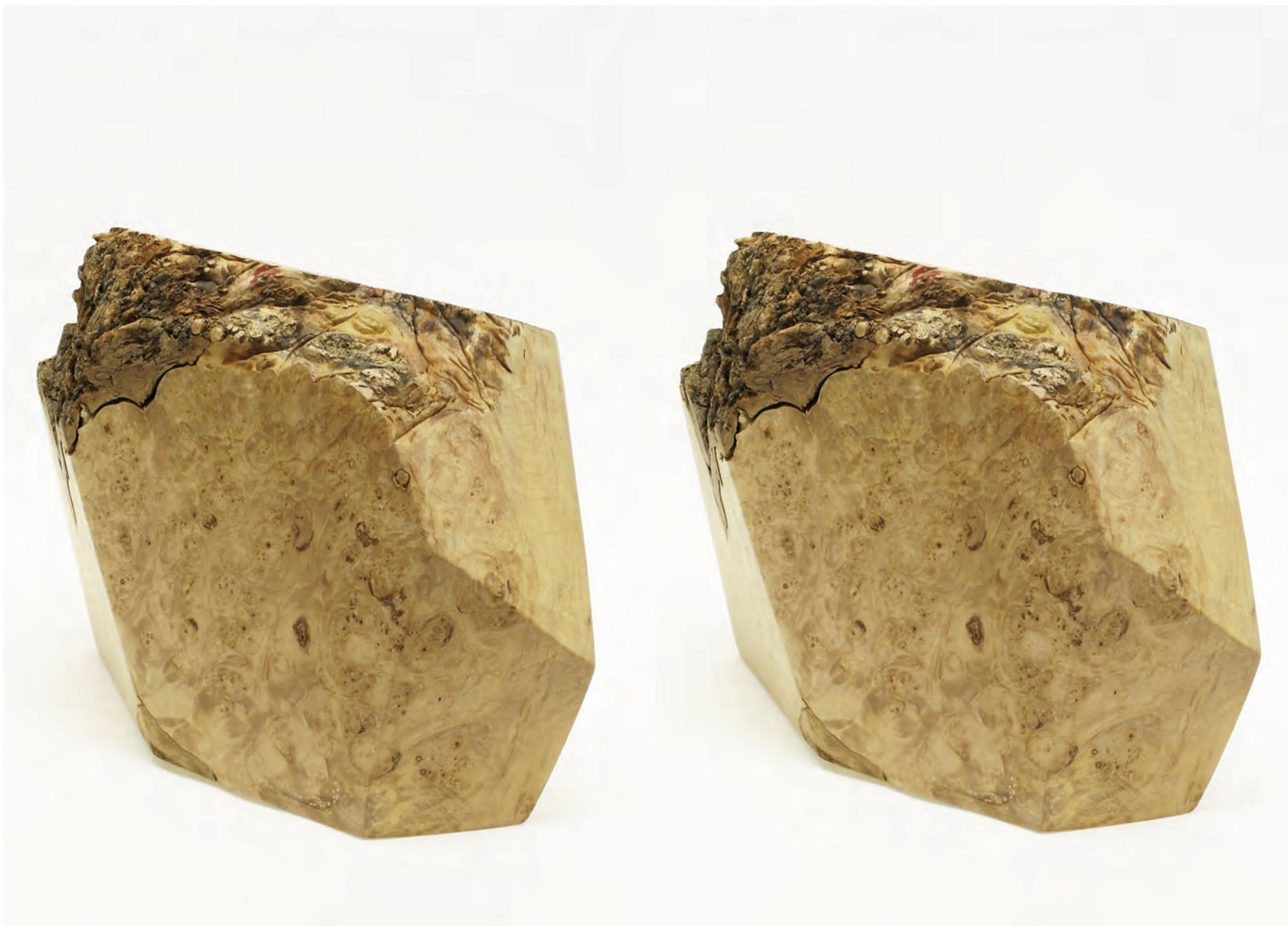
*Aleggedlee, 2000, maple, 195 cm. high*





*St. Martin*, 2003, cedar, 36.8 cm. high





*Daramulan, 2002, maple, 22.5 cm. high*



*Daruma*, 1992, manzanita, 14.4 cm. high



*Nootka*, 1996, ironwood, 12.8 cm. high





*Yarilo*, 1996, ironwood, 17.9cm. high



*Pango, 1993, manzanita, 12 cm. high*



*Halfdan*, 1995, cedar, 6.5 cm. high





*Hydroprimo*, 2000, granite, 15.5 cm. high



*Keremet*, 1993, butternut 13.4 cm. high





*Forsid, 2005, walnut, 35.3 cm. high*



*Viti*, 1997, maple, 56 cm. high





*Lada*, 1993, granite, 7 cm. high



*Herkrand, 1995, quartz crystal, 11.5 cm. long*





*Grebo*, 1992, ebony, 6.6 cm. high



*Clove*, 2004, nephrite, 11.2 cm. high



*Ono*, 1994, quartzite, 6.7 cm. high





*Niffleheim, 2003, diorite, 9.3 cm. long*





*Frigga Loki*, 1997, fluorite, 4.9 cm. high (2 pieces)



*Fortuna*, 1996, fluorite, 8.8 cm. high



*Anubis*, 2001, nephrite, 9.3 cm. high





*Dodona, 2005, sulphur crystal, 4.5 cm. long*



*Leucadia*, 1995, granite, 12.7 cm. high





*Alecto*, 1995, Franklinite and calcite, 6.8 cm. high



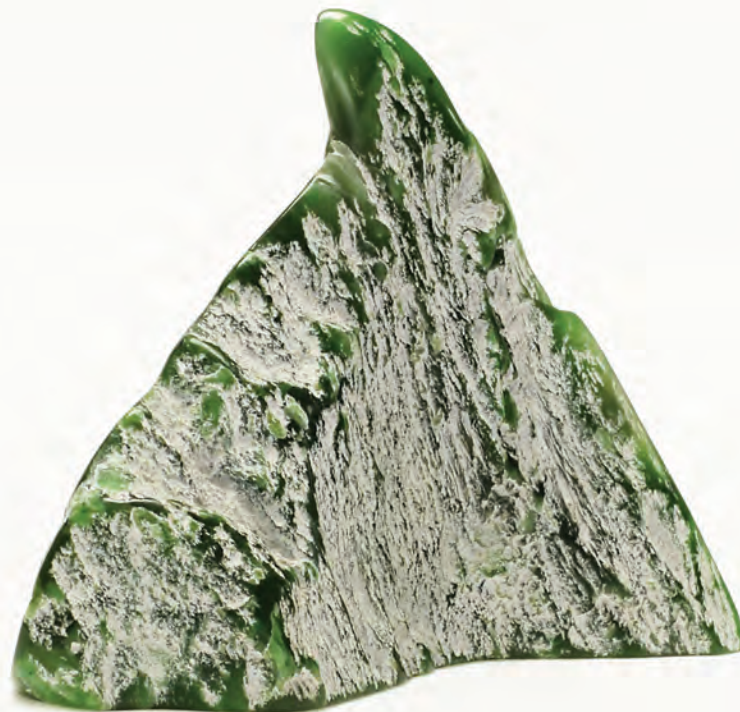
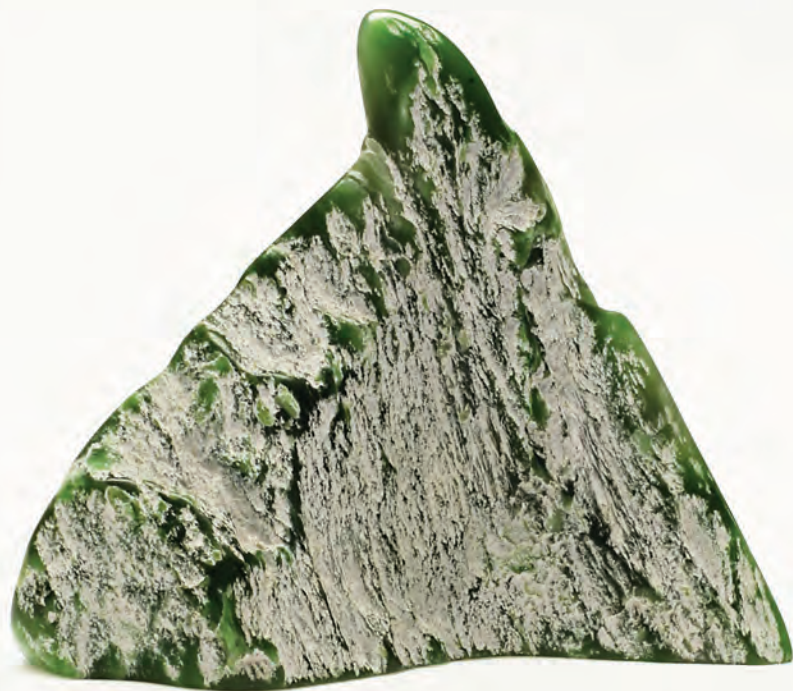


*Lebadea*, 1997, quartzite, 10 cm. high



*Cleomenes, 1996, fluorite, 12 cm. long*





*Omo*, 2004, nephrite, 8.5 cm. high



*Hama*, 1998, quartzite, 17 cm. high (without stand)





*Polynices*, 2002, quartzite, 13.5 cm. long





*Thessaly*, 2001, quartz, 16.8 cm. high





*Latona*, 1999, maple, 21.2 cm. high



*Thalia*, 2002, willow, 27.4 cm. high





*Terminus*, 1996, hematite, 14.7 cm. high



*Pierre*, 2000, limestone, 18.6 cm. high