

Cover Page Art

Presence

by Lauren Browning
www.laurenbrowning.com

Lauren Browning is a sculptor who works primarily with stone but also incorporates bronze, metal, and other media into her artwork. Her sculptural designs are beautifully realized, highly refined, and original, with strong flow, tension, and movement. The uniqueness of Browning's three-dimensional designs reflects her openness to discovering the essence and nuances of beauty in disparate environments. She is as willing to perceive beauty in the random arrangement of roadside construction materials as she is in nature, where she often immerses herself.

Born in Miami, Florida, Browning moved to Austin, Texas, when she was nine. After high school, she explored spring-fed creeks in the Texas Hill Country and played guitar with friends for a few years before entering college. She then earned a Ph.D. in geology and worked as a research geochemist on projects for NASA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. In 2007, she turned her attention to the visual arts and began working as a stone sculptor.

Browning exhibits her artwork widely throughout Texas and enthusiastically gives public presentations and stone carving demonstrations in conjunction with art museums and community organizations. Her seductively curving sculptures have received significant critical acclaim in local and regional newspapers and magazines. In 2012, Lauren presented her work in a solo exhibit at the Institute of Texan Cultures as part of its Texas Contemporary Artist Series. Browning's artwork was awarded a Certificate of Congressional Recognition from the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as certificates of recognition from the Texas Senate and the City of San Antonio. Currently, most of Browning's collectors are Texans, but her audience is broadening to other states, and as far as Brazil.



Artist Statement about *Presence*

I was instinctively drawn to the water's edge. There, the twisted roots of ancient Bald Cypress trees cradle gently flowing waters, as the Texas Hill Country yields her most precious gift to the seas. It is there at the confluence of water and land that I'm most able to feel the impermanence, as well as the resilience and communal spirit, of their shared histories.

While treetops far above shaded the banks, the sumptuous tangle of their roots drank quietly from cool waters below. Behind us lay the ruins of their ancestors, whose decaying trunks now sustain today's dance of wildlife with its offerings of food and shelter. The sinuous path of the river, too, honors times gone by, flowing gently now within channels formed when ferocious floods rasped the limestone bedrock and ripped the mighty cypress from its edges.

I lingered there along the banks of the river until I could feel the ephemeral nature of the boundary where land and water meet, and I became conscious of the analogy with my own life's journey. How can one thing be less beautiful than the other? A tear of gratitude pushed itself from my eye, rolled down my face, and disappeared silently onto the riverbank.

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