



# **Anita Mandl: The Works**

2018

## Foreword

The first time I saw a polar bear by Anita Mandl I was reminded of a jadeite carving of the Inuit people of Northern Canada. The unknown artist must have known polar bears intimately; the hard substance made the simplification of the bear inevitable and I realised that both artists must share an innate knowledge of their subject together with a determination to express it through intractable yet very beautiful stone.

Mandl is first and foremost a carver, working in from the outer limits of a block of ornamental stone or wood to create smooth, rounded and tightly-honed animal forms. The highly polished, seductive surfaces and varied colours of her selected materials make her sculptures irresistibly tactile and joyful to contemplate. Not only are the works beautifully conceived and executed but they also conform to the characteristics of their individual species. Her early illustrious career as a research scientist specialising in zoology informs the accuracy of her subjects and with a simplification of the forms to eliminate unnecessary elements, Anita instinctively knows the postures, shapes and details which sum up the essence of her chosen creature.

The starting point for all carving is the 'block' which can be either a cut cube like a brick or a lump of rough stone, loosely quarried with organic, random sides. Somewhere inside these shapes Anita sees her subject. The grain or marbling of the rock may refine her choices of position or posture and with the sketchiest of outlines chalked on all sides she starts to cut, chisel and file away until the initially-imagined form begins to emerge. This is hard labour: the impact of mallet on chisel, the clouds of dust generated by the grinder, the refining of the forms with rifflers and files and of course the lengthy process of polishing which reveals the true beauty of the stone and the sculpture.

As well as stone, Anita uses hardwood, fruitwood and other ornamental woods to create her sculptures and here the grain has to be factored in to what can be carved. Some timbers crack or splinter in unpredictable ways but where the rich colour and grain of the wood work in harmony with the image, a marvellous catalytic combination occurs, enhancing both material and form.

Cast bronze and silver complete the range of Anita's materials. Both involve moulding her stone or wooden originals and then casting into metal using the ancient lost wax process. In bronze, the craft of patination gives a multitude of new options for colouring her sculpture. The use of acidic metallic salts to oxidise bronze has developed to include a diverse range of incredible colours and effects. Anita has embraced these new hues and chooses to reflect the natural plumage and fur of her subjects, the colours and marbling of the original material or even a combination of both. In her silver pieces, the high polish and smooth surfaces reflect light and enhance the form, sometimes contrasting with a dark patina.

Otters, penguins and seals are among Anita's favourite subjects, their streamlined forms enhanced through the carving process. The impressive shapes of bears, bulls, hippos, gorillas and elephants are frequent subjects as well as more exotic creatures: armadillos, duck-billed platypuses, koalas, uakaris, yaks, drills and aardvarks are all part of Anita's marvellous imaginary menagerie.

Behind the inherent scientific and artistic structure of her work there lies a robust sense of humour that animates it all; encyclopaedic diversity, wonderful shapes, tactile surfaces and it makes you smile! Humorous and appealing animal subjects in other hands could easily be sentimental, kitsch or both. However, under Anita's chisel, any such tendency is chipped away.

Scientific rigour, the arduous nature of her craft and a respect for her media prohibit such trivial sentiment. What does come across is a delight in the idiosyncrasies of animals and birds, keenly observed and reflected in a way that communicates not only the character of the animal concerned but also our own reactions.

We are fortunate indeed to have worked with Anita Mandl for over thirty years and we are especially delighted to be able to show for the first time such a comprehensive selection of her work in stone, wood, bronze and silver.

Rungwe Kingdon  
June 2018



Indri 2008  
Bronze  
Edition of 6  
16cm high





Frog 1971  
Corraline  
Unique  
9cm high







Guinea Pig and Young 1974  
Alabaster  
Unique  
15.5cm high





Silver Penguin 2016  
Sterling Silver  
Edition of 6  
15cm high







Owl II 1975  
Teak  
Unique  
20cm high





Young Lemur 1999  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
11cm high





Seal and Pup 2 1978  
Applewood  
Unique  
8.5cm high





Rabbit 1972  
Marble  
Unique  
9cm high







Pig 2004  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
15cm high







Owl I 1969  
Rio Rosewood  
Unique  
28cm high





Otter and Cub 2018  
Bronze  
Edition of 5  
30cm high



Seal 1972  
Marble  
Unique  
6.5cm high





Asian Elephant 2005  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
15cm high







Gorilla 1989  
Teak  
Unique  
21cm high







Zebra Foal 2007  
Bronze  
Edition of 6  
14cm high





Hedgehog 1973  
Marble  
Unique  
13cm high





Eagle Owl 2007  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
20cm high







Monkey 1975  
Walnut  
Unique  
36cm high





Young Vole 2008  
Sterling Silver  
Edition of 6  
8cm high







Tortoise 1969  
Marble  
Unique  
9cm high





Armadillo 2006  
Bronze  
Edition of 8  
8.5cm high





Seal and Pup 1969  
Teak  
Unique  
17cm high







Aardvark Mother & Child 2002 & 2009  
Bronze  
Editions of 7 & 9  
15cm & 12.5cm high



Sea Lion 1999  
Alabaster  
Unique  
13.5cm high







Young Elephant 2010  
Bronze  
Edition of 8  
13.5cm high





Cormorant 1986  
Rosewood  
Unique  
27cm high





Armadillo 2002  
Sterling Silver  
Edition of 6  
8.5cm high





Squirrel 1969  
Lignum Vitae  
Unique  
28cm high







Green Badger Cub 2010  
Bronze  
Edition of 12  
8.5cm high



Diver 1990  
Polyphant & Resin  
Unique  
12.5cm high





Little Curled Otter 2001  
Bronze  
Edition of 9  
13.5cm high





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