

## WOODS DAVY: LAS PIEDRAS

Natural phenomenon remains the core catalyst for Woods Davy's recent stone sculptures and smoke drawings. In the graceful, precariously balanced sculptures of his *Cantamar* series, smooth, pastel colored stones defy gravity by projecting dramatically into space. Davy collects these luminous stones from a small, isolated cove in Baja California called *Cantamar*, or "Song of the Sea." Their pale hues of green, pink and mustard resonate as Davy pulls them out into a fluid curve that is a virtuoso display of cantilevered balance. These stones echo the geological processes of erosion and change in their variegated surfaces.

Paring down the more complex cantilevered projections of his *Cantamar* series, Davy has recently turned to large-scale granite stones to create a new series of totemic sculptures that are vertically oriented. *Maroma* and *Dos Ojos* are two primitive steles of tumbled stones whose rough textures and gray tones emphasize their weight and power. The stones touch each other in a rhythmic dance of balance and gravity. Ancient rock formations come to mind, whether natural or man-made, and these sculptures have the inherent energy of a natural altar. Collected from a quarry in north San Diego County, these large granite stones shimmer with monochromatic tones of white and gray. Their surfaces are rough and pitted, revealing their geologic evolution. Davy has an inherent facility to select just the right kind of stone, both in color and shape, and these stacked sculptures have a fluid interplay with space that is lyrical and eloquent.

Other granite sculptures echo his cantilevered pieces, but he uses fewer stones to great effect. *Obispo* curves into space with a minimum amount of stones but a sense of dynamism, for the stones form a volumetric continuum. Sculptures such as *Chiapas* have an anthropomorphic quality as large granite arms seem to project into the air, and the whole entity moves forward. Davy's mastery of nature's geometry is clear in *Omu* as a large vertical slab is balanced perfectly in an asymmetrical way by two triangular shaped stones.

Unique smoke drawings accompany the stone sculptures, and reflect the various underwater explorations that Davy has made in Hawaii, Central America and Mexico to caves and hidden coves filled with undersea life, coral and rock formations. Organic and abstract, Davy lets the smoke form the layered images of charcoal black, then accents the wafting forms with luminous accents of watercolor and oil stick. The smoke drifts across the paper leaving negative space, mimicking the feeling of floating in transparent water. On the paper the smoke leaves transparent veils of black that are amorphous but form an elegy to the beauty of the sea.

Davy distills earth, water, and fire to its essence in his stone sculpture and smoke drawings. Elegant but precarious, his stones seem ready to fall but instead cut a swath through space, echoing nature at its most simple and most complex. A smoky current floats randomly on paper in the artist's drawings and becomes a fluid image that is constantly changing. Defying gravity yet having weight, interjecting into space but tumbling, his sculptures speak of his innate understanding of nature and its rich visual vocabulary.

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*March, 2003*