

From Rocks to Masterpieces: An examination of the art of stone carving





Imagine transforming rocks you find on the ground into artistic and cultural masterpieces. That is exactly what stone carver **Laura Travis** has accomplished over the past 28 years. “I took a trip to Ireland and would spend my time running around trying to find ruins and little carvings. I was so attracted to these little carvings.” Travis now teaches classes on how to carve a multitude of designs into many different types of stones.

On her website, Travis mentions ancient myths and stories about white stones that she refers to as “sanctuary stones” which are found on the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Ontario. “Throughout time white stones are always singled out as being special... Once I carved something into them, people treated them like they just had a different feeling about them. I was attracted by the notion that it represented something more to people.”

At the Blackstone River Theater in Cumberland, she teaches Celtic Relief Stone Carving to novice carvers. Travis elaborates on the role that Celtic culture plays with her art: "It is something (...) that evokes a different atmosphere, maybe a little more contemplative, associated with history and something older. If I had something that I was seeking to connect with, it is not the giant museum full of large marble sculptures, it is that little church at the end of the road with some of things that have survived for a long time that are small and intimate that you have to go look for them."

Travis works hard to bring Celtic traditions into her art that she shares with others. In her class, people can come with designs they like, but Travis recommends designs that are ancient patterns and representative of the Celtic culture. "As beginning carvers, we want them to have a great time, to learn a lot and to have the piece be successful... We spend a certain amount of time modifying the designs so it makes them very carvable for the beginner."

"It is a whole weekend, non-stop, it is like an immersion experience. So you can really throw yourself into it and see if you like it. (...) I am always amazed with how much people get out of it," Travis says. Classes in stone carving are a great opportunity to try something new and possibly discover a new talent or passion. More than anything, you can enjoy a weekend with great company and great art!

Laura Travis is also a guest artist at Imago Gallery in Warren, RI. The show opens on June 4th.