GRANITE LANDSCAPE: an installation

by Jesús Bautista Moroles

Granite Landscape, Jesús Bautista Moroles' installation at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, provides somewhat of a dilemma for viewers in a museum setting. The stone's rough textures and smoothly polished surfaces cry out to be touched, yet this is an environment where tactile experiences are usually off limits. But here is an exception, because Moroles desires viewers to interact with his sculptures by caressing, rolling, rocking, and "playing" their notched, xylophone-like edges. By doing so, our hands release the life force from the granite in much the same way Moroles frees the form which he believes is inherent in the stone by cutting, tearing, grinding and polishing it with tools. Moroles speaks with reverence about his granite medium, and feels that it
chose him rather than vice versa. He refers to the hard stone as if it were alive, saying that when he visits the quarry to pick out his materials, certain pieces of granite "speak" to him, beckoning him to take them home, although it may be several years before they reveal their secrets to him. In this manner, Moroles is aligned with many ancient cultures which have attributed great powers—from magical energies to fertility and healing—to stones. While modern society has largely distanced itself from such beliefs in the forces of nature, Moroles' work seems to speak of the necessity of establishing a direct connection between human beings and the earth.

Growing up in the Texas coastal town of Corpus Christi, Moroles had the opportunity to develop a deep affinity with nature. After studying art—first in northern Texas and then in Italy—Moroles came home to be near the ocean, and now produces his monumental works in a studio/factory in Rockport, Texas. So it is not surprising that the forces of water play a large role in his work. Water is even involved
in the production of Moroles' granite pieces, since the stone is bathed in water as it is cut with diamond-bit saws. Using natural materials (water and diamonds) along with man-made force to create the sculptures is in keeping with Moroles' intention to show man and nature working together in his work—thus the juxtaposition of the naturally rough surfaces with highly polished ones.

For Moroles, the central path in *Grass Landscape* represents a river whose granite banks have been eroded by the movement of water. As one enters the landscape through the massive portal, you step into this "river" and climb along the terraced banks, weaving between individual sculptures varying in size and shape from upright rectangular monoliths to low-lying curvilinear forms. This is not a work to be experienced quickly. Linger in the landscape and listen to what the stones have to say to you.

Susan G. Baley
JESÚS
BAUTISTA
MOROLES

a brief biography

BORN:
1950 Corpus Christi, Texas

EDUCATION:
B.F.A.,
North Texas State University,
Denton, Texas, 1978
A.A., El Centro College, Dallas,
Texas, 1975

EXPERIENCE:
Lived and worked in Carrara,
Italy, 1979-1980

HONORARY POSITIONS:
Appointed to the
Board of Directors for the
International Sculpture Center,
Washington, D.C.

PANELS:
Southern Arts Federation/
National Endowment for the
Arts, Regional Fellowships in
Sculpture, 1989

AWARDS:
University of North Texas,
President's Citation Award, 1992
"Texas Artist of the Year,"
Art League of Houston,
Houston, Texas, 1989
Matching Grant, National
Endowment for the Arts,
Birmingham Botanical Gardens,
Birmingham, Alabama, 1984

Susan G. Baley is a
freelance writer in Oklahoma

Jesús Bautista Moroles is
represented by the
Davis/McClain Gallery,
Houston, Texas
SELECTED COLLECTIONS:
Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, New Mexico; American General Corporation, Houston, Texas; Andrews & Kurth, Houston, Texas; AT&T/Prudential, Pleasanton, California; Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham, Alabama; Credit Suisse, Houston, Texas; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas; E.F. Hutton, New York, New York; Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, Western Regional Service Center, Fresno, California; Fondazione Umberto Severi, Carpi, Italy; IBM, Raleigh, North Carolina; The Robert & Ryda Levi Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland; Mint Museum, Charlotte, North Carolina; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, Texas; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Nabisco Brands, East Hanover, New Jersey; National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.; New Orleans Museum of Fine Art, New Orleans, Louisiana; Newsweek, Mountain Lake, New Jersey; North Texas State University, Denton, Texas; Old Jail Art Center, Albany, Texas; Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, California; San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, Texas; Trammell Crow Associated Companies, Dallas, Texas; University of Houston, Houston, Texas; Vantage Corporation, Atlanta, Georgia; Viriane Foundation, New Orleans, Louisiana; World Towers One, Houston, Texas
checklist of the exhibition

Vanishing Edge
Texas granite 1986
83" × 21" × 12"
Collection of Garlin and
Linda Rhymes

Grinding Stone
Georgia gray and black granite
Stacia rose granite base 1988
40 1/2" × 29 1/2" × 19"
Private collection

Zig Zag Las Mesas
Black granite 1990
7' 16 1/2" × 8 1/4"
Private collection

Eclipse
Vermont granite 1990
78 1/2" × 33 1/4" × 7 1/2"
Collection of Harvey and
Mireille Katz

Spirit
Texas rose granite 1990
108 3/8" × 15 7/8" × 11 1/8"
Collection Brad and
Leslie Bucher

Moonscape
Texas granite 1990
64" × 64" × 20"
Collection of Dr. Gary and
Anna Mason

Dome
Texas pink granite 1990
18" × 35" 1/2 × 33 3/4"
Collection of the artist

Granite Pyramid
Texas granite 1990
74 1/2" × 87 1/4 × 5"
Collection of the artist

Shell
Texas granite 1990
6" × 46 3/16" × 28 3/8"
Collection of the artist

Ziggurat
Black granite 1990
12 3/8" × 35" × 23 3/4"
Collection of the artist

Granite Landscape
Fredericksburg granite 1990
40" × 20" × 40'
Collection of the artist

Round Rocks
Italian black granite 1991
7 3/4" × 7 3/4" × 5 1/4"
Private collection

Granite Weaving
Texas granite 1992
106" × 94 1/2" × 10 1/2"
Collection of the artist

Portal
Texas granite 1992
104" × 102" × 27 3/4"
Collection of the artist
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