

## Mona Saudi

"The sculptures of Mona Saudi bring the Greek word *Omphalos* to mind. From there, it echoes in the ear just as the sculptures themselves remain in the memory's eye - rich as notes of a cello.

*Omphalos* means, literally, navel, and essentially, 'the stone at the center of the earth,' the point of beginning from which life radiates. It is this sense of centrality, of essential life-force, that Mona Saudi captures in her sculpted stone forms - forms that marry the simplicity and coherence of primitive sculpture with the sleek contemporaneity of abstract design. Their effect on the viewer is two-fold: a feeling of womblike harmony and security on the one hand, and the excitement of a latent creative force on the other.

Saudi is an artist of opposites. She takes stone, the oldest material, 'the primal material of the construction of the whole universe,' as she calls it, and uses it like a living, breathing mass. She starts with basic shapes - the square, circle, rectangle and cylinder - and educes from them complexities of volume and mass, sensing in the inert stone what it is capable of becoming. Her drawings are analytical and detailed, her sculptures a serene synthesis. Her work has stillness and movement, immediacy and continuity. Perhaps most strikingly, it is both intimate and monumental, containing within itself its own certainty and independence, irrespective of scale or placement."

Excerpt from "A Search for Simplicity" by Anne Mullin Burnham

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