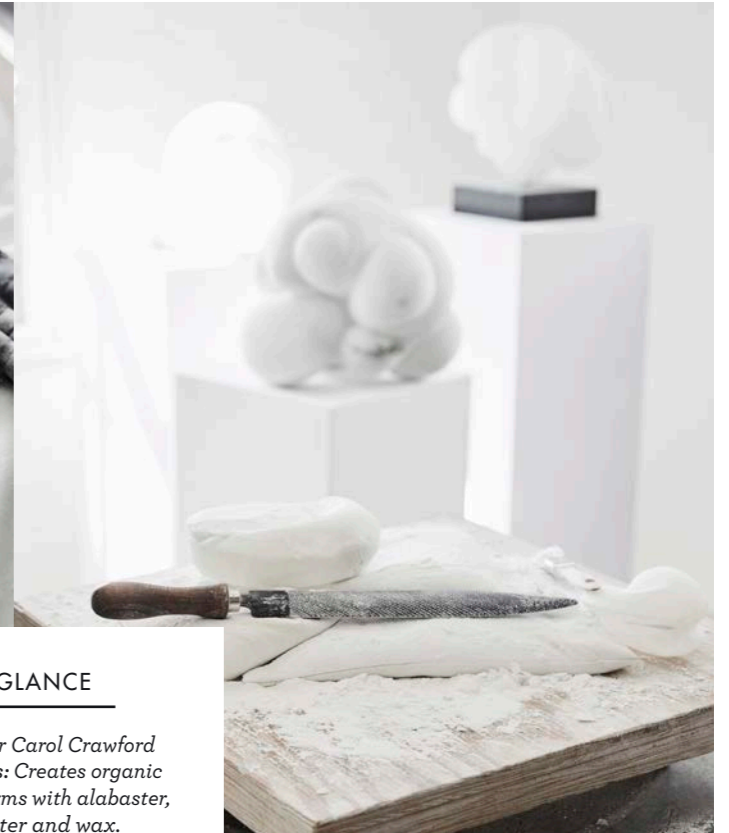


CREATIVE COLLECTION:

LABOUR OF LOVE

SYDNEY-BASED SCULPTOR CAROL CRAWFORD REDEFINES THE BOUNDARIES OF BEAUTY BY SHAPING THE WAY WE SEE THE WORLD

Words HARRIET SIM Styling SANDY DAO
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AT A GLANCE

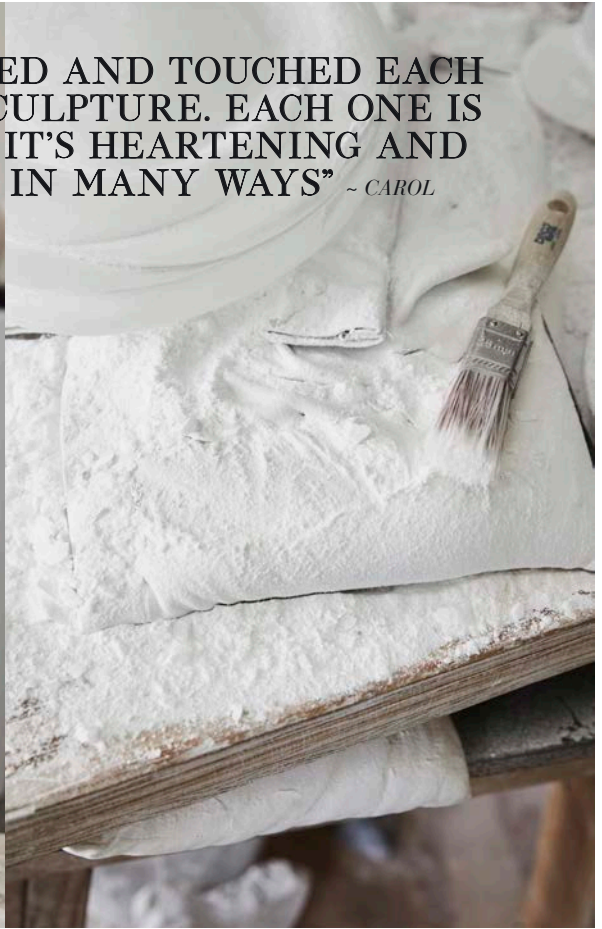
Who: Sculptor Carol Crawford
What she does: Creates organic interlocking forms with alabaster, clay, plaster and wax.
Where: Surry Hills, NSW.
Why she does it: "The process is what drives me," says Carol. "I find carving stone soothing and cathartic."
Visit: carolcrawfordsculpture.net
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THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT: A milky white alabaster nodule rests in Carol's studio. **TOP RIGHT:** Carol works primarily with alabaster due to its luminous quality, and the intimate nature of her interaction with the stone. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A series of sculptures command her workspace, illuminated by the dappled light in her north-facing studio. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** "I listen to what the stone is telling me - working very slowly using hand files and rasps," says Carol of her creative process. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Carol, pictured here, in her studio sanctuary, which she describes as "otherworldly". >



“I’M STILL AMAZED AND TOUCHED EACH TIME I SELL A SCULPTURE. EACH ONE IS A PART OF ME - IT’S HEARTENING AND REAFFIRMING IN MANY WAYS” ~ CAROL



“Many of [my sculptures] have female names or terms of endearment,” says Carol, pictured above. Tools cover her work bench, above right, while an assortment of interlocking nodules, below, show Carol’s signature sculptural forms.



Like all the best holiday romances, Carol Crawford’s love affair took shape in Italy, in the rustic mountain-top town of Volterra. “I brought a piece of rough alabaster stone home in my suitcase,” explains the sculptor, who works out of her studio in Sydney’s Surry Hills. “I carved that first stone intuitively, keeping the integrity of the stone. I still do exactly the same thing now, only in a slightly more refined way.”

Carol came to sculpting later in life, although her distinct eye for form and beauty was nurtured from an early age. Her mother was a trained opera singer and her father, a “deep thinker”, was one of the pioneers of the Australian textile industry. “My parents were immigrants from Europe and sole [WW2] survivors of their families, bar one,” says Carol. “[They] gave me the space to dream and make my own way in the world.”

Although she studied art history at the University of Sydney, it wasn’t until her youngest son turned five that she enrolled in a workshop with renowned Australian sculptor, Tom Bass. It was here, during Tom’s traditional atelier method – where experienced sculptors worked alongside students – that he taught Carol to truly ‘see’. “When I first walked into [Tom’s] studio school in Erskineville, it was like entering a magical, light-filled creative space, where all the worries

of the world were left behind,” says Carol, who continued to study under Bass from 2002 until he passed away in 2010. “[The workshop] was a place where, during the obligatory tea time, philosophies of life and art were discussed.”

Today, Tom’s teachings still sing throughout the airy, sun-drenched walls of Carol’s own studio. “I feel comforted and surrounded by love when I walk into my studio – every sculpture has a different personality,” says Carol, of the voluptuous, polished knots that line her space in varying stages of completion. Capturing organic, feminine form has long been an influence for Carol, whose work evokes a deep sense of humanness. “The sculpture and I are interconnected in many ways,” she says. “When I am carving and ‘talking to my stone’ I am in another world – everything stops.”

Exhibiting mainly to private viewings and several public commissions, including two portraits for Cootamundra’s ‘Captains Walk’ in NSW, Carol’s work has strong sentimental and metaphoric ties. “Whenever I experience deep emotional stress I express these feelings by creating beautiful, soothing forms that convey love and comfort,” says Carol. Reflecting the imperfections of life and love is at the core of Carol’s work as she, so elegantly, reshapes the narrative to seek beauty among the flaws. 🍷