

EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

CHRONICLES OF TIME

Raquel Rabinovich has chosen the shoreline as her art gallery and has welcomed nature as her creative partner. Each work of art in the series called *Emergences* consists of moderately sized stones arranged in clusters. Indigenous rocks mingle with those the artist introduces to the site, such as pink marble, bluestone, chunks of Corinthian granite. Each mound is measurable according to human scale. Because the periphery stones scatter from the cores, the sculptures merge into the natural setting. They become edgeless and, therefore, dimensionless. Even at low tide they barely intrude upon the landscape. But at high tide they completely disappear beneath the rising waters. These works reveal a special relationship with nature. Rabinovich includes nature as her artistic collaborator, not merely as a source of inspiration. Unlike landscape or seascape painters who explore the surface of the earth or the dance of the waves as they recede to meet the horizon, Rabinovich's works focus on the vertical rise and fall of the tides in the Hudson River, which occur at varying intervals, twice each day, every day. Furthermore, unlike most visual artists, she considers time an essential component of space. The distances relevant to these sculptures are tabulated as minutes that form the rhythm of the tides, hours that separate the rising and the setting of the sun, months that mark the annual rotation of seasons, and years that evolve into millennia. Finally, unlike an artwork that reduces the wondrous and unpredictable effects of nature into a single snapshot, these sculptures are synchronized with nature's perpetual flux. They register changes that are cyclical and those that are erratic. Likewise, they welcome changes that are gradual and therefore imperceptible, as well as those that are sudden and therefore remarkable. Ice crystals, fallen leaves, drift wood, fog, wind, migrating birds, human footprints, and litter are all components of this art project, although their effects cannot be anticipated by the artist. Even more significantly, these occurrences will continue to determine the fate of the sculptures long beyond the artist's lifetime. Eventually, the river will render them invisible. Objects washed ashore will obliterate the clusters. Ebbing tides will confiscate the artist's stones. These works urge all those who encounter them to yield to eventualities, possibilities, probabilities, and mysteries that lie



beyond human control, just as stones yield to the pervasive urgings of gravity.

'Emergence' refers to coming into view from concealment. It is the principle that unites the diverse mediums that comprise Rabinovich's artistic activities, and the techniques she has invented to enact them. She 'paints' by accumulating rhythmic markings that evoke atmospheric unknowns. She 'draws' by submerging entire sheets of paper into ink baths so that tonalities accrue on their surfaces. Pencil often is used to inscribe text that is then partially obliterated by repeated markings of brush and crayon and charcoal and graphite and pastel and manganese powders. Her current works mark a graceful transference of these creative gestures from the confines of her studio to the expansive zone of nature where she has fully embraced her theme. In these works Rabinovich relinquished studio control, abandoned the concept of completion, perpetually delayed termination, and dispensed with the notion of a salable art product in order to enact, in real time and space, the eternal rhythms of emergences.

LINDA WEINTRAUB

January 2002





Emergences is an ongoing project of site-specific sculpture installations on the shores of the Hudson River. Created out of natural stones, each work completes two daily cycles of emergence and submergence, synchronizing with the rhythm of the river tides. At high tide the sculptures are claimed by the river. At low tide they belong to the earth. 'Merging' with the landscape, they resonate with the ever-changing currents of the waters, the weather, the seasons. In turn they echo our own existence. Human life unfolds like *Emergences*, for we too unfold from the dark towards the light. We too are impermanent. Moment to moment, the sculptures remain sculptures, and we remain ourselves. Yet both the sculptures and we are in a perpetual state of flux.

RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2001

Etowah marble, Tiger stripe marble, and on-site stone
Installation. Rotary Park, Kingston, New York

Directions to Rotary Park, Kingston

Take Route 9W south in the direction of the Rondout. Exit at Delaware Avenue. Turn left at the first traffic light, and follow Delaware Avenue all the way to the end toward Kingston Point. The park entrance is on the right. Walk toward the Hudson River. *Emergences* is on the shore, on the left cove just before the small bridge.

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support, and acknowledges the kind cooperation of the City of Kingston.

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Text © 2002 Linda Weintraub
Design by John Isaacs



EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2001

Bluestone and on-site stone

Installation. Robert E. Post Park, Ulster, New York

Directions to Robert E. Post Park, Ulster

Take Route 32 south and west of the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge. Turn onto Ulster Landing Road. Make first right onto Park Road. Go all the way to the end, and enter the park. Turn right at the circle. *Emergences* is on the shore of the Hudson River, at the south end of the park.

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support, and acknowledges the kind cooperation of the Town of Ulster.



EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2002–03

Algonquin fieldstone, South Bay quartzite stone, and on-site stone
Installation. Riverfront Park, Beacon, New York

Directions to Riverfront Park, Beacon

From Route 9D in Beacon, just south of the Beacon-Newburgh Bridge, turn at the light onto Beekman Road in the direction of Beacon RR station. Go over the RR bridge. Bear right and continue past the parking lot all the way to the end of the grass area. Walk to the edge of the Hudson River. *Emergences* is on the cove, close to the RR tracks.

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support, and acknowledges the kind cooperation of the City of Beacon.



EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2005

Wappingers dolomite stone and on-site stone

Installation. Kowawese Unique Area at Plum Point Park, New Windsor, New York

Directions to Kowawese Unique Area at Plum Point Park, New Windsor

From Newburgh, take Route 9W south. Drive for 1.7 miles after you pass Route 94. The entrance to the park is on the left. Drive into the park until the road ends and opens into three driveways. Take the second driveway on the left all the way to the Hudson River. Walk left on the shore. *Emergences* is towards the end of that stretch.

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support, and acknowledges the kind cooperation of the County of Orange and the Department of Environmental Conservation.



EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2006

Bluestone

Installation. Ulster Landing Park, Saugerties, New York

Directions to Ulster Landing Park, Saugerties

From the traffic light at the intersection of Route 32 and the north access to the Kingston/Rhinecliff Bridge in Kingston, drive north for 1.4 miles and turn right onto Kukuk Lane. Continue on Kukuk Lane (which becomes Ulster Landing Road) for 2.2 miles, and turn right into the park. Drive all the way to the south end of the park. *Emergences* is on the shore.

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support, and acknowledges the kind cooperation of the Ulster County Legislature.



EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2007

Diabase rock

Installation. Nyack Beach State Park, Nyack, New York

Directions to Nyack Beach State Park, Nyack

From the traffic light at the intersection of Main Street and Broadway in Nyack, drive north on Broadway till the end (2 miles), and turn right into the park. Drive all the way to the north end of the park. *Emergences* is on the shore.

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support, and acknowledges the kind cooperation of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.



EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2009

On-site stone

Installation. Denning's Point State Park (Hudson Highlands State Park), Beacon, New York

Directions to Denning's Point State Park (Hudson Highlands State Park), Beacon

From the traffic light at the 1-84/9D intersection in Beacon drive south on Route 9D. After 1.4 miles turn right at Hudson Avenue. After 0.7 miles make a slight turn at Denning's Avenue. Park at the bottom of Denning's Avenue, adjacent to the Beacon Waste Treatment Plant. Walk through the entrance to the park, which is between the electronic gate and the sign "Beacon Institute". Continue walking for about 10 minutes. You will see a sign on your left pointing down to the trail; follow the sign. A trail marker will be visible on your right. As you begin the trail it will fork. Stay on the right and walk for half a mile until you see an engraved stone on your right with the *Emergences* signage pointing towards the path, which will take you down to the river. Follow the arrows along the path until you reach the shore, where you will see another engraved stone with the *Emergences* signage pointing towards the sculpture, to the left of the jetty. *Emergences* is on the shore, at the southern tip of the park.

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support, and acknowledges the kind cooperation of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation of the Taconic Region, and the Department of Environmental Conservation.



EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2012

On-site stone

Installation. Lighthouse Park, Port Ewen, New York

Directions to Lighthouse Park, Port Ewen (225 River Road, Port Ewen NY 12466)

From the Rondout in Kingston take Route 9W south to Port Ewen. When in Port Ewen you will find a cemetery on your left hand side. First left after the cemetery, turn onto River Road. You will be driving alongside the Hudson River. Drive 2.5 miles and you will see the Lighthouse Park on your left. Enter the park and walk past the picnic tables to the edge of the river. *Emergences* is on the shore.

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support, and acknowledges the kind cooperation of the Town of Esopus.

Photographs: Camilo Rojas

CHRONICLES OF TIME

Raquel Rabinovich's extensive art lineage exceeds humanity's 200,000 year history. It reaches across the vastness of time until it arrives at the origin of life itself, some 3,500 million years ago. That is when elemental life forms first emerged from the dark and teeming waters that enveloped the Earth. Over the succeeding eons, droplets of this primordial ocean became enclosed within wombs, eggs, and seeds. By engendering new life, these enclosing capsules perpetuate the marvel that distinguishes our planet from all others.

When Raquel surveys this lengthy history, she notes that modern humans lack the unity that early humans enjoyed with the earth, its energetic forces, and its myriad forms of life. She comments that this harmonious accord coincided with "the time before human consciousness came into being, to the time before language, to the time when all was one." The genesis of the split between humans and our planetary home coincided with these landmark events in humanity's cultural evolution. That is why her artistic pursuit involves suspending consciousness and language. "I want to go back to the origin, to reconnect with that oneness that we have lost."

Myths and cosmologies the world over have imagined such beginnings within dark waters of potentiality. This vision of ultimate beginnings also resonates with modern scientific views. Scientists describe early Earth as a seething ocean of organic compounds enclosed by impenetrable clouds. Raquel's recreates these originating conditions on Earth when she produces drawings in her studio and when she installs stone sculptures along river ways outdoors.

Such momentous significance is invested in works of art that are modest in scale and form. At first glance Raquel's drawings appear to be muted, monochromatic fields of grey, coffee, chocolate, russet, or mustard. Their exquisite complexity only becomes perceptible when observation assumes the tender and unhurried sensibility of a caress. That is when their subtle textures, tonalities, shadows, reflections, and highlights come into view, barely within the threshold of visibility.

Likewise, Raquel incorporates the planet's engendering conditions, as they occur within the Earth's waters, when she creates her stone installations. These clusters of moderately sized stones scarcely assert their artistic presence within the majestic scale of the landscape where they are placed. But viewers who invest time and attention are rewarded when these modest clusters of indigenous and introduced stone become imbued with a majesty that is comparable to their setting.

To create the drawings, Raquel emulates Earth's multi-million year rehearsal for each new occurrence of life's first stirrings by submerging paper into mud that has been garnered from ancient rivers across the globe – the Ganges, the Hudson, the Urabamba, the Ayeyarwady, the Nile, the Mekong. The first plunge into these nourishing fluids marks the art work's conception. Each successive dipping of the paper manifests the manifold, unpredictable, immanent possibilities that are essential attributes of life. Raquel has been refining this momentous act since 2002.

The title of this series of drawings, *River Library*, is doubly apt. First, it confirms the physical resemblance between these drawings and pages compiled into books. This analogy is particularly pronounced with regard to drawings that are comprised of multiple mud-encrusted sheets that are layered to comprise a single work of art. The library reference also acquires metaphysical significance because these drawings beckon viewers to apply the slow, progressive form of inquiry that is more typical of reading than of art-viewing. Raquel notes, "Mud, like an alphabet with which to write that yet unwritten history of nature and culture, functions like a text, providing a trace or memory of our existence." Such histories are conveyed in the non-verbal language of dark, rich river deposits that accumulate through the geological processes of sedimentation. In this manner *River Library* attests to the all-encompassing unity that prevailed before humanity formulated the abstract conceptual systems of language and mathematics.

Once the paper that has been submerged in mud dries, Raquel enhances the geological qualities they present by gluing minute granules of sediment to their surfaces. She describes the ceremonial nature of this process: "Making art is for me a slow process of unfolding, an experience akin to the one offered by many temples in India, where the gradual passage through various concentric walls, like the passage through the layers in my work, finally leads to a sanctum sanctorum, to a dark source common to us all."

These enhancements parallel planetary forces as they act upon the stones installed along the Hudson River's shorelines. In these outdoor settings, the sculptures are sub-

jected to the actual rhythms of the river's tidal ebbs and flows. The series earned its title, *Emergences*, because, over the course of six hours and twelve and a half minutes, the tides extend ever further up the beach until the entire sculpture is submerged under water and it vanishes from sight. Immediately the reverse six hour and twelve and a half minute process begins as the tide retreats. First the tips of the highest stones reappear. Then those that are the next highest, until the sculpture is completely exposed upon the land along the river's edge. Raquel explains, "At high tide the sculptures are concealed from view, submerged in the river; the waters claim my art. At low tide they are revealed, reemerging when the land reclaims them from the river. Merging with their surroundings, the pieces resonate with the ever-changing currents of the waters, the weather, the seasons. In turn, they echo our own existence."

By lingering on the river bank, viewers can perceive the stones yielding to manifold Earth forces that are ever-present but rarely discerned. The inert mineral deposits that comprise these works gradually come to embody the twice-daily crescendos of the Earth's waters, the once-daily rotations of the planet, the cosmic source of sunrises and sunsets, the omnipresent authority of gravity, and the ever-shifting border between water, land, and sky. Raquel abandons the concept of completion to reenact, in real time and space, the perpetual rhythms that have absorbed the planet since its originating cosmic journeys.

Viewers embark on comparable journeys into the wondrous source of creativity that resides in human consciousness. These inner journeys are engendered by scrupulous formal determinations, apparent in both the drawings and the installations, which transcend references to the material universe. These subtle interventions liberate viewers from the constraints of physical existence. Structure dissolves. Hierarchy is eliminated. Foreground blends into background. Centers merge into peripheries. Space collapses into time. A strange reversal occurs. The longer these works are scrutinized, the less is known about them. Mud dissipates. Water evaporates. Stone dissolves. Only consciousness remains.

Raquel concludes, "The stones and mud that I use in my work literally come from ancestral times, like silent witnesses to the primordial unity of the Earth." These works are created out of mud that is wet and slimy, rock that is cold and hard, and water that is wet and cold. Yet when they are enfolded into Raquel's works of art, these tangible entities assume the visual equivalent of mental 'emptiness'. Instead of sediment upon paper, viewers 'see' the empty space between words; they 'read' a non-verbal syntax; they 'observe' nothingness. Similarly, when the stones are submerged upon the river shores, visitors 'perceive' their absence. In each instance, mental space is cleared so that consciousness can be primed for apprehensions that bypass hurdles to unity - language, writing, and symbolic constructions. These unpretentious works embody the vast oneness that ancient humans possessed and modern humans yearn for.

LINDA WEINTRAUB

May, 2013

EMERGENCES RAQUEL RABINOVICH

Emergences, 2001 – 2013

Multi-site stone permanent evolving sculpture installations
Hudson River

The artist thanks the Pollock-Krasner Foundation for its generous support.

