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Stone. Wood. Gem. Empty Space - The Art of Dorit Schwartz at the Wynn Las Vegas

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Contributing Writer

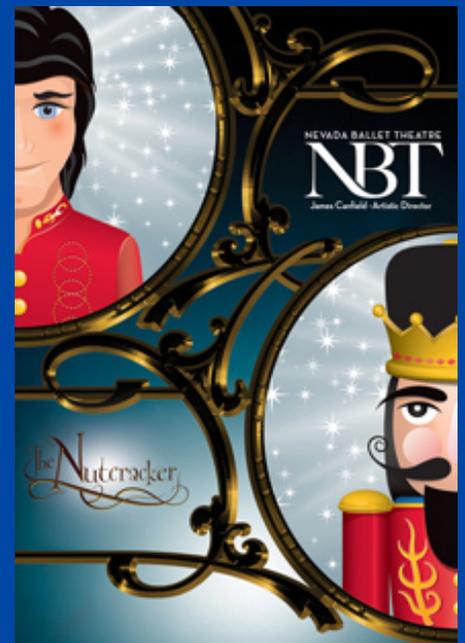
Dorit Schwartz's sublime sculptures lyrically express spiritual enhancement and power, particularly that of the natural world. This is poetic ekphrasis, telling the tale, in physical terms, of the invisible, a vision of unity and transparency. A crystal within the branches of a tree, the creation of open space to contain a metaphysical heart of agate or amethyst. Schwartz's remarkable works are made of beautiful hand carved materials including rare wood, and gemstones.



Artist Dorit Schwartz

A holistically defined artistic vision is exemplified in Schwartz's mystical sculpture Energy Portal. This work incorporates fine Brazilian agate geode, encased within reclaimed mortar wood, with a steel mount and lighting effects. The magic of all of Schwartz's work includes a quiet evocation of the spiritual. No overt symbols exist, rather seemingly simple shapes stand, like nautilus shells, hidden treasures often at the core. The artist has worked the surface and form, however, her interventions are subtle, and almost seamlessly perfect, the objects seem touched by elements, weathered by the sky, by rain, by the ocean. She has maintained a classical paradigm, adherence to the truth of materials, as first expressed by the alternately smooth and rough marbles of the great 19th century French artist Auguste Rodin and the late 19th - early 20th century Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi. These elements and sensibility

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coalesce in Schwartz's work to express something metaphysical as seen in the organic rounded shape of Contemplation composed of an iconic center of selenite crystal, rooted in lovely acacia wood, suggesting meditative and spiritual experience.

This graceful expression reflects a central thematic of the artist's life, and for many others in the modern world, the desire to achieve harmony not only in plastic form, but also within the spiritual self. As such these sculptures serve as spectacular visions of something deep within us, the open spaces like an abstract illustration of the innermost heart of a man, containing a chakra like crystal, a round curvilinear wood carved to form a womb like interior, reflecting perhaps the struggles and hidden chakra of woman. Such imagery is clearest in works such as Rings of Life, a round feminine shape of acacia holding a gem of aragonite, while the work Inner Self features white quartz again encircled in a maternal roundel, expressive of an immeasurable spirituality. This is the essence of crystals, an alternative to the empirical view of the world, and refers to the idea of chi or qi, a Taoist concept naming an unseen healing force. In this philosophy, problems originate from disharmony.

The use of crystals as amulets or healing devices can be traced to the ancient world. The ancient Greeks believed crystals were perpetually frozen ice formations found on Mt. Olympus, this captured beautifully in the passage on the ice of the Gods and embodied in Schwartz's majestic sculpture Happiness (Vav-Hey-Vav וָוַיְהִי) masterfully carved from selenite set with high-polished stainless steel (number 49 in The 72 Names of Schwartz's God Series).

We know in addition to the mention of crystals in Exodus, the ancient Egyptians held quartz sacred, and drank from carved quartz vessels, the liquid imbued with life force. In addition, throughout the world, crystal balls were representative of artist power and purity of vision. Tibetan monks saw these important objects as "windows of the gods." In South America, ancient cultures used crystal objects in ceremonies, and in North America, Native American cultures including the Cherokee believe in the legend of the time of harmony of long ago, the old way. Within this belief system, crystals and minerals possess certain properties that can reinstate harmony and peacefulness. It is no accident, thus that Schwartz has chosen such evocative materials to express what the Buddhists called the "visible nothingness" an esoteric understanding of spiritual ascension and understanding.

The search for ascension and the attainment of spiritual elevation is present in all religion, whether Buddhist, Taoist, Christian, Judaism, Islam or Hindu and many other belief systems and philosophies. What Schwartz captures in her work is this invisible truth, a metaphysical concept that is represented by the distilled purity of nature, masterfully created in hand made sculptures of the utmost earthly material. In Schwartz's extraordinary oeuvre, nature functions as the model for the synergetic, symbiotic and cyclical, an inspired expression of personal spiritual harmony.

As a whole, Schwartz's work has a distilled purity and an organic sensibility, mirroring shapes of flora and fauna, and the silhouette of the curves and recesses of the human body. Many of the works showcase the inherent quality of the natural material, the porous surface of a wood



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"enculturation is the process by which an individual acquires the mental representations (beliefs, knowledge and so forth) and patterns of behavior required to function as a member of a culture." The Dictionary of Anthropology...

about me



**Brian Paco Alvarez,
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Brian Paco Alvarez, is a professional curator, urban historian and native Las Vegas. He has dedicated his life and career to the cultural arts and historic preservation in the Las Vegas area and throughout the state.

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undulated by time, even a tropical wood, touched by the elements, or the grain or spectacular smoothness of polished stone give these works a haptic beauty. It is understood that Brancusi's experiments in sensual abstraction were in some way an extension of the work of Auguste Rodin, and Arp and Moore's work was in the same sense after Brancusi. Schwartz continues this tradition, expanding on the poetic use of natural materials, the contrasts evoking complex impressions of balance, heaviness and lightness in an arrangement of lyrical shapes.

Las Vegas will have the opportunity to see firsthand the luminous beauty of Dorit Schwartz's handcrafted sculpture in a stunningly curated collection of her newest work at the Wynn Home Store, Las Vegas.

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