

TURNING MATERIAL INTO MEANING

JONATHAN PRINCE

Lannoo


DOUCET



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KATHLEEN WEYTS IN CONVERSATION WITH JONATHAN PRINCE

A LOVE AFFAIR, PART I

"In most languages, there's one word for love. But in Sanskrit, there are over a hundred." This is one of the first things Jonathan Prince told me when we started talking about his life and work. It struck me because conversations—unless deliberately intended to do so—rarely start with the subject of love. After more than thirty years in the art world, I have come to feel that it is the only thing that truly matters. Art and love are so deeply intertwined that perhaps we should learn Sanskrit to capture their connection in words. Yet, when trying to understand an artist's work, we barely consider the role of love. However, talking to Jonathan Prince made it unavoidable, challenging and reshaping my understanding of what constitutes an artist, beyond his training, ego, treatment of material and form, and professional trajectory.

Our conversations reminded me of the outrageous reactions during the preview days of the documenta 14 art exhibition in Athens, when we were confronted with artworks by 'unknown' artists, lacking the information that we consider necessary for understanding their value and importance. There were only a limited number of copies of the catalogue available, and the team hadn't had time to label all the artworks. The curators had traveled the world and introduced art practices that most of the art professionals roaming documenta 14 were unfamiliar with. Comments about the absurdity of the situation were plentiful. In retrospect, it was an essential wake-up call for a spoiled Western audience that is far too often focused only on its own criteria of judgment, highly influenced by an ever-more dominant art market. It taught us to be more humble in forming our opinions about which art practices deserve attention. Furthermore, it encouraged us to let the art speak for itself, confronting our growing inability to do so.

When we embarked on this book project, I was unfamiliar with Jonathan Prince's work and his professional journey. From our very first encounter, it became clear that there was much more to discuss than just his sculptures and how they came into being. To understand the work and its creator, it is necessary to dig deeper and embrace a different way of thinking, characterized not only by an openness to knowledge of art, science, and technology, but also by an acknowledgement of our capacity to connect and recognize the underlying power of this. "No matter what I do or how different it is from what I did before, the meaning of it all is so intricately tied together that it hardly matters what the visual or physical aspects are. What matters is what lies behind it, what goes into it, and the emotions it evokes. At the heart of it is this construct that we call this world, and how we make it our own. We should ask ourselves how our understanding of it differs from one person to another. Although I love talking about my work, I find myself saying less and less about it, offering people the opportunity to experience it for themselves. For me, love is the central axis of everything that happens in the world. It's the center of it all. It's so basic, and so easy to find. Over the years, I have learned that love knows no limits, and much of that understanding has been related to my work."

Born into a family of early Jewish immigrants to the United States who made a living in New York's garment industry, Jonathan's father broke with family tradition, specializing in top-notch restorative and aesthetic dentistry. His patients included the rich, powerful, and famous, some of whom became family friends, influencing young Jonathan's destiny. "One day, we went to visit Jacques Lipchitz (1891–1973) in his studio in Hastings-on-Hudson. He and my father got along very well. I remember he was working on a bust of John F. Kennedy. It was larger than life. I mean, the head was bigger than I am now! I was twelve, and Lipchitz invited me to help him apply clay. I just loved it: the ladders, the assistant, and the material. I remember Lipchitz putting his arm around me and explaining the work in his studio, showing me the house and his incredible collection of pre-Columbian art. It was so inspiring, and I fell in love with it all. Luckily, he fell in love with me too. He told my father that I was welcome to spend time in his studio anytime I wanted. I went as often as my

FORM & MATERIAL

WORKS BY JONATHAN PRINCE

ALEMBIC CUBE

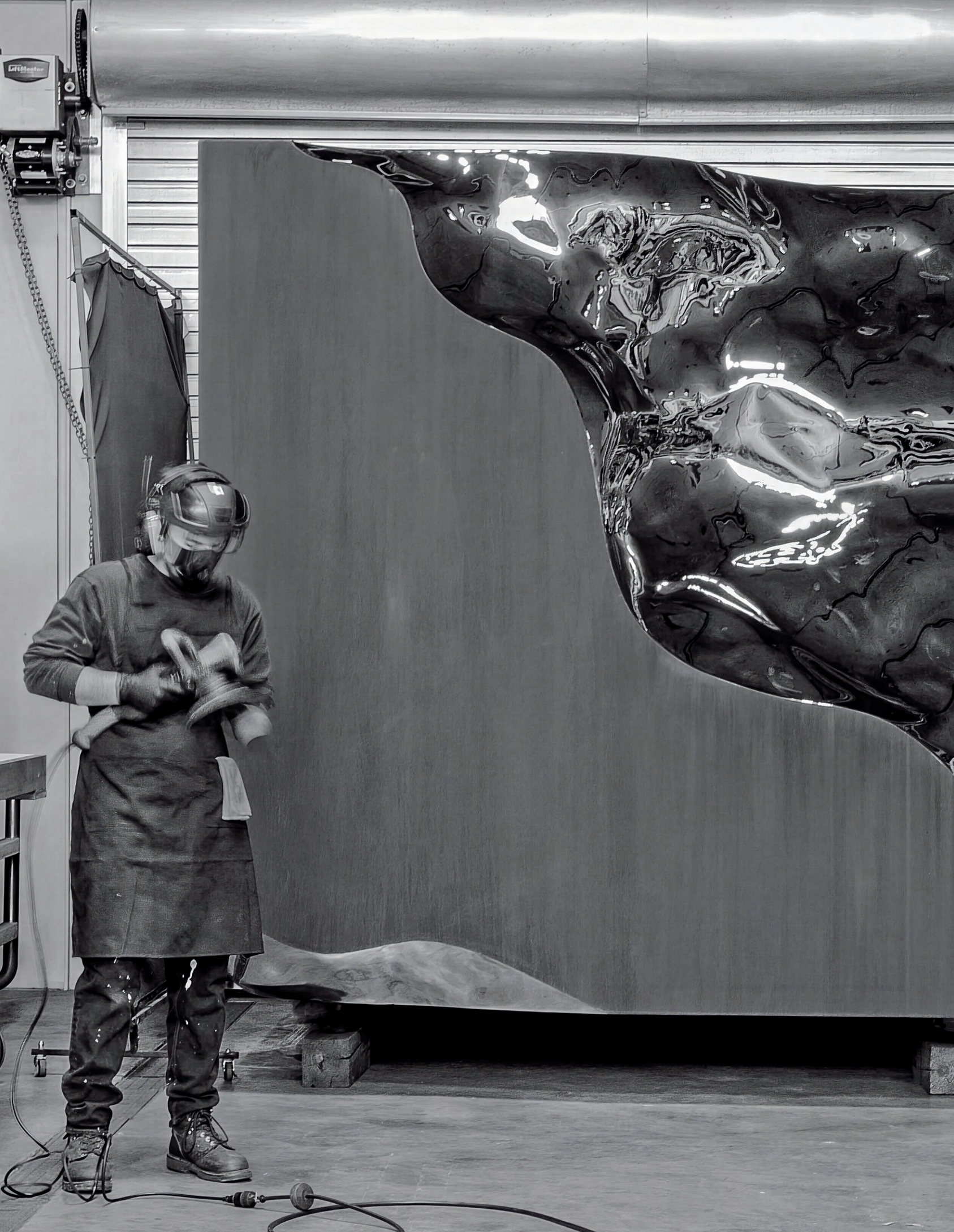


Alembic Cube
Series: Liquid State
CorTen and Mirror Polished Marine Grade Stainless Steel
254 × 244 × 244 cm / 100 × 96 × 96 in





‘FOR ME, MAKING BEGINS WITH LISTENING. METAL HAS ITS OWN INTELLIGENCE, ITS OWN LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES, AND THE WORK EMERGES FROM PAYING ATTENTION TO THEM.’




STANLEY
PowerLock
16'
38
34
31
29
30
28
22
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16
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8
9
6
3
2
1



p. 40
Alembic Cube
Series: Liquid State
CorTen and Mirror
Polished Marine Grade
Stainless Steel
254 × 244 × 244 cm /
100 × 96 × 96 in



p. 48
Ellipsis
Series: Liminal
South African Granite
170 × 208 × 152 cm /
67 × 82 × 60 in



p. 54
Rumination
Series: Erosion
CorTen Steel
366 × 41 × 41 cm /
144 × 16 × 16 in



p. 62
Odyssey
Series: Shatter
Marine Grade Stainless
Steel
86 × 35 × 35 cm /
34 × 14 × 14 in



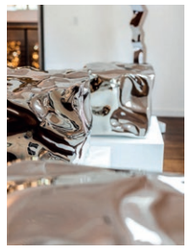
p. 68
G2V
Series: Liquid State
CorTen and Mirror
Polished Marine Grade
Stainless Steel
289 × 243 × 121 cm /
114 × 96 × 48 in



p. 78
Tumbler New Zealand
Monumental
Series: Tumbler
CorTen Steel
548 × 609 × 304 cm /
216 × 240 × 120 in



p. 88
Ascension
Series: Flow State
CorTen Steel
36 × 72 × 72 cm /
14 × 28 × 28 in



p. 92
Liquid State
Series: Liquid State
High Chromium Stainless
Steel
48 × 48 × 48 cm /
19 × 19 × 19 in



p. 100
Bore Block
Series: Torn Steel
Bronze and Stainless Steel
299 × 299 × 76 cm /
118 × 118 × 30 in



p. 110
Red
Series: States of Matter
Zimbabwe Granite
66 × 64 × 16 cm /
26 × 25 × 6 in



p. 116
Apparition
Series: Liquid State
Marine Grade Stainless
Steel
187 × 109 × 30 cm /
73 × 43 × 12 in



p. 122
Pareidolia
Series: Pareidolia
CorTen Steel
142 × 81 × 261 cm /
56 × 32 × 103 in



p. 126
Mother Earth
Series: Flow State
CorTen Steel
104 × 243 × 76 cm /
41 × 96 × 30 in



p. 134
Fissure
Series: Flow State
CorTen Steel
122 × 137 × 122 cm /
48 × 54 × 48 in



p. 140
Cauldron
Series: Liquid State
High Chromium Stainless
Steel
30 × 30 × 30 cm /
11 × 11 × 11 in



p. 146
Torus 340
Series: Torn Steel
CorTen Steel and Stainless
Steel
411 × 366 × 244 cm /
162 × 144 × 96 in



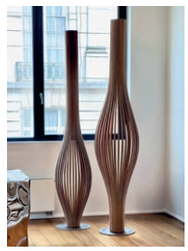
p. 154
Construct
Series: Gel State
Stainless Steel
121 × 121 × 121 cm /
48 × 48 × 48 in



p. 158
Flow State
Series: Flow State
CorTen Steel
183 × 117 × 46 cm /
72 × 46 × 18 in



p. 166
Turbulence Column I
Series: Turbulence
High Chromium Stainless Steel
215 × 48 × 48 cm /
85 × 19 × 19 in



p. 172
Enceinte II
Claro Walnut and Stainless Steel
239 × 51 × 51 cm /
94 × 20 × 20 in

Enceinte III
Claro Walnut and Stainless Steel
228 × 44 × 44 cm /
89 × 17 × 17 in



p. 178
Oracle
Series: Fragment
Cambrian Black Granite
203 × 182 × 99 cm /
80 × 72 × 39 in



p. 184
Jello Spectrum
Series: Spectrum
Cast glass
15 × 18 × 18 cm /
6 × 7 × 7 in



p. 188
Pirouette
CorTen Steel
76 × 34 × 34 cm /
29 × 13 × 13 in



p. 194
Turbulence Column III
Series: Turbulence
High Chromium Stainless Steel
243 × 15 × 12 cm /
96 × 6 × 5 in



p. 202
Shatter
Series: Shatter
CorTen and Mirror Polished Marine Grade Stainless Steel
224 × 117 × 117 cm /
88 × 46 × 46 in



p. 212
Axis Mundi
CorTen Steel
426 × 152 × 152 cm /
168 × 60 × 60 in



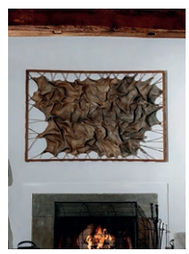
p. 218
Columnar Tear
Series: Torn Steel
Stainless Steel
254 × 40 × 40 cm /
100 × 16 × 16 in



p. 226
Disc Fragment
Series: Liquid State
CorTen Steel and Stainless Steel
274 × 243 × 152 cm /
108 × 96 × 60 in



p. 230
Vestigial Block
CorTen and Stainless Steel
183 × 183 × 183 cm /
72 × 72 × 72 in



p. 238
Transcendence
Series: Flow State
Buffalo Rawhide, Aluminum, Stainless Steel and Nylon
203 × 132 × 20 cm /
80 × 52 × 8 in



p. 242
Tumbler (Monumental)
Series: Tumbler
CorTen Steel
548 × 609 × 304 cm /
216 × 240 × 120 in



p. 254
Southern Remnant
Series: Liquid State
CorTen Steel and Stainless Steel
152 × 335 × 152 cm /
60 × 132 × 60 in



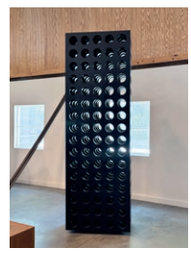
p. 262
Tumble I
Series: Tumble series
Mirror polished stainless steel
63 × 86 × 45 cm /
25 × 34 × 18 in



p. 266
Tumble IV
Series: Tumble series
Matte and mirror finished stainless steel
59 × 46 × 35 cm /
23 × 18 × 14 in



p. 268
Flow State Console
Cast Glass and Bronze
89 × 51 × 183 cm /
35 × 20 × 72 in



p. 276
Dark Matter
Series: Liminal
South African Granite
254 × 50 × 81 cm /
100 × 20 × 32 in

