

***Purity*: some differences between this, the initial work of my *Masterpiece* sculpture series, and its historical "starting place" antecedent, Antonio Corradini's *La Purity* in the permanent collection of Ca' Rezzonico, Venezia.**

In general, I have set for myself the difficult task of making a new sculpture that is "more perfect" than the "perfect" Corradini, a "Masterpiece" of Baroque sculpture. Here is a partial list of the ways I have gone about attaining that goal:

1. The substantial additions I have effected and the way I have carved / polished my work has made mine a true sculpture-in-the-round, not a frontal portrait intended for placement in a niche or against a wall.
2. I have employed a non-traditional (for sculpture) stone for my work, not stereotypical white Italian Marble. My translucent stone (e.g. translucent white Iranian onyx) renders the veil, shawl, and drapery diaphanous. The onyx's subtle sedimentary layering establishes a parallel surface network, one that alternately camouflages and reveals the sculpture's skein of folds and sweeps. My translucent stone, when carefully lit, appears to glow from within, to have an inner light that radiates outward, that penetrates the veil. This is not possible with opaque marble. Corradini used the material that he was familiar with, the most readily-available carving stone in Italy, the one that responded well to traditional hand-carving techniques. Because of my high-tech methodology and my access to and knowledge of worldwide stone sources, I have many more options. I made a concerted attempt to select a stone that works with the form to create something rich and new.
3. My sculpture is a mirror-image of its source. The mirroring, a feature of many of my portraits, is intentional. It is the view that the subject "sees" in a mirror. This feat is extremely difficult (i.e. near-impossible) to accomplish through traditional means of sculptural reproduction (e.g. "pointing up"). It is possible through my use of advanced technology, and I hope, adds a significant element of strangeness, of unfamiliarity, of newness to my sculpture (especially for those who are familiar with the Corradini).
4. I eliminated the Christian Latin cross from the bodice area of the veil. By so doing, I intend to make the veil more universal. The veil is a widely-used head covering - Christian, Islamic, Indian, mourning (think Jackie Kennedy at the funeral), etc. The universal veil is especially appropriate for Venice (location of the Corradini source sculpture) because of that city's role as crossroads of Islam and Christianity. I hope that by removing the cross, I have made the veil one of rich mystery, not only a relic of religious devotion, mourning, penitence, or modesty. The ethereal translucence of the onyx, in concert with the spiritual drape of the veil, serve as counterpoints to the enhanced sexuality (see below) of the woman.
5. I eliminated the lace border from the veil to freshen its appearance and enhance its smooth, sensual liquidity.
6. My sculptural treatment of the veil and drapery is intentionally softer, more flowing, less sharp than that of the Corradini. In my work, the veil has become more than a covering - it is the form itself. This difference is subtle, but important. The Corradini woman appears to be covered by an improbable, wet-look, relatively crisp pile of cloth. In my sculpture, the body and veil are more unified. It almost appears that the body has departed and left behind a misty, swirling, dematerialized fabric surrogate.

7. I have corrected several of Corradini's sculptural errors. Corradini not only didn't finish the bottom, sides, and back of his sculpture, certain passages of his work are confused. In particular, the layers of his drapery sometimes don't make sense or were not completely resolved. I fixed those problems in my work.

8. I subtly enlarged the breasts. For a sculpture ostensibly with devout "purity" as its subject, the Corradini woman is quite sexy. By my breast enhancement, I have tried to gently tip the pious / sensual balance a bit farther toward the latter.

9. I have polished the small patch of exposed flesh to differentiate it from the matte finish of the cloth. The entire lower back of my sculpture is also mirror-polished. The Corradini has a dull surface finish throughout. I have worked hard to give the cloth passages of my work a fine, ultra-uniform satin finish so that the surface softly "disappears".

10. The Baroque-era Corradini has suffered damage in some areas over time. Its carved surface also has several rough, chipped, unfinished passages. This could be because Corradini didn't feel the need to finish those areas, because he didn't have sufficient time to complete the work, or because those sections have been subject to abrasion. My sculpture is completely finished and damage-free. I have treated its back, side, front, and top with equal fastidiousness. The bottom of my work is also scrupulously finished, and I have permanently affixed a custom stainless steel insert and ABS base plate to ensure display / transport safety. Corradini's sculpture lacks these accommodations.

11. My pedestal is a fitting accompaniment to the sculpture. The Corradini was, until recently, displayed in a corner at Ca' Rezzonico on an unfortunate, too-large, too-dark wood base, to which it was crudely attached. My pedestal is a refined, multi-part, carefully-designed-and-constructed ensemble that I believe presents my sculpture far more elegantly. It permits my work to be seen from all sides. It is a beautiful piece of furniture, but it doesn't interfere with the 'Purity' of the sculpture.

I hope this list makes clear my intentions and adequately addresses the subject of "originality". I want my work to induce questions, not dictate answers. While almost forcing a type of refined viewing, of connoisseurship, the sculpture should seduce. Ultimately, the analytical approach I have employed in the creation of this piece doesn't feel all that different from the one I have used to make my portrait sculptures. Yet it is undeniable that the net results are quite new.



P.S. There is a long tradition of artists making works "after" the works of their forebears. Although utilizing an unprecedented, advanced, complex technological armamentarium, I am, in a way, working in that great tradition. I and my Masterpiece project are, at most, tangentially related to "Appropriation" and the contemporary artists whose works have been labeled as such. Fueled by love, I'm reaching way back to a time centuries before the Modernist Revolution, searching for a way to make something equally revolutionary.