

WRITTEN IN STONE

A Journey Shaping Places in New Millennium China

By Polo Bourieau



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SCULPTURE, SPACE, AND URBAN IDENTITY

Introduction by Catherine Shaw

The first time I saw Polo's work was in 2015, in Chengdu, China. I was navigating my way through Taikoo Li, a sprawling 250,000-square-metre pedestrian-only retail district with a 1,300-year-old temple at its heart. And then, there it was – a massive, gravity-defying sculpture, unmistakably modern, yet somehow perfectly placed in this landscape of preserved traditions. It was a bold landmark, marking the place not only geographically, but conceptually too, sparking thought through orientation. The sculpture shifted my sense of the space dramatically, but remained entirely respectful of its history.

As an urban planner who has lived in Hong Kong and travelled to Mainland China since the early 1990s, I was especially taken by how seamlessly Polo's piece completed the urban landscape. Its presence was dramatic, almost arresting, yet it didn't intrude; it was a welcome guide, a natural focal point that went beyond the functional, touching instead on a genuine dialogue between past and present. The sculpture was not just beautiful in the aesthetic sense, but a tool for deciphering our world today.

After this powerful introduction to Polo's work and to the philosophy that defines his ideation, I learnt that he was born in Nantes, France, and trained in stone carving with les Compagnons des Devoirs. Polo's early practice was steeped in the technical rigour and craftsmanship of European sculpture as he helped to restore historic sites such as the Louvre, which gave him a real appreciation for architectural legacy and the durability of stone as a medium. But it was his move to Hong Kong that transformed his art, introducing complex new layers of meaning and adaptation. In a city defined by its extreme density, speed, and constant change, and, paradoxically, where land is so precious, Polo found a setting that challenged him to expand his vision of site-specific and public art and, ultimately, to define a new purpose for his work.

Immense, elemental, and in noble materials such as marble and stainless steel, his sculptures speak out – not just to their physical surroundings, but to the whole community. They address the city itself, inviting interaction and encouraging a sense of place that's rare in such a densely constructed setting.

Polo's creative activities occur in multiple different workshops driven by the source of his materials: whether it is an atelier in Pietrasanta, Italy, or workshops in Xiamen and Shanghai, or a smaller studio

in Hong Kong's Kennedy Town. In Pietrasanta, a renowned town of artisans steeped in a centuries-old tradition of stone carving, Polo carves monumental blocks of marble or granite, engaging with these ancient materials on a scale that honours their origins. Proximity to quarries that have supplied sculptors since Michelangelo allows Polo to realise his larger projects, where the grand scale of the stone and the landscape converge to illuminate his vision. Here, surrounded by tools designed for large, heavy carvings, Polo is liberated as he experiments with weight, texture, and impact.

In other places, such as Shanghai, a metal workshop allows for him to make large, weighty sculptures such as *Walking Man*. And in Hong Kong, his own working space is more intimate and his work therefore takes on a human scale, focusing on the finer details that bring his larger concepts to life. Here, he refines smaller maquette, tests materials, and creates pieces in dialogue with the urban environment that impels him so strongly. The juxtaposition of these workspaces indicates Polo's peripatetic nature, and together, these spaces enable Polo to merge overriding objectives with detailed elegance, bridging the colossal and the intimate in his public art.

This volume goes beyond cataloguing his work; it traces how his formative experiences went on to guide his distilled outlook on sculpture. It explores how Polo's style has adapted and evolved in response to the dense urban fabric of Hong Kong, and how his attitude towards public art has been fashioned by an awareness that these works aren't confined to a gallery or museum. Instead, they exist in spaces where people live, move, and interact daily, offering moments of contemplation and connection. At the heart of Polo's journey stands Alison Pickett, his partner in life and an indelible force in his practice. Her influence runs strongly through his work, supporting his vision and his singular approach to sculpting in the public realm.

At the core of Polo's work is an exploration of humanity's relationship with the natural and built environments. His use of enduring materials like stone and metal demonstrates his fascination with themes ranging from permanence to change. By referencing ancient and modern authorities – from Chinese scholar's rocks to contemporary architectural forms – he creates a chronicle that is deeply rooted and also forward-looking, where each piece is as much a part of the landscape as the buildings or trees surrounding it. Indeed, Polo has remained consistent in his view that his public sculptures are part of architecture.

This book captures that philosophy, inviting readers – architects, planners, urbanists, and the *flâneur* and art lovers alike – to consider how art changes our experience of space, and taking viewers on a journey of colour, texture, and atmosphere. For Polo, public sculpture is about storytelling, but on a scale that exists outside traditional boundaries, spanning the individual and collective experiences. And this book reveals that, at its best, public art does more than decorate: it transforms, resonating with passers-by, making the city a place of integration and shared memories.

While the process of creating sculptures may seem mysterious, Polo embarks on his work with a rare openness, a directness that brings his audience closer to his process and philosophy. Through ruminations that are as honest as they are poetic, this is an entrance into the artist's mind, written with a generosity of perception that mirrors his sculptural strategy. Polo provides an authentic view of how his creations emerge in dialogue with urban landscapes, shaped by and responding to the architectural surroundings. His voice here is vital, lending an unfiltered and nuanced perspective on what public space means today and how it differs from art in an art gallery in both its accessibility and context. There, art is housed within curated spaces and often targets a specific audience, but outside, public art is created for open spaces, making it available to everyone, regardless of their background or familiarity

with art. In this way, art interacts with its environment, engaging with the community, fostering a sense of belonging and dialogue among diverse audiences.

Thoughtfully arranged as a journey through the structure of the monomyth or hero's quest often seen in literature and myth, in this context the framework becomes the lens through which Polo explores the creative and philosophical process behind his public sculptures, and mirrors the stages of a transformative journey.

This journey begins with an exploration of Polo's early inspirations, aspirations, and formative years, akin to the "call to adventure" phase of the monomyth, dwelling on his discovery of sculpture as a powerful medium, tracing his fascination with the primordial nature of stone, and his drive to explore how materials and places merge to form meaningful connections.

As the tale progresses, Polo's projects in Hong Kong and China serve as the "trials" or "challenges" stage. Each sculpture represents a different test or experiment, with Polo working within the constraints of an urban environment, and navigating the interplay between planning challenges, developers' interests, public perceptions, and his own creative integrity. For example, in works like *Walking East* or *Reflection*, he addresses the spatial and social functions of sculpture equally, focusing on pieces that invite public engagement and situate his work within the broader urban narrative.

Towards the book's conclusion, the journey reaches a phase of "transformation" and "return", illustrating Polo's growth as he mulls over the themes of continuity and change in his work. Here, his projects take on a new resonance, embodying the symbolic return to share hard-won insights with the community – whether through large-scale pieces that speak to a collective memory or intimate sculptures that evoke personal musings. This final chapter confirms the idea of his sculptures as not merely physical objects but as markers of time, identity, and place within the urban landscape.

By aligning the book's structure with the monomyth, Polo invites readers into a milieu where each sculpture contributes to a larger story, asserting his belief that public art, like the hero's journey, should give something meaningful to its audience – guidance, a means of concentration, or even just a pause to consider one's place within the world. In this way, the book serves as a record of his work as well as a way for readers to experience his sculptures as stepping stones on a journey through the city, just as he did in their creation.

As well as Polo's deliberations, this book includes a conversation between him and me, adding a further layer of enlightenment to his written chapters. Through our exchange, readers gain a more profound understanding of his ideas and artistic principles as they relate to the urban landscapes he creates. This dialogue brings forth new nuances, with Polo articulating the unfolding influences and challenges that inform his work, lending a fresh, conversational frame of reference that complements the more analytical chapters.

As such, this book is essential for everyone who sees the power of public art in urban spaces as more than just an aesthetic penchant. It is an invitation to explore Polo's creative process, from his careful selection of materials to his consideration of placement and public interaction. His work resonates with a timelessness that, in the bustling spaces of Hong Kong and other Asian cities, imparts a grounding – a reminder that art, when thoughtfully integrated into public spaces, serves as a powerful connector across time and culture.









Taking his words into account and visualising the setting, something was starting to take shape in my mind, but I had no clear idea what I would actually make there. My first visit to the site in Chengdu would change everything.

Scale is a very important element to appreciate volumes in space. As I gazed down from an adjacent office tower, Jinjiang District, home to Taikoo Li Chengdu, looked like a very busy ant colony surrounded by giant praying mantises.

From ground level, however, the lanes concept was taking shape in front of me. And the construction of contemporary architecture was creating another blurring experience with the renovation of the traditional existing buildings.

The most impressive of all the renovations was Guangdong Hall, situated in the south-west corner of the development, where we all thought an iconic sculpture should be present. The building constituted an empty shell made of beautiful antique grey bricks supporting ancestral traditional wood carpentry. And surprisingly, time also managed to keep the 200-year-old original Chinese wood-framed windows.

I am a big fan of sixteenth-century Italian sculptor Benvenuto Cellini's hypothesis that each sculpture has eight views, and they must be equally good. And I was curious to imagine what a sculpture – my sculpture – would look like from the inside through a 200-year-old Chinese wood frame. I would not be disappointed!

In the chiaroscuro that filtered the light into the hall, I realised that those windows were not something intended to keep you out. On the contrary, they were designed to frame the other people's moments of life in motion.

And suddenly, the sculpture was right there! Just as one of the people I was observing walking through the lanes. So I designed *Walking Through* to mimic human behaviour walking through a series of orthogonal grids, reminiscent of architectural blueprints and the skeletal frames of the buildings that surround us.

From another of Cellini's eight views, my walking man was to become a conceptual link, tying the sculpture to the very essence of the urban lines' development and design. And through this grid-like construction, I designed the sculpture to naturally form a dialogue between the silhouette versus the volume.

Together with Henrique de Almeida, The Oval Partnership executive architect in charge of the site, we discussed at length the size of the sculpture. Finally, we agreed it should reach the level of the fascia of the new construct.







SCULPTING PUBLIC SPACES

A conversation with Polo Bourieau and Catherine Shaw

Catherine: You said that growing up in Brittany, sculpture was simply woven into the fabric of everyday life. This must have profoundly shaped your artistic sensibilities.

Polo: Yes, in France it was part of the fabric. And as a young apprentice to a guild of stonemasons, sculpture was seen as a fundamental element of architecture, not just an add-on. They share the same meaning. This is quite different from the more common approach in the West, where sculpture is often seen as a decorative feature to be added to a building. Part of my hope with this book is to rekindle this natural relationship between sculpture and architecture to inspire young artists and architects to work more closely together.

Catherine: How do you think this has influenced the way you approach your work culturally in a very different context like Hong Kong?

Polo: I think it has had a big impact on my work. When I first arrived in Hong Kong, I was struck by the density, its modernity, and then by how very Chinese it was. It was incredible. My early encounter with art consultant Alison Pickett, who is now my wife, was important in determining my career here, because she had the same vision about convincing developers and city officials of the importance of not just placing a sculpture in a public space, but about integrating it as something essential and inseparable.

Catherine: Can you tell me more about how the city's dynamic environment has influenced your artistic approach and the materials you use?

Polo: In France, we build and sculpt with stone, but Hong Kong was quite different and that influenced my work. I found myself drawn to materials and techniques that could stand up to the scale and energy of the city. At the same time, I've had to think about how my sculptures interact with and respond to their surroundings. In general, sculpture is contemplative. It's not something that you understand at once. It invites you to pause, turn around, and see it in all its dimensions. So, it's already an art form that

demands reflection and meditation, and that is why today it is more relevant than ever for placemaking. The first goal of sculpture is to make people stop, think, and understand, through the material, the story, where they live, or simply the scale, like the ten-metre-high sculpture in Chengdu that you first saw. The dimensions make you think about yourself, because you cannot help comparing yourself with the pure monumental scale.

Catherine: Is it possible to create sculptures that are both visually striking and yet integrated into the urban landscape?

Polo: I cannot simply plop a sculpture down in a public space and expect it to thrive. There must be a deep, symbiotic relationship between the artwork and its environment. That's why I always start by immersing myself in the cultural and historical context, trying to understand the character of a space, and who lives there or visits.

Then it's about finding the right balance between the sculptural form and the architectural elements, taking cues from the surroundings, and using similar materials and shapes, or even incorporating the sculpture directly into the structure.

At the same time, I want my sculptures to have a strong, distinct identity – to be more than just background features. It's a delicate balance. It's not just about creating eye-catching pieces, but about making something that belongs. I think the *Earth Dragon* sculpture I created at the ELEMENTS shopping mall [see page 86] in Hong Kong is a good example of how sculpture should reflect its location and the people there. It combines the ultra-modernity of the International Commerce Centre, which rises above ELEMENTS, with a more traditional Chinese identity. It creates a topographic relationship between the mythology of dragons and the geography, and that is why *Earth Dragon* looks like part of the landscape, emerging from and penetrating the floor.

Catherine: Do you find working within a historical urban environment satisfying?

Polo: I try to achieve a timelessness that supersedes the fashion of a particular period. My sculpture reflects the cultural landscape as much as the urban landscape. After me, it has another life. I was recently asked to restore one of my sculptures in Taikoo Li Chengdu because so many people have been climbing on it. This is good, because to me it means people like touching it. Sculpture is not just about form – tactility and materiality are especially important.

Catherine: You clearly see public art as a collaborative process. How do you navigate that aspect, especially when working with architects and city officials?

Polo: It's not always easy, especially when there are different visions and priorities, but if we can find common ground, the results are transformative. I may have a clear artistic vision, but I also need to be willing to adapt and incorporate other perspectives. At the same time, I am not afraid to advocate for my own ideas and push back when necessary.

Catherine: Looking ahead, what do you see as the future of public art, particularly in rapidly growing cities like those in Asia?

Polo: I think we will continue to see the rapid transformation of the urban fabric, particularly in Asia, and a lot of innovation in terms of materials, technologies, and approaches to integrating art into the built environment. For example, the use of light, video, and other digital media is opening new possibilities for creating dynamic, immersive public art experiences. At the same time, I am interested in exploring how we can use more traditional sculptural materials in new ways.

But beyond the technical aspects, I believe the real key to the future of public art lies in stronger partnerships between artists, architects, developers, and local communities. We need to embed public art into the very fabric of urban design and placemaking. This is going to take a shift in mindsets and policies, and it needs government incentives and support. We have to also think about management and maintenance so that sculptures that were intended to be touched and climbed on are not behind barriers that stop people interacting with them.

Catherine: How do you see the monomyth in the context of your work?

Polo: Well, in a way each of my public sculpture projects can be seen as its own hero's journey. The initial call to action is the commission or opportunity that sets the process in motion. Then the artist, like the hero, must venture into the unknown, navigating obstacles and ordeals along the way. Whether it's dealing with the challenges of the material, collaborating with architects and community stakeholders, or simply achieving the grand vision, there are always tests and problems to overcome. But, ultimately, the goal is to emerge transformed into a work of art. For me, the people in the public realm are also heroes with their own stories. They are "*les aventuriers du quotidien*" ("the everyday adventurers") that I reflect through my sculptures.

Catherine: I love that analogy. It really captures the epic, transformative nature of creating public sculpture. How do you see this monomyth structure in the overall narrative and structure of the book?

Polo: Well, I wanted to use the monomyth as a unifying thread that ties the whole book together. Each chapter becomes a different stage of the hero's quest – the call to adventure, the trials and tribulations, the moment of revelation, and, finally, the return home, transformed. By framing the book in this way, I can share the specific stories and experiences behind my public art projects and illuminate the deeper, universal themes that underlie the creative process. It's about capturing the emotional and spiritual dimensions of being an artist working in the public realm.

Catherine: That's a very compelling approach. I can see how the monomyth provides a rich framework for exploring the multifaceted nature of your work. It allows you to delve into the personal, the practical, and the philosophical, all within a cohesive narrative structure.

Polo: Exactly. But the monomyth is not just a structural device – it's a way for me to share the true essence of being a public artist. At the end of the day, it's not just about the sculptures themselves, but also about the transformative journey that goes into creating them.



BEHIND THE SCENES

In this book, I talk about sculpture and the elements which compose and define it. Mainly about memory, matter, gravity, textures, edges, mass, and the harmony it creates in space.

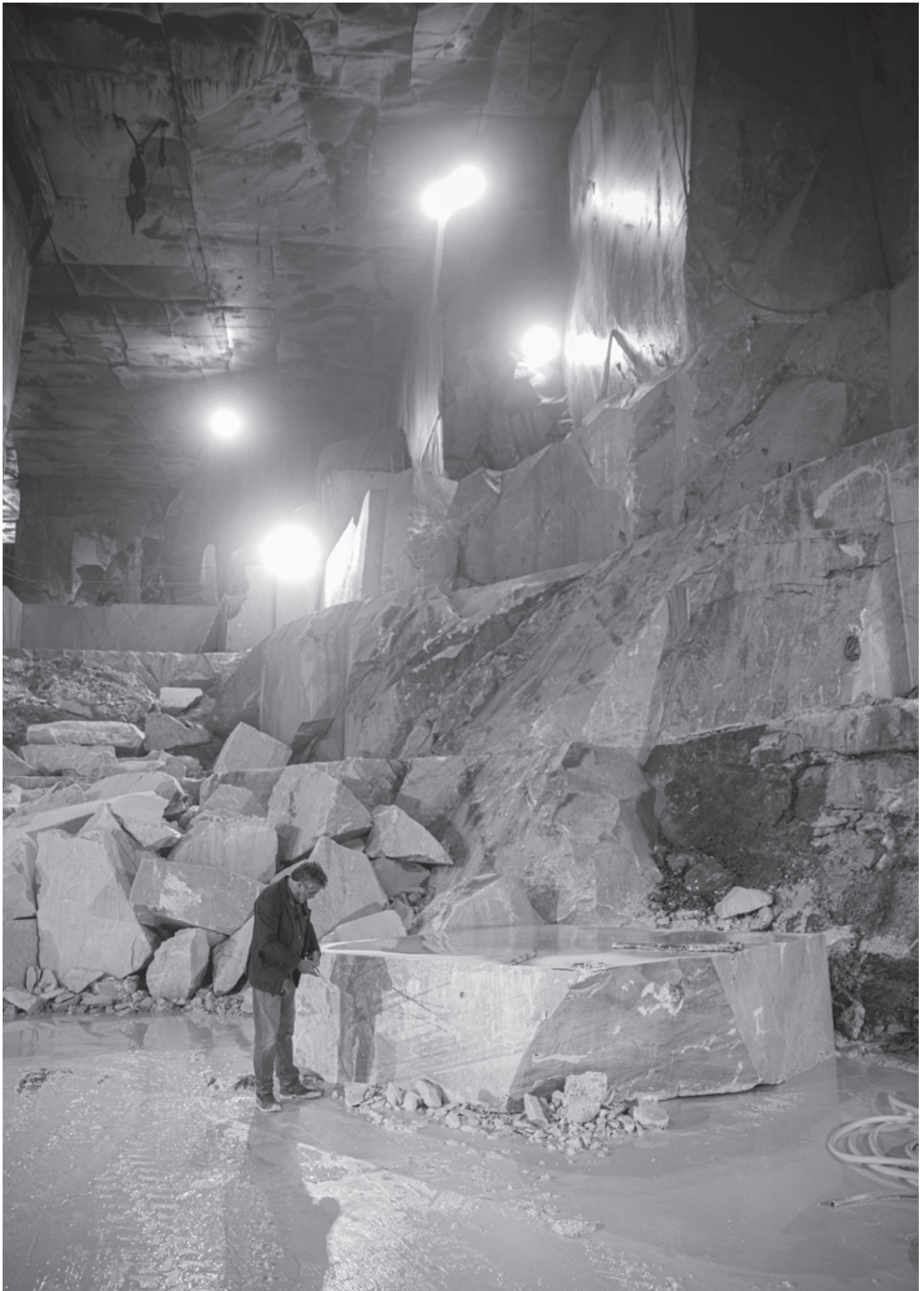
Of course, it all begins with a spark – an idea born from observation, a memory, or the resonance of a place. But creating a site-specific sculpture is as much about imagination as it is about problem-solving.

And behind every monumental work lies a tapestry of human effort in between patrons, art consultants, curators, landscapers, architects, engineers, logistics, craftsmanship, and, hopefully, the intimate dialogue with tools and matter.

In my studio, discussions with collaborators are crucial. Engineers, architects, and artisans gather around designs, scaled models, and site plans to explore how the sculpture will interact with its environment – variables can include the wind load, the material behaviour with the elements, and even how light will fall on the piece at different times of the day. It is here that the sculpture begins to emerge as a living entity.



After that, choosing the right block is an act of reverence. The stone holds its own story – millions of years etched in its veins, colours, and imperfections. For me, the matter is the very soul of the sculpture and stones are more than raw materials. Their density, grain, and subtle hues dictate the tools you will use and the narrative you can tell.





But, for site-specific projects, the journey does not end in the workshop. The installation on-site is a performance in itself. Each site presents its own challenges. And it often requires cranes, scaffolding, and the coordinated effort of many hands.

Installations are where the sculpture finds its own voice. It begins to interact with its surroundings, casting shadows, reflecting light, and inviting touch. It is a moment of both vulnerability and happening, where the piece becomes part of the world it was created for.

And there it is for you!

But what lies behind the scene you see is more than labour; it is the essence of creation. And throughout this process, I am never alone. On that scale, sculpting is a collaborative act, a symphony of skills and perspectives. It is the sweat on a quarryman's brow, the hum of a robot arm, the questions of my assistants, and the ache in my own hands after hours of carving, chiselling, and polishing. It is the unspoken dialogue between the sculptor and the matter, the tension between control and surrender. These moments of shared labour become memories etched as deeply as the grooves in the stone.

The art may bear my name, but it carries the spirit of everyone who touched it.

As you stand before one of my sculptures, I invite you to see beyond its polished surface. Imagine the journey – the means it carries, the land it comes from, the hands that shaped it, the tools that carved it, and the dust that filled the air. It is in these hidden layers that the true essence of sculpture resides.

Sculpture is not just an object; it is an act of becoming. And every act of becoming has a behind-the-scenes story, waiting to be told.

Written in stone.





BIOGRAPHY

Polo Bourieau MRSS

- 1968 Born in Nantes (France)
- 1983 Baccalauréat, Fine Arts and Art History
- 1984/1989 Joined The Compagnons des Devoirs (Houses of Nantes, Campeneac, Bordeaux, Marseille, and Avignon)
- 1985 Bronze medal, Académie d'architecture, Paris
- 1989 Joined the 21st Regiment of Engineers in Angers
- 1990 Relocated to Paris
- 1990 Restoration, Musée du Louvre
- 1991 Design consultant for Atelier d'architecture SNCF
- 1992 Design consultant for Oger International
- 1993 Design consultant for The American Center in Paris
- 1993 Collaborator, Group Polska, Ronchamp (France)
- 1994 Relocated to Pietrasanta (Italy)
- 1995 Oscar dei Giovanni Europei award
- 1998 Founded Studio M.A.D. in Turin (Italy)
- 2003 Consultant for the Conferenza Episcopale Italiana
- 2003 Relocated to Hong Kong
- 2004 Founded Urbanrock International Ltd Hong Kong
- 2018/2019 Lecturer at the Accademia di Architettura di Genova (Italy)
- 2022 Joined The Royal Society of Sculptors
- 2025 Living and working in Hong Kong

Exhibitions / Workshops / Lectures/ Publications

- 1995 International Sculpture Symposium, Atri (Italy)
- 1996 International Sculpture Symposium, Civitella Rovetto (Italy)
- 1997 International Sculpture Symposium, Front Canavese (Italy)
- 1998 Show Point of View, Gallery Teart, Turin (Italy)
- 2000 International Sculpture Symposium, Alpalhão (Portugal)
- 2003 Collective show, Fondazione Arkad, Seravezza (Italy)
- 2003 International Symposium, Hualien (Taiwan)
- 2011 Lecture: Identity and Art at The Guangzhou Museum of Art (China)
- 2014 Collective show at 10 Design (Hong Kong)
- 2016 Workshop: Creatività e Robotica, Fondazione Arkad, Seravezza (Italy)
- 2018 Lecture: Dialogo Tra Arte e Paesaggio (Dialogue Between Art and Landscape), Accademia di Architettura di Genova (Italy)
- 2019 Collective show: +852 at La Galerie (Hong Kong)
- 2019 Collective show: Flower Power, Camaiore (Italy)
- 2019 Collective show: Swi7ch, Pietrasanta (Italy)
- 2020 Collective show: Hong Kong Art Gallery Association Sculpture Exhibition at Asia Society (Hong Kong)
- 2020 Solo show: Future Classics at La Galerie Paris 1839 (Hong Kong)
- 2023 Solo show: Urban Rocks at Artistree (Hong Kong)
- 2025 *Written In Stone: A Journey Shaping Places in New Millennium China* for Hong Kong University Press



SELECTED SITE-SPECIFIC COMMISSIONS

- 2003 *Plein Air*: Urban Design, Piazza III Millenio, Riva Presso Chieri, Turin (Italy)
- 2003 *The Breath of God*: Monumental complex in marble for The Holy Catholic Church, Sacro Cuore di Gesù, Diocese of Cuneo (Italy)
- 2005 *Alice*: Monumental marble fountain for a private garden, Sai Kung (Hong Kong)
- 2004 *Les Baigneuses*: Contemporary interpretation of a classical nymph for a swimming pool garden, The Knightsbridge, London (United Kingdom)
- 2005 *Birds*: Abstract composition for The Four Seasons Hotel Junior Ballroom (Hong Kong)
- 2005 *Trans for Matter*: Monumental marble fountain for New Found World, Novotel Citygate, Tung Chung (Hong Kong)
- 2007 *Earth Dragon*: 18-metre Shanxi black granite sculpture for MTR Corporation at The Elements Mall, West Kowloon (Hong Kong)
- 2009 *Walking East*: 5-metre-high stainless steel sculpture for Winsor Properties, Landmark East, Kwun Tong (Hong Kong)
- 2009 *The Hong Kong Club Great Wall*: 22-metre-long Sichuan yellow sandstone bas relief for The Hong Kong Club (Hong Kong)
- 2010 *Quaystone Heritage*: 22-metre-high haut relief for Sinoland Fullerton Bay Hotel (Singapore)
- 2011 *Bagoda!*: 10-metre-high white Chinese granite sculpture for Swire Properties, Taikoo Hui Guangzhou (China)
- 2012 *A Phoenix*: 8-metre-high white granite sculpture for China Resources Land, Phoenix City, Beijing (China)
- 2012 *Fire*: Monumental kinetic stainless steel sculpture for China Resources Land, Phoenix City, Beijing (China)
- 2013 *Wishing Well*: 5-metre-high granite sculpture for MTR Corporation and Sun Hung Kai Properties for Crowne Plaza Hotel, Tseung Kwan O (Hong Kong)
- 2014 *Walking Through*: 10-metre-high stainless steel sculpture for Swire Properties, Taikoo Li Chengdu (China)
- 2014 *Written in Stone*: Monumental complex installation of 3,000 sculpted marble books for Swire Properties, Taikoo Li Chengdu (China)
- 2014 *Father and Son*: Monumental complex of mirror-polished stainless steel sculptures for Swire Properties, Taikoo Li Chengdu (China)
- 2018 *Present*: 6-metre-high granite sculpture for KWG M·Cube, Chongwenmen, Beijing (China)
- 2019 *Reflection*: Life-size mirror-polished stainless steel sculpture for Ovolo Hotels, Central (Hong Kong)
- 2020 *Origin*: 2.2-metre rotating disk in white Carrara marble for Great Eagle Holdings, ONTOLO, Tai Po (Hong Kong)
- 2020 *City in the Clouds*: 2.5-metre-high floating urban rock in Bardiglio Imperiale marble for Great Eagle Holdings, ONTOLO, Tai Po (Hong Kong)
- 2020 *Legacy*: Monumental fountain representing a hand in the water in Iranian titanium travertine for Great Eagle Holdings, ONTOLO, Tai Po (Hong Kong)
- 2021 *Shell-Ter*: Monumental sea shell in Michelangelo marble for Great Eagle Holdings, ONTOLO, Tai Po (Hong Kong)
- 2022 *The Rings*: 3-metre monumental rings in Carrara white marble for Hysan Development/ HKR International, Villa Lucca, Tai Po (Hong Kong)
- 2025 *Storia*: Monumental floating sculpture in Carrara white marble for Henderson Land, Castle Road (Hong Kong)



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Polo Bourieu is a celebrated sculptor known for his monumental site specific projects that integrate sculptures with urban spaces, particularly in Hong Kong and China, exploring the concept of placemaking.

Written in Stone by Polo Bourieu is an extraordinary exploration of how monumental sculpture transforms urban spaces into places of meaning and connection. From the ancient marble quarries of Carrara to the skyscrapers of Hong Kong or the bustling lanes of Chengdu, this richly illustrated book charts Polo's creative journey, offering profound insights into the dialogue between sculpture, architecture, and community.

Structured as an epic narrative inspired by Joseph Campbell's monomyth theory, Polo's sculptures become the protagonists of our common narrative of adventure, transformation, and identity.

With reflections on the creative process and a conversation with urban planner and design writer Catherine Shaw, the book delves into the challenges and realities of creating public art in the dynamic landscapes of 21st-century China.

Written in Stone offers a philosophical meditation on the power of art to shape our cities and ourselves. It invites readers—whether city planners, urbanists, architects, landscapers, artists or art lovers—to reimagine the relationship between sculpture and the spaces we inhabit. This book is a must-read for anyone who cares about the enduring debate between matter, place, and meaning.



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