

## The best sculptors in the world

*Art critic Richard Cork tracks the evolution of sculpture as a medium – and Kurt Beers, author of 100 Sculptors of Tomorrow, highlights some of the most important sculptors today.*



FOR TOO LONG, sculpture was in danger of losing its prominence as a major art form....There are an astonishing array of possibilities now playing a part in sculpture – far from being confined by narrow, defensive and pedantic rules, its potential seems limitless, and certain to play a continually challenging role in the art of the future. The following are some of the most exciting talents in sculpture today.

### Robin Antar

What constitutes culture? At what point does a mere ‘observer’ become a political activist? At what point does responsibility befall the viewer; at what point do one’s projections and assumptions about a piece form the basis for its meaning?



American sculptor Robin Antar tends to shy away from the label of political activist. She states quite simply that her passion is to create, to cull visual records from the blocks of marble, travertine, onyx, calcite, limestone and alabaster which she sources, dyes and carves herself in a complex process refined over 30 years. The resulting works are

humorous-but-solemn monuments to modern American life: a jar of Hellman’s mayonnaise, a hamburger with fries, a giant hot dog, Milano cookies, a cowboy hat and boots, a pair of jeans. Antar commemorated the 11 September 2001 attack on New York City’s Twin Towers by carving a half-ton marble block into a crumpled white bag, with M&M’s spilling out of the top.



In its politicised context it is a powerful piece, a sombre statement on tragedy – despite seeming no less innocuous than, say, her one-metre hot dog with a proud bite taken from one end.

The New York Daily News once referred to Antar as Brooklyn’s answer to Andy Warhol; other comparisons might be made with Claes Oldenburg or Jeff Koons. The answer to culture isn’t lurking in a high-art, theoretically burdened manifesto, but rather in the simple, often silly, everyday articulations that come to act as metonym for an entire nation, society or ideology. At the time of writing, Antar’s marble baseball cap, *Make America Great Again* (2017), has been removed from her website for instigating too much controversy. If that is not powerful political commentary, then precisely what is?

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