

## MANUEL NERI *Working in Marble* A Selection from the Carrara Studio

**Exhibition Dates:** February 7 - May 9, 2014

**Opening Reception:** Friday, February 7, 5 - 7pm

'Manuel Neri: Working in Marble, A Selection from the Carrara Studio,' is an exhibition of marble sculptures by Neri on view for the first time. Neri's unique treatment of the fabled marble began after a visit to Carrara, Italy in 1975. Neri's attraction to the material is "as much for its historical associations with artists such as Michelangelo as for its legendary color, luster, and veining," according to Joseph Antenucci Becherer, Curator at Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park.

Neri is a leading member of the Bay Area Figurative movement along with David Park, Richard Diebenkorn and Elmer Bischoff. The climate of the Post-War era encouraged bold artistic searches for new expression and Neri led the way in the Bay Area through a sculptural practice rooted in the desire to explore and manipulate material, beginning with cardboard and junk material and later oscillating between plaster, bronze and marble.

In marble, we see Neri's contemporary approach to materiality in the context of Neri as a true classicist. In 'Pisano Torso,' Neri achieves this bold juxtaposition, the refined and the raw. Former Corcoran Gallery of Art Director Jack Cowart explains, "Neri adores stone for its tough permanence, vast geological history, luscious colors, and intricate veining. But he fights against the stone's surface, nonetheless, by chiseling, hammering, grinding, polishing, and, occasionally, painting it to deny its nature."

Manuel Neri's sculpture and painting is included in more than thirty American public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; Corcoran Gallery of Art and Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., and San Jose Museum of Art. In 2006, Neri received the Lifetime Achievement in Sculpture award from the International Sculpture Center, and in 2008, he received the Bay Area Treasure Award from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. This annual lifetime achievement award recognizes Bay Area artists who continually redefine contemporary art.



**Images, left to right:**

1. *Pisano Torso*, 34.5 x 38.5 x 20 inches, marble, 1985.
2. *Vinka*, 59 x 17 x 15.25 inches, marble, 2003.