

Don Porcaro: *Lost Stories*

Curated by James Cavello

By William Corwin

The Brooklyn Rail | ARTSEEN

December 16, 2025



Installation View | *Don Porcaro: Lost Stories*, Westwood Gallery NYC, New York, 2025.
Courtesy Westwood Gallery NYC. Photo: Westwood Gallery NYC.

Don Porcaro has focused on the trope of the disarticulated column in his current exhibition. It's easy to automatically equate obelisks and trophy columns, like Trajan's Column in Rome, or the two columns attached to the Karlskirche in Vienna, with unbridled phallic energy. It's there, for sure. But the architectonic reading of the column—as a support, and as a valuable and practical commodity which was often stolen by one group and repurposed in their own buildings—is also viable. Porcaro playfully dances between both: his columns are symbol and portrait simultaneously.

In *Lost Stories 1* (2024), an almost 8-foot tall white marble piece, the artist refuses to give us a column that acts as a single thrust. Instead, the work is broken down into countless component slices and even supports-within-supports with numerous ridges and bulbous forms that provide an erotic sub-narrative. A quote on the wall from the artist mentions the columns of ancient Egyptian temples resembling bundled reeds, papyrus stalks as inspiration. Indeed, *Lost Stories 1* includes this motif too—a ring of mini-columns at the base of the piece, which also mimic cartoon-like legs.

The undulating silhouettes of most of the works, as well as delightful little feet inserted in many of their bases, as in *Lost Stories 5* (2025) and *Tempest* (2022), add a degree of anthropomorphism.



Don Porcaro, *Lost Stories 5*, 2025. Marble and limestone, 94 × 20 × 20 inches. © Don Porcaro. Courtesy Westwood Gallery NYC. Photo: Westwood Gallery NYC.

So Porcaro's columns are in fact anti-columns in the classical sense. They don't seek to hold up anything other than themselves, and they don't attempt to overwhelm us with straight-up-and-down lines of force. Porcaro's technique is about lamination and solidity through neatly fitting component parts together. This almost marquetry-like technique is heightened by alternating veining in the marble and the addition of occasionally different colors of marble or metal inserts, further shifting the scale down to a level of mostly flat layers of stone, and small repetitive pieces rather than grand expanses of material. *Lost Stories 8* (2025) is a squat little affair incorporating

travertine as well as black and white segments. It has a bundle of five somewhat severe volutes as a nod to Egypt, and a slightly twee little red cap as well as four travertine footings. It is sweet, and anything but oppressive and toxically masculine! Porcaro's columns thus are closer to the communally created archaic *hermai* of the ancient world, in which boundaries were marked by piles of stones—a form still carried out on mountain tops where hikers leave a stone to represent their passing by.

The far right interior wall of the gallery has been reserved for Porcaro's small sculptures, where the sculptor's wit is given free reign. The premise is not dissimilar from the larger works—assemblages centered on a rounded piece of marble—but here the smaller scale vis-à-vis the size of the applied metal parts creates a completely different sensibility. These are not human-scale solid stone presences, but ethereal elfin impromptus.



Don Porcaro, *Art or Fact 63*, 2025. Marble and brass, 5 × 4 ½ × 5 ½ inches. © Don Porcaro. Courtesy Westwood Gallery NYC. Photo: Westwood Gallery NYC.

Art or Fact 63 (2025) has as the body of a beige-y marble disk slightly larger than a hockey puck, which is sandwiched between two art nouveau brass door handles. Handles no more, they become lyrical fins for this agile little being. *Art or Fact 83* (2025) is half crab, half-sea anemone—two copper plumbing pipe fittings emerge from a marble base, and end in two golf-ball sized stone eyes. Because of the solidity and simplicity of the marble, the smaller works are whimsical without being trite, a quality they share with the ceramics of Ken Price. Similarly, the whole of Porcaro's *Lost Stories* engages with the process of the artist reinterpreting a classic trope, the column, but in a way that has nimbly sheared away the grandiosity of the form itself and left us with a humble and thoughtful meditation on the subject.

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