



the faces of Floyd Kuptana



the faces of floyd kuptana

*Total confidence*

*full belief in the reliability of his own gestures*

*of his tools, of his seeing inside the stone*

*trusting his ability to bring it to life*

*Floyd was transformed when he carved*

*unwavering attention, meticulous the placement of his tools,*

*no talking inside his head or out*

*incredible quiet surrounded by howling power*

*holding the stones in his hands*

*feeling the weight, finding the balance*

*turning it and looking, looking.*



Gallery Arcturus is a unique place founded on inquiry and beauty and a search for objectivity.

We have a permanent collection of art that we have acquired and created on site and an extraordinary space in Toronto where we display this work for public viewing.

For those few of us who work here I can say that it is more than a job we share, it is a space we have obligated ourselves to care for and explore what is possible.

Floyd Kuptana came to visit one day and became our most frequent and beloved guest, master sculptor, eager student, animated story teller, attentive observer, wild as a bear and shy as a deer.

All of the sculptures shown here have passed through Gallery Arcturus, some on their way to somewhere else, some finding homes among us who work here and others taking up permanent residence in the gallery.

Floyd often brought his just finished pieces to the gallery and let us haggle over who would get what.

We each have our own small collection of Floyd's work that we treasure.

The photographs in this book were taken by members of the gallery, inspired to document Floyd's work as it occupies the gallery and, when possible, as it was being created.

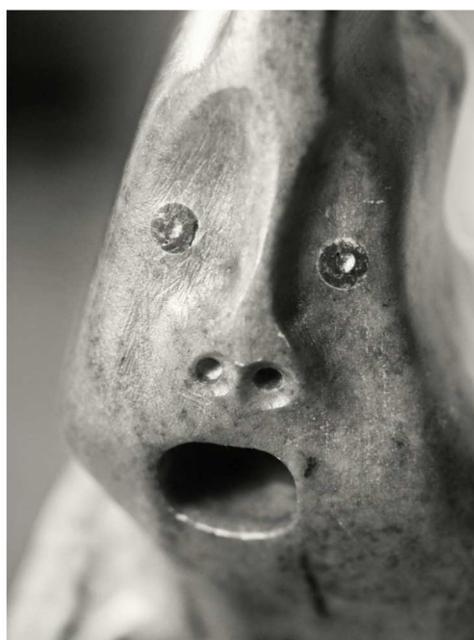
The photographs themselves document a quality of attention.

The words are mine, Deborah Harris, and simply describe what I witnessed.

This book is about observation.

The observation of Floyd Kuptana.













running dog





In the summer of 2011 we invented a makeshift studio under the front gallery steps.

The first sculpture Floyd made was part angel, part human, giant wings but no beak or claws, face turned upwards. I helped to carry it inside at the end of the day's reveal, its weight and shape a substantial body in my arms, demanding strength to move and place it standing on the floor. Backing up to leave the room, it was difficult to separate. I did many drawings of this sculpture when it was still white before its final waxing. Cathy took photos of the work as it happened.

Eron shot a video of the same which is still on Youtube.

This was the first on site sculpture that accepted the gallery as home.

Years later someone without our consent or knowledge decided to give it a new home.

We still miss it.

After this there was a lull, Floyd found other opportunities or rather other opportunities found Floyd. Out of the city away from temptation he could work tirelessly for days on end. In the summer he sometimes lasted out there two or three weeks before he needed to reconnect to the city and its ways.

The colder weather would bring him back.

In the winter he had to look for other work alternatives and distractions.

This is when we began to paint and draw with him.



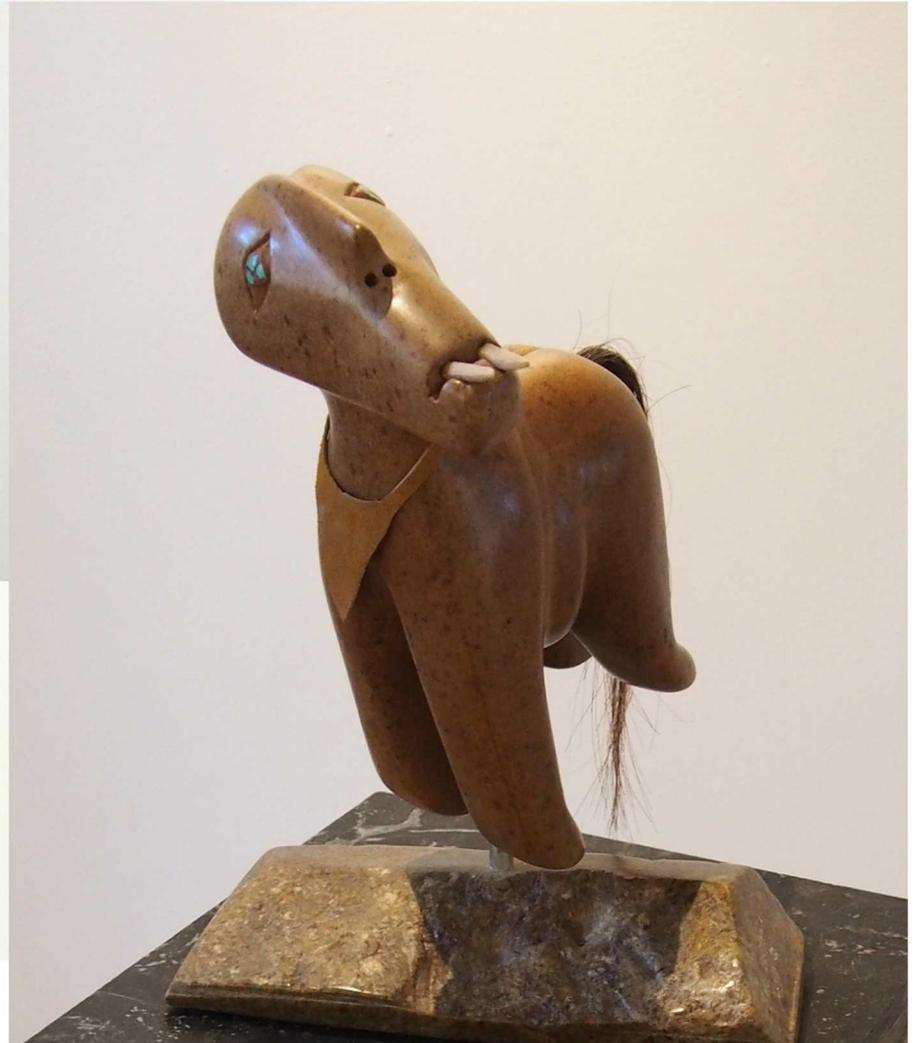




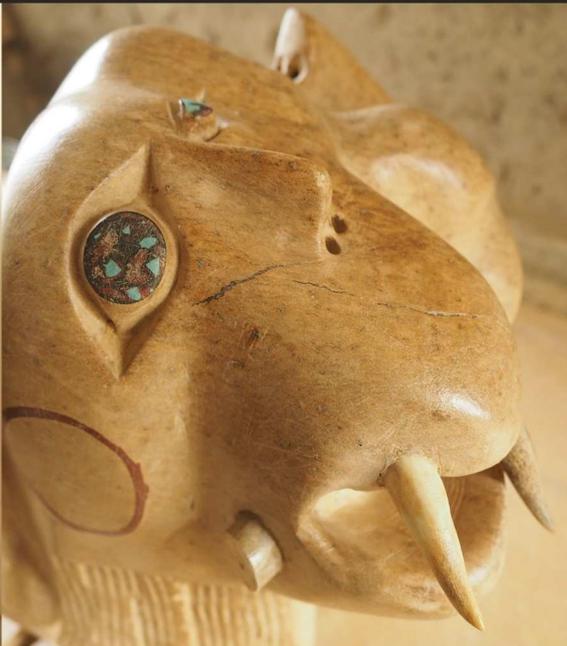




GALLERY ARCTURUS









In the late fall of 2018 Floyd was longing to sculpt again.

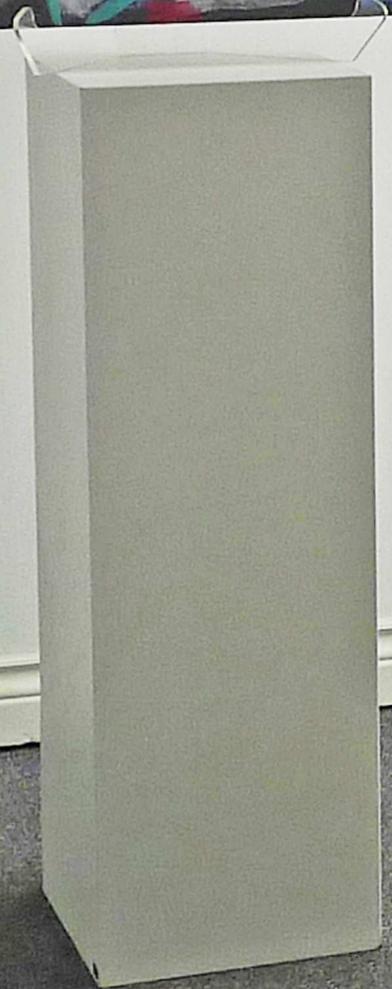
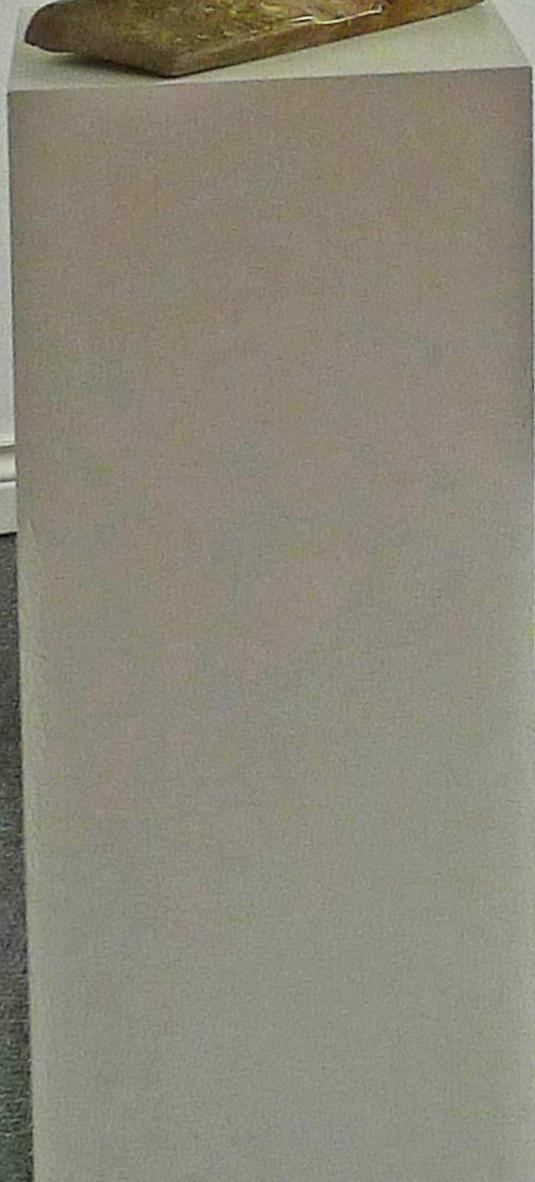
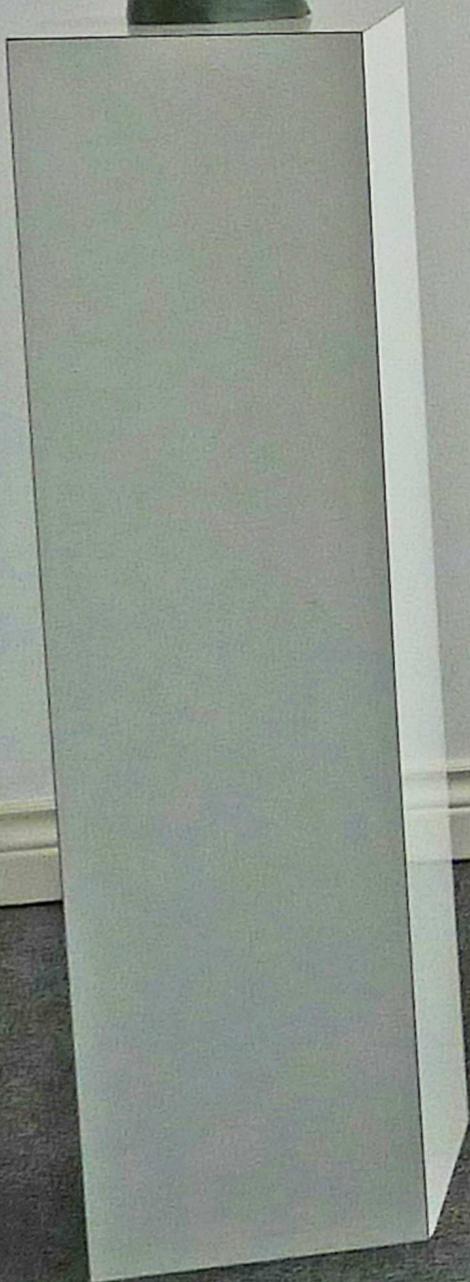
We resurrected the 'under the stairs studio' improving on our last design

by covering the side openings with clear plastic,

to protect it from wind and keep it warmer into the winter.



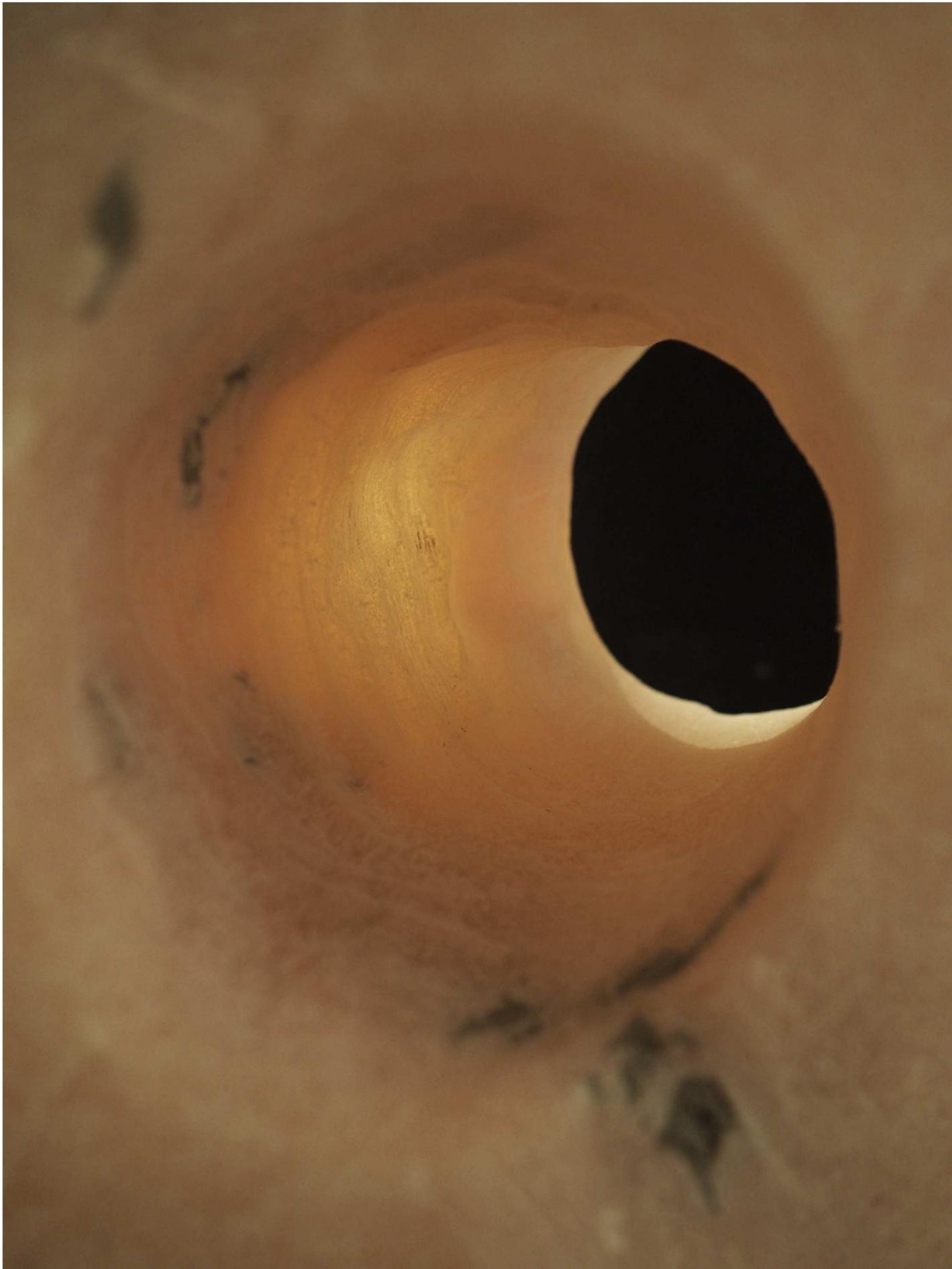








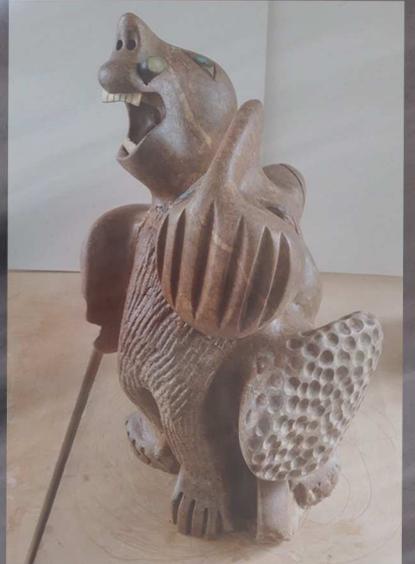






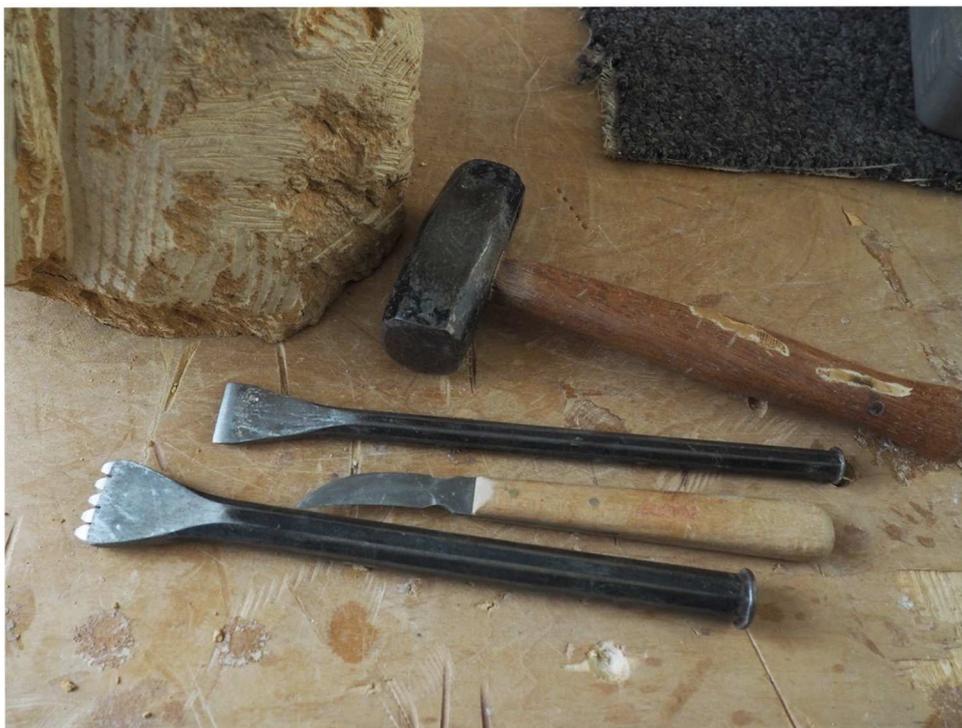
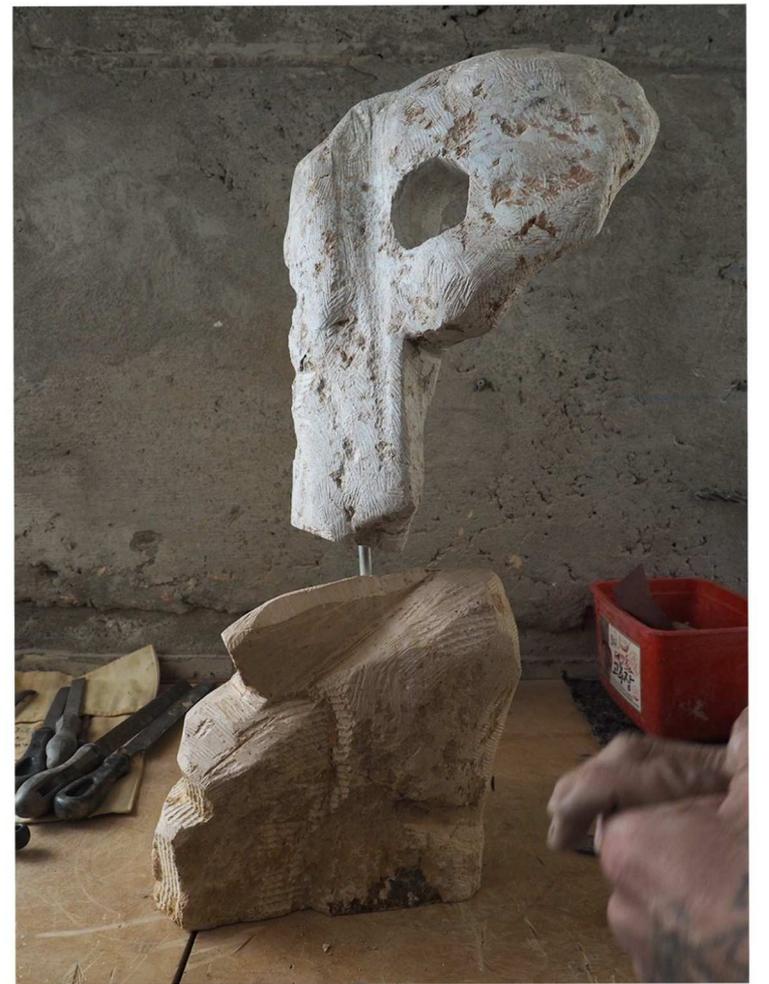












Sculpting in soapstone is best done outside. Cutting and especially filing creates incredibly fine dust.

A studio should be small enough to contain it with an outlet for a saw and shop vac.

If you aim the vacuum nozzle just right, close to the blade,  
you can better see through the cloud, maybe even take a breath.

When he began to work again this was my job.

I became his shadow,  
rarely saying a word, trying to anticipate what tools he might need,  
or if it was time to eliminate the dust gathering in obstruction to his view.

Each stroke hinted at what was becoming, every time I imagined its outcome he would change course.

His movements were sure and steady.

The sound of his chisel was a rhythm and ring he loved to hear.

"Listen," he would say, smiling.





## Bones

shaped by the life they support

flying walking swimming

a moving sculpture.

When life departs they remain

small memories

forms imagined into being

with alteration by the hand.

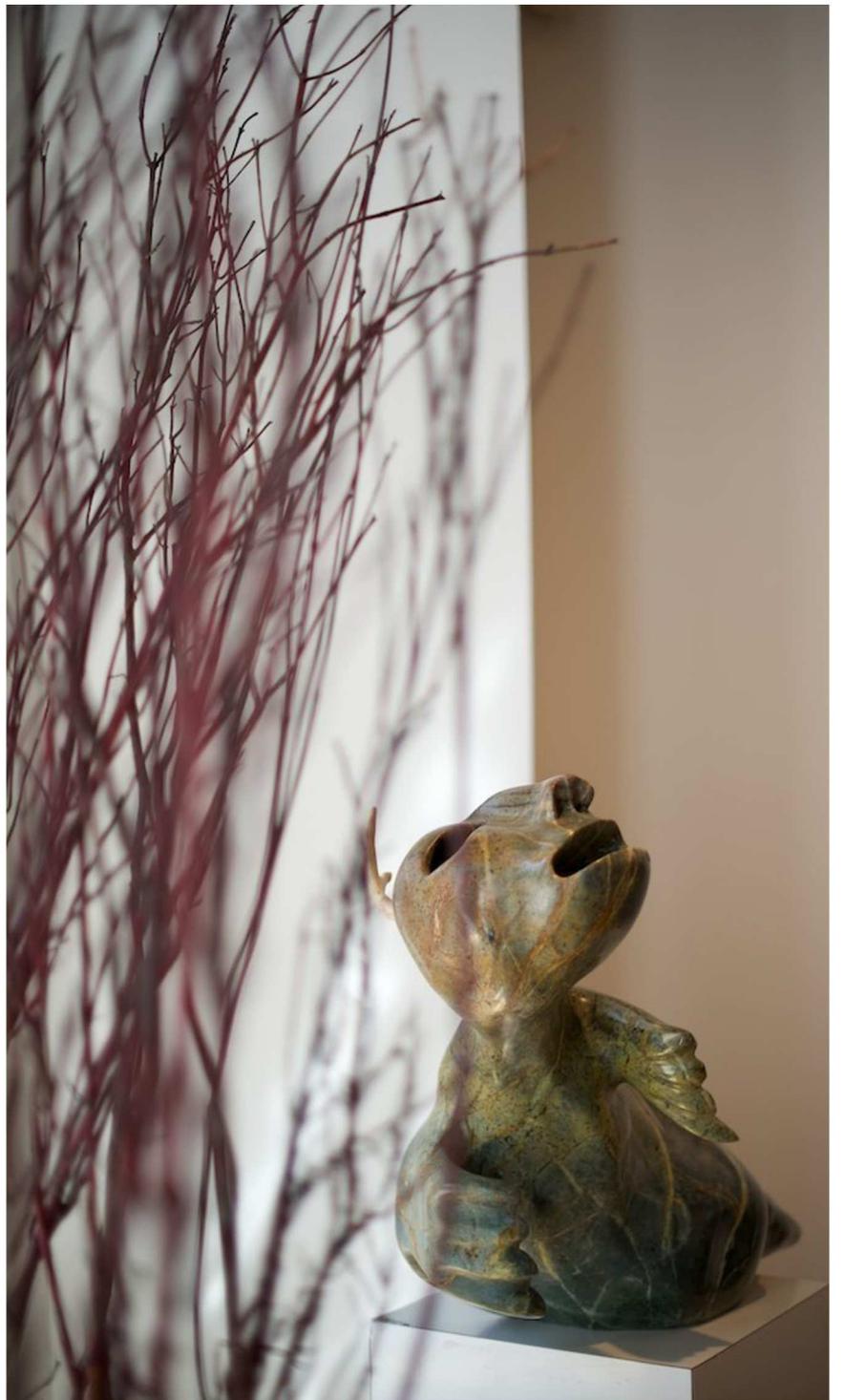


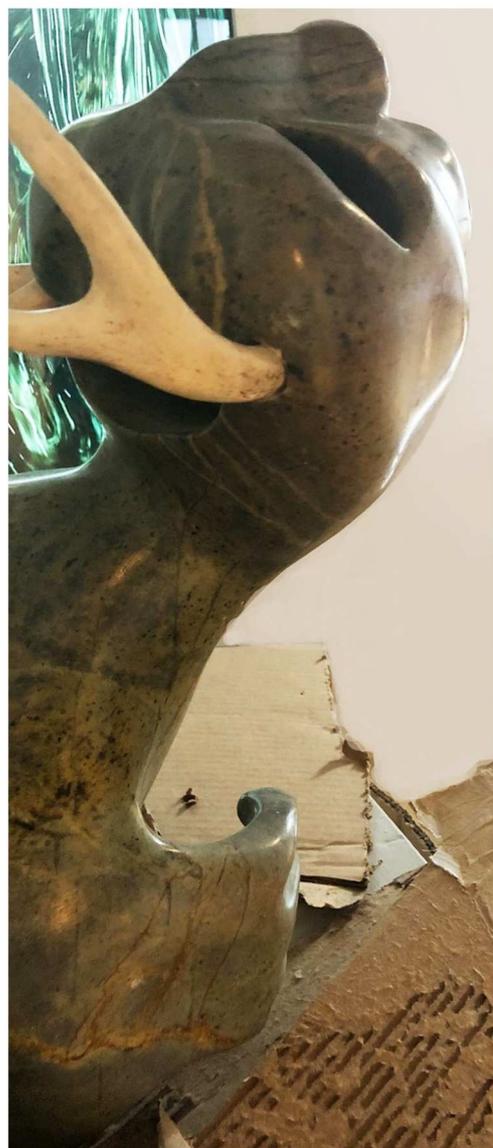






Sedna







In September 2011, the gallery purchased Sedna.

Her presence was and is overwhelming.

Weight and gravity perfectly anchored

to allow her to rise,

singing.

She is the gallery's steadfast sentinel,

present for every exhibition,

always playing a role in the narrative.

As heavy as she is to move we manage to slide her, with some strong man intervention.

(that would be Lee Harris)

Floyd never seemed to give her any notice.

He was not attached to his work once completed

but when he did comment on Sedna he told me that he

had worked on her with his friend Jean-Paul Albert.

When I talked to Jean-Paul he told me that he had got the stone for Floyd

and set it up for him to work in his studio. Floyd finished the carving in about four days.

Jean-Paul did the first sanding and transported the finished piece to

Maslak McLeod Gallery in Hazelton Lanes, Toronto.

That's where we found her.



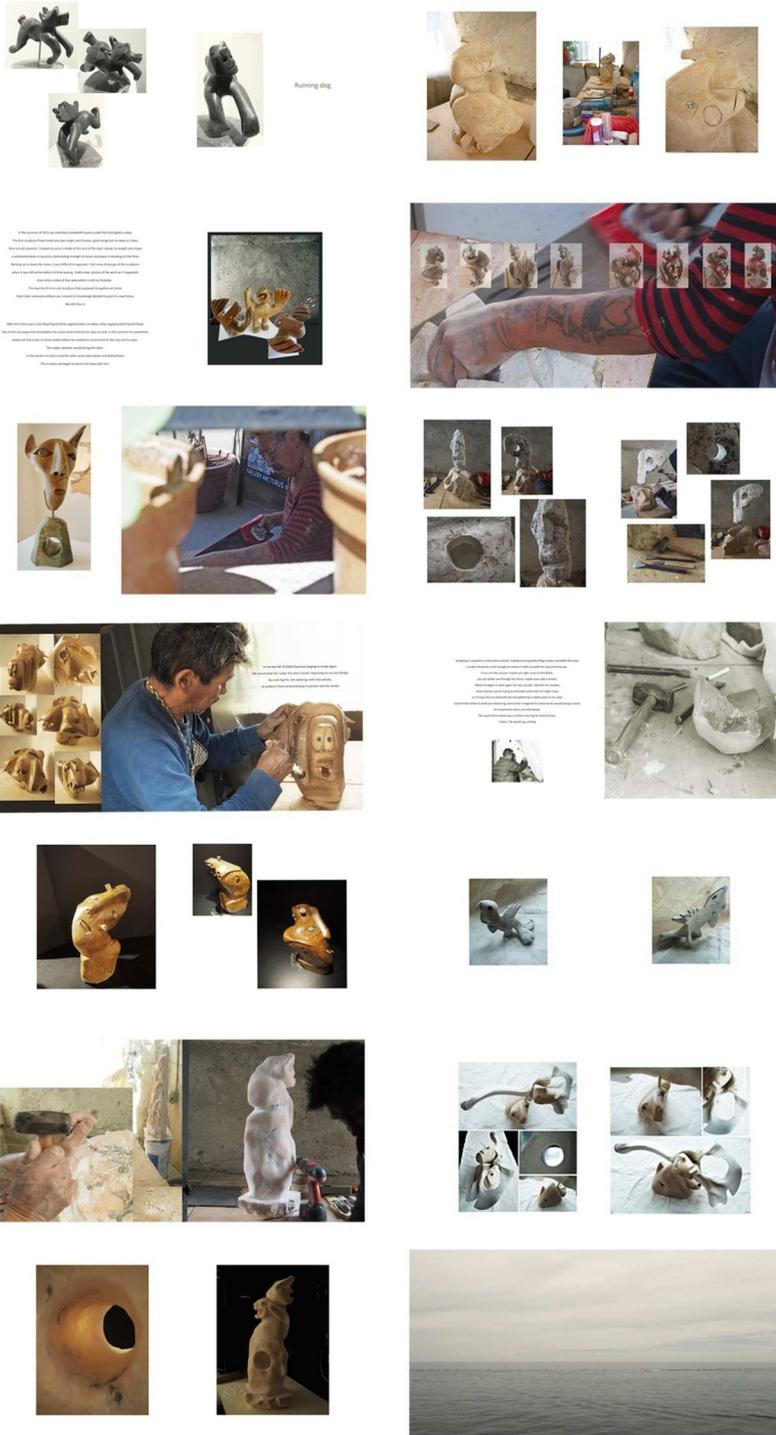


The lake was Floyd's favorite destination.

In the spring of this year, 2021, Floyd unexpectedly passed away.



Photographs by Sae Kimura



Photographs by Jamie LaTrobe



Photographs by Cathy Stilo



Text by deborah harris

Photo Assemblage

by deborah harris & Sae Kimura

**arcturus books** are conceived, written and produced by deborah harris and Sae Kimura, two gifted artists dedicated to inquiring into the nature and purpose of art and sharing their insights in superbly crafted books.



Floyd Kuptana was a master sculptor.

He was born February 14, 1964 in Cape Parry, North West Territories.

He died May 25, 2021 in Toronto, Ontario.

In between he lived with passion and courage, grateful for the generosity of strangers  
who became his friends.



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Books in this Series

Artists Together

The Faces of Floyd Kuptana

Carved with a Brush

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