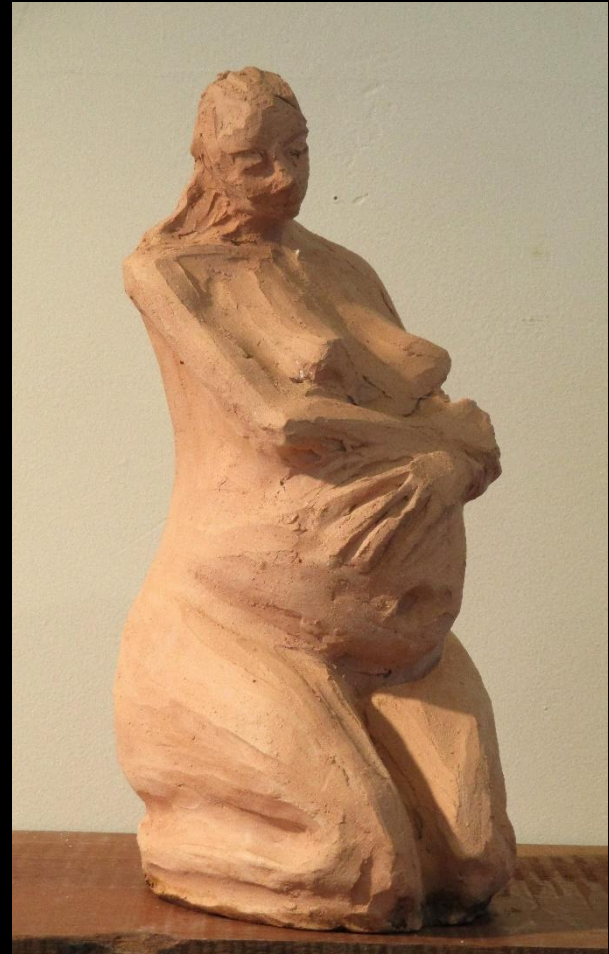


*Fifty years of sculpture:
A retrospective from 1969 to 2021*



Kathy Park

*After years of throwing pottery, I moved on to clay sculptures,
Maryland circa 1969*

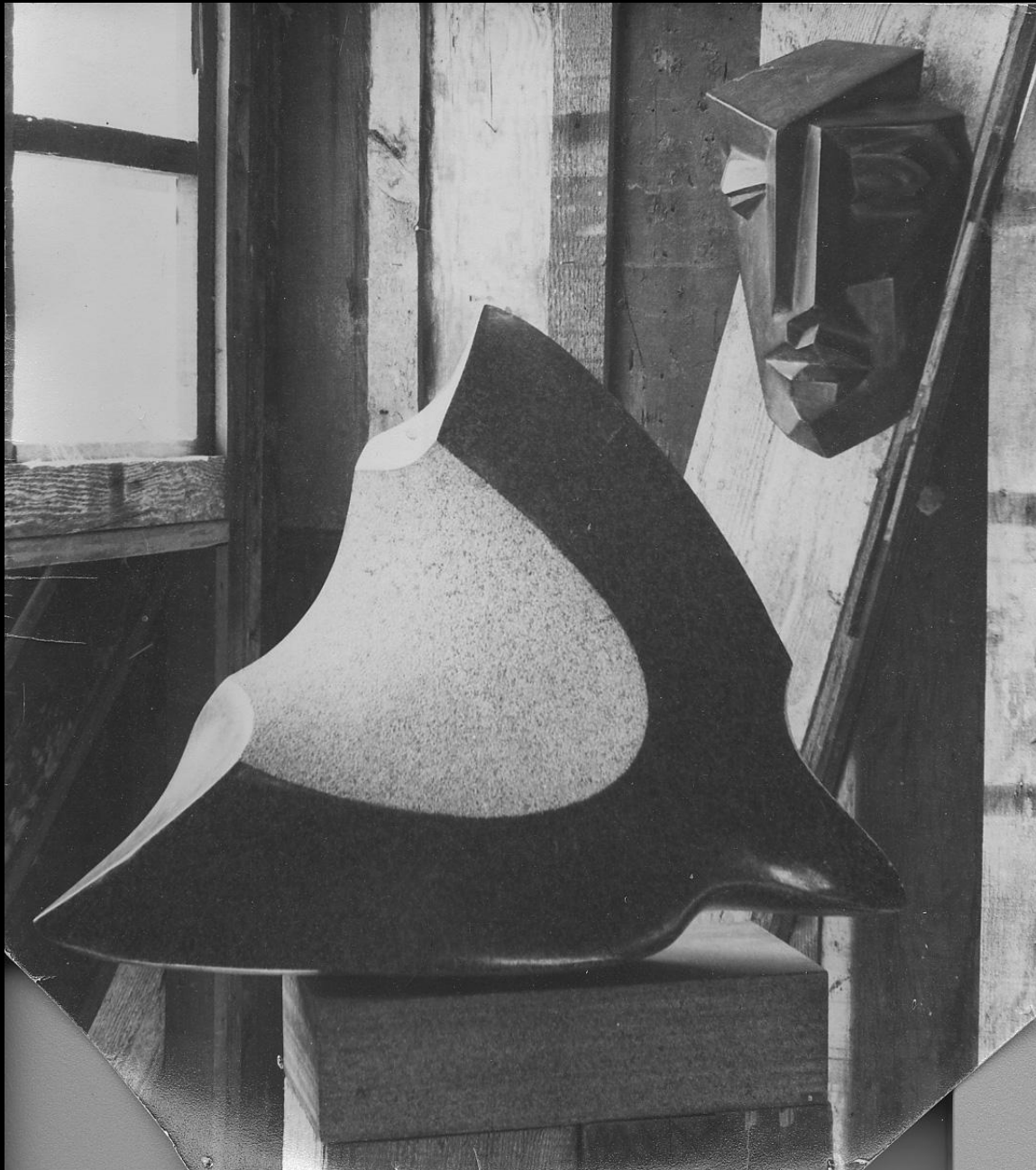




*Although I can draw from life,
I'm not interested in making
figures that are "anatomically
correct." Perhaps that's because I
grew up in a family challenged by
physical disabilities. I learned
early on that the quest for
"normal" was unattainable and not
near as much fun as exaggeration
and asymmetry.*

Seated Figure

*terra cotta, Maryland circa
1969*



After dropping out of college, I apprenticed with my uncle-in-law Gordon Nevell at the Sculpture Center on Cannery Row in Monterey, California. It combined a gallery with studio space so that visitors could not only witness the making of a sculpture from start to finish, but also meet the sculptors, of whom Gordon was the charismatic but reluctant leader. Gordon was my mentor for 15 years

Sculptures by Gordon Nevell

We were a colorful troupe, capable of concentrated artistic devotion, but prone to eccentricity...I was the youngest and the only woman, naive and inexperienced at living on my own.

Sculpture Center

Monterey, California 1971



Gordon gave me a few worn chisels and a rough-sawn plank of black walnut into which I carved a sleeping woman. He also showed me how to sharpen the chisels with a whetstone, to go with the grain and to pay attention to how the light fell over the form. But beyond these gifts of tools and wood and a few carving tips, Gordon's most unusual teaching method was to simply walk away.



Sleeping Woman

California, black walnut, 1971

Gordon believed that the wood or the stone itself was the best teacher...Gordon never pressured me to carve the way he did. In fact, he never pressured me at all.

Eucalyptus Woman

Wood, California, 1971





After the elegant, silver-timbered Sculpture Center was torn down because of Cannery Row's "face lift," we sculptors scattered. I headed north to Oregon... At 21 years old, I was too excited about my next adventure to register the shattering of our sculpture community.

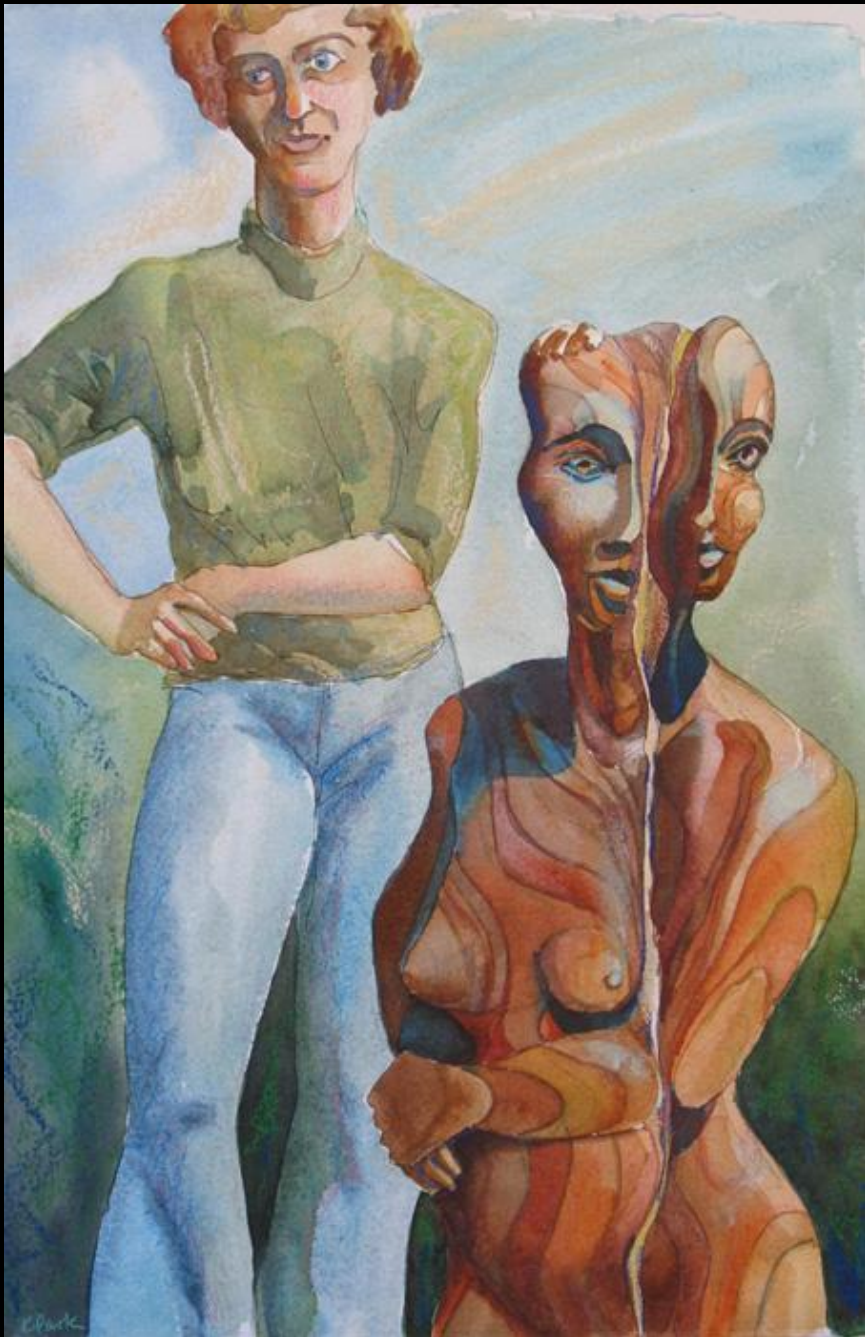
Ashland, Oregon, 1972

I roughed out a figure that stood with both hands on one hip, weight more on one leg, head turned slightly to the side—my version of a classic Italian contrapposto... The carving went well until one day I realized that the log was splitting right down the center of the woman's face. I thought the sculpture was ruined.

Cracked Woman,

black walnut, Oregon, 1973-1975





I started carving on the cracked figure again. I remember thinking, what have I got to lose? ... I realized I was going into the crack, exploring it, shaping it... The figure now had two profiles; each side slightly different. It was one face, and it was two. She was split, and she seemed whole. She looked like herself, and she looked like me.

Cracked Woman and me

Colorado, watercolor, 2009

I'd always thought of myself as strong, capable and unafraid. After all, my family counted on me to be that way...I was expected to be the "normal" one, an elusive state I understood then as not needing anyone's help. No. Not needing anything at all.

Of course, this was a flawed strategy.

Portrait Squared, 1976



Walnut head, Oregon 1975

Crow's foot woman, walnut, Oregon 1978



*Desert Flame, mountain mahogany, 1977-1979 Goddess of the Screwbean
Mesquite, 1978-1981
California*



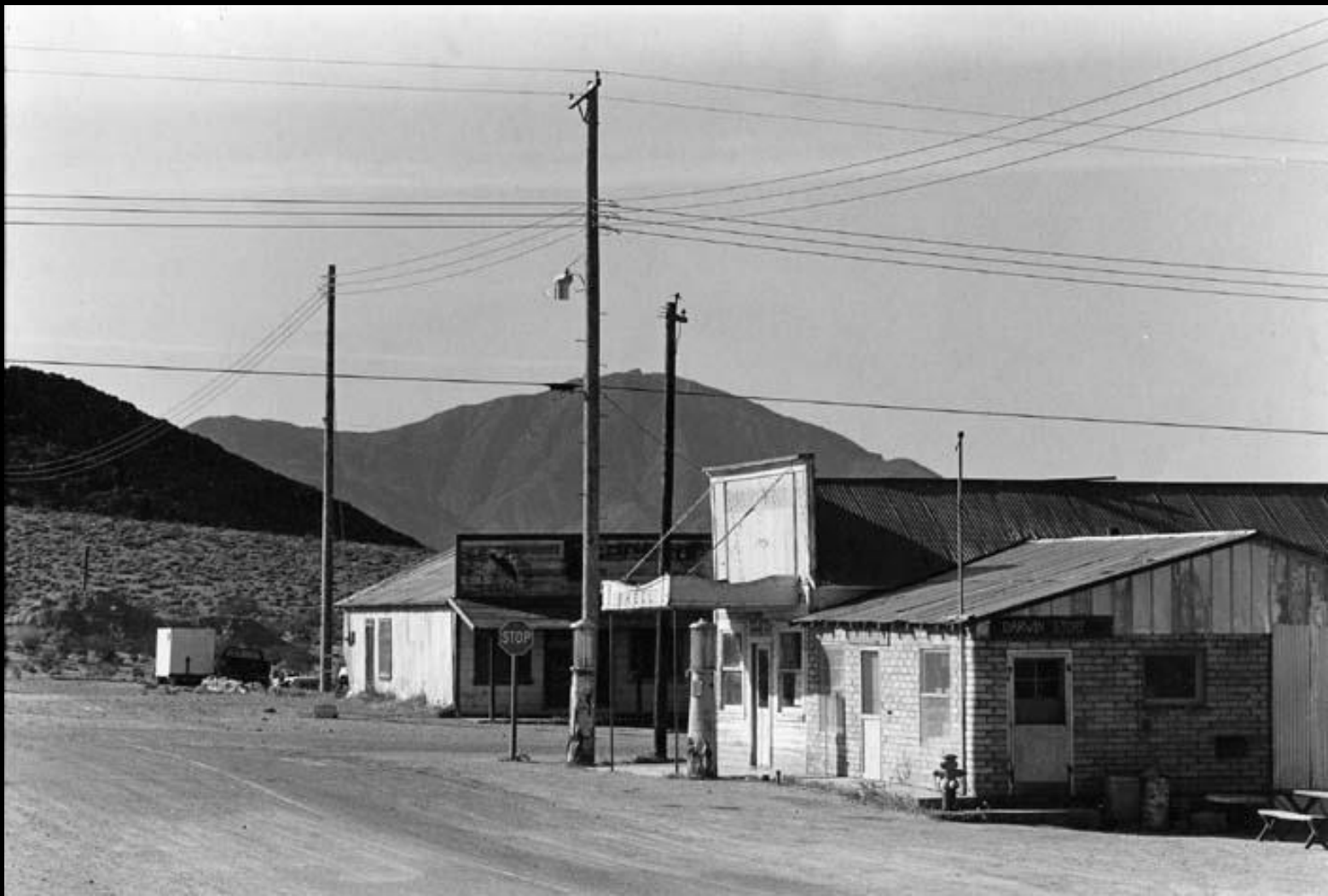
After losing The Sculpture Center, Gordon moved to the ghost town of Darwin in the Mojave Desert so that he could carve in peace. It was during this time that my desert pilgrimages to carve alongside Gordon became important. There was something about being around him that slowed me down, honed my rough edges, brought my tough exterior and vulnerable interior more into balance.



with Gordon Newell. Darwin, California, circa 1977



Perched at about 4700 feet halfway between Badwater Basin, Death Valley and the granite fangs of Mt Whitney, Darwin was six long and empty miles from the highway and 30 miles from any kind of town.



When I arrived on my first pilgrimage...I listened for the flood of Darwin's silence but instead heard my own turmoil, a loud buzzing in my ears.

downtown Darwin, circa 1977 photo by Roy Bishop

The accommodations suited me just fine...Each morning as I cradled my coffee mug, I'd watch the sun rise over Darwin Hill. To the south, Maturango jutted up like a hipbone from the Argus Range...I didn't know it then, but I would come to know these dry mountains and the changing light as my most reliable friends.





During my many visits to Darwin, I rarely remembered to take a photo of Gordon. In one, I'm helping him crack open a large mold into which a plaster model for a cubist tree has been poured.

Photo circa 1977 by Roy Bishop. Painting by the author 2007

In another photo, Gordon and his long-time apprentice Ralf Kahl rig canvas straps on a block of white marble that's been roughed out in the shape of a standing eagle.



In a third photo...the carving has progressed enough to discern the eagle's beaked head, the concave archway of its legs and the convex curve of its flexing wings.



*Photo by Pattie Whetstone
Detail of watercolor by the author*



*During one visit,
I had a
particularly good
carving day.
Roughing out a
pair of lovers in a
black walnut log,
I discovered a
way to twine them
in a spiral.*



Darwin, circa 1979 Photo by Roy Bishop

*I decided to work the surface in
the texture of chisel cuts to
encourage their movement.*

The Lovers,

black walnut, 1978-1981

Darwin, California





Pleased and satisfied, I rewarded my hard work with a long walk along the burro trails up to Panamint Overlook. When I reached the top, breathless from the climb...I took a photograph of myself before heading downhill.

*Desert Serpent, mountain mahogany
on dolomite, Darwin, 1983*



It was a challenge to mount this sculpture on the stone with no flat surfaces to speak of.



Tibetan Meditator, walnut, Darwin 1983



Don Quixote's Horse, oak, Oregon 1984



Anguish, piñon, Darwin, 1984



After meeting and marrying Henry, we honeymooned in Marble, CO. I was in search of a block a marble big enough to carve but small enough to carry...later I carved it into a rocking Buddha...I wanted to make a figure that wasn't pinned down, a sculpture that moved and invited touch. My nephew called it the Breakdancing Buddha

*The Rocking Buddha,
Marble on mahogany Darwin, 1984-1985*

After moving to Darwin, Henry and I posed in front of our shack with mop and shovel in hand, an American Gothic gone west. Never mind the pack rats gnawing holes through the walls or the scorpions scuttling in the cupboards. We were home.

Photo by Roy Bishop 1984



watercolor by author



My new carving studio was the biggest I'd ever had..I could leave my chisels out if I felt like it...Drawings soon piled up on the table, and the "scattered brothers" (as Gordon called the stone and wood chips) soon carpeted the floor.



Darwin, 1985. Photograph by Roy Bishop

Birth, terra cotta, Darwin, 1984



This piece was once censored from a museum show. I'm in good company

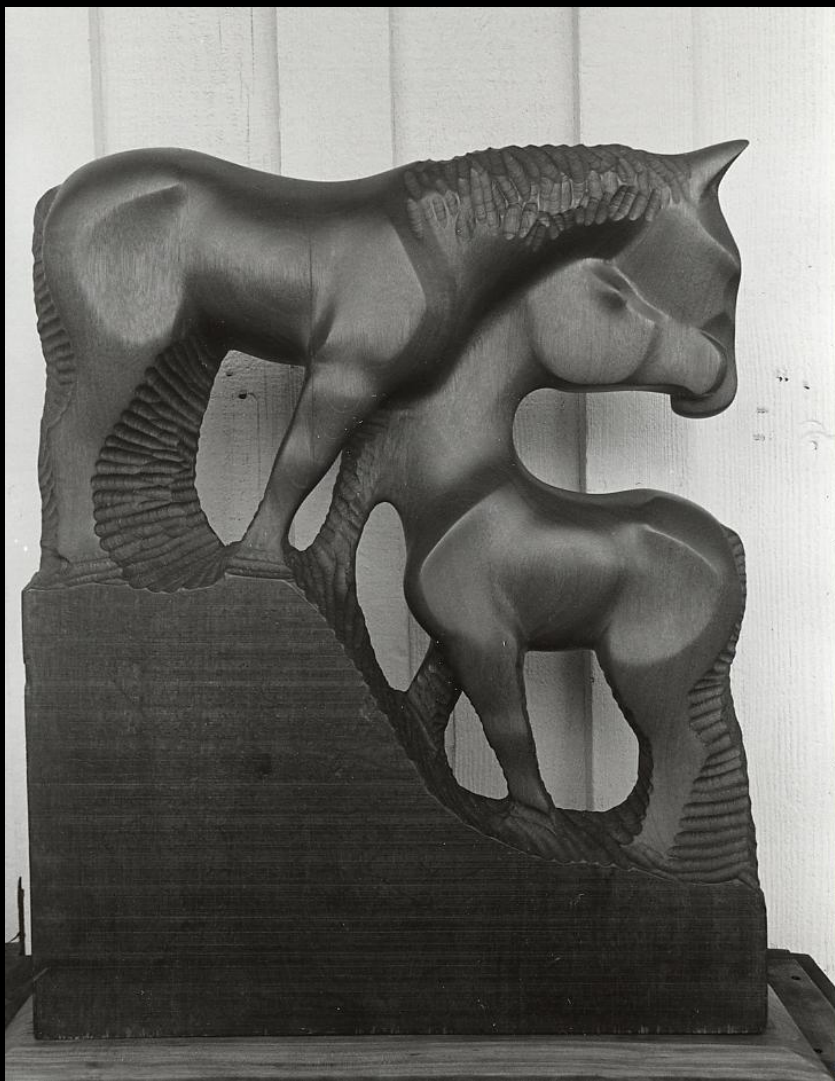
Sky Standing Figures

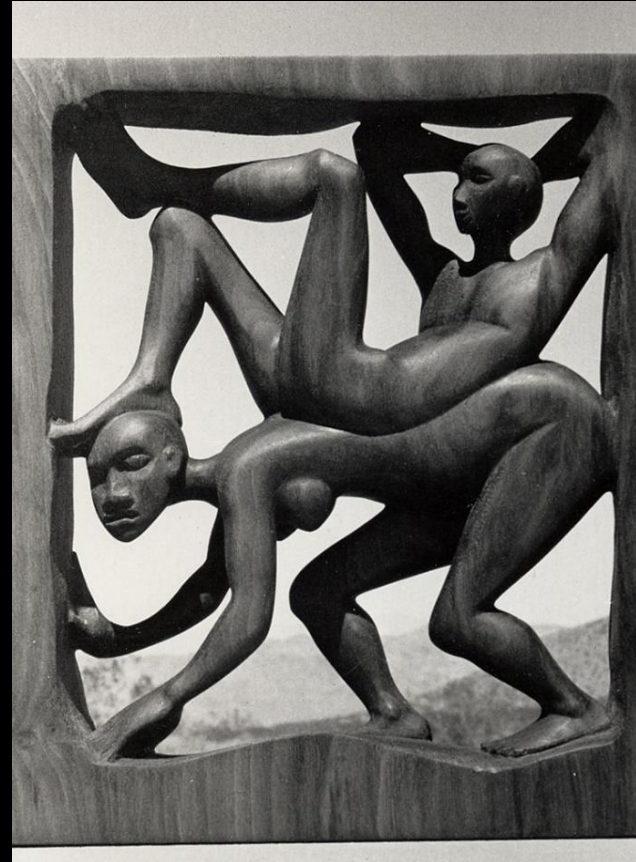
onyx and bronze California 1985



An onyx mine lay between Darwin and Death Valley, a good place to rockhound. I got the patina for the bronze by burying it in my compost pile and pouring pee into it.

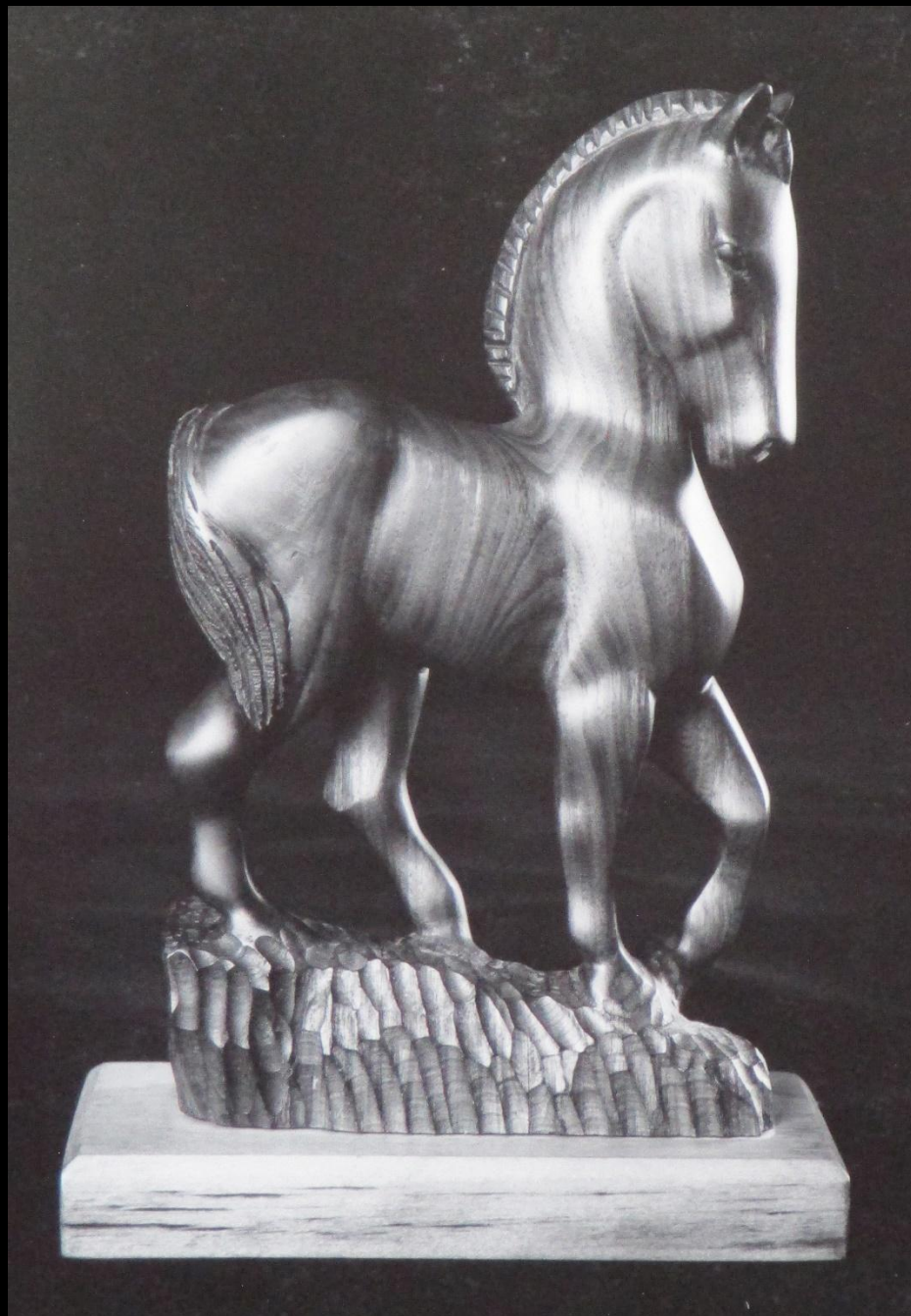
Mustangs
mahogany, Darwin, 1985





Captive Dancers, 1986 and Beast of Burden California 1987

examples of double-sided and pierced bas-relief carvings



*Trojan Horse, walnut,
California 1986*

My trusty spirit animal

Interdependence

teak, California 1988



This piece has two bases so it can be flipped upside down. In one configuration the man holds up the woman; in the other it is she who supports him... As it should be in any healthy relationship.



Freedom, maple 1990

Pregnant Woman, mahogany 1989

Mother and Child, mahogany 1993



These small carvings were inspired by the incarcerated women I worked with in the Prison integrated Health Program at FCI Dublin, California, in the early 90s

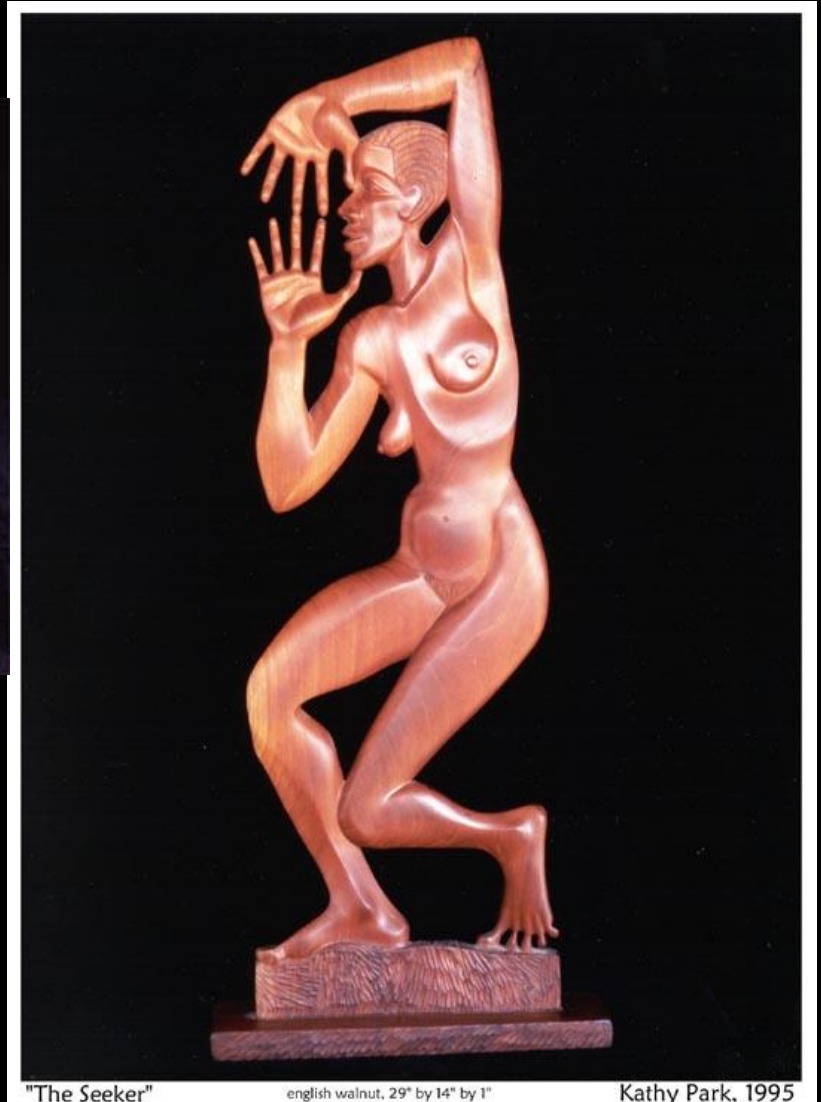
*Guardian Angel,
onyx, California 1994*



Guardian Angel is an homage to the simple forms favored by my sculpture mentor.

The Seeker pays homage to some of the incarcerated women I worked with in the Prison Integrated Health Program

*The Seeker
black walnut California 1995*



"The Seeker"

english walnut, 29" by 14" by 1"

Kathy Park, 1995



*Metta: Goddess of
Loving Kindness,
lignum vitae California 1996*

Lignum vitae is a very dense and oily wood. It doesn't float.

I wanted to make a woman who would never burn out, who channeled heart energy and collected it in her center. Little did I know that this same mudra was carved in the ancient figures of Angkor Wat.

*Black Madonna,
ironwood
Colorado 1996*

*Desert ironwood is a very dense wood. I
tried to take advantage of the strong
contrast between the dark heartwood and
the light sapwood to suggest her shawl.*



The Gatherer, marble, Colorado 1997



"The Gatherer"

marble, 22" by 13" by 4"

Kathy Park, 1997



"The Gatherer"

marble, 22" by 13" by 4"

Kathy Park, 1997

This piece was carved from an old headstone that was engraved three times—once formally on the flat and twice informally on the edges—for three different people.

Yes, No, Maybe so, two figures in ash
Colorado 1997



*Strutting my Stuff and
a Song of Home, both koa wood,
Colorado, 1997 and 1999*



A Song of Home koa wood on purple heart, 33" x 9" x 5" Kathy Park, 1999

*She Who Watches,
koa wood Colorado, 1998*



*I was interested to
see how running the
grain horizontally
creates a geologic feel
to this carving*



*Reunion,
mahogany Colorado, 1998*

*I expect the ecstatic yet grounded experience of
being connected to my spirit animal will stay
with me even when I cannot ride anymore.*

Grrrrrl, walnut, Colorado 1999

*One of the carvings inspired by our
trip to Africa. And also the
defiant attitude of the women in
prison.*

*Sometimes an artist must push the
limits of her material to see what is
possible.*



Drumming Ecstasy and Flute Abandon,
black walnut, 2001



More carvings inspired by our trip to Africa in 1999

Bighorn
mahogany, Colorado 2009



Stealth

mahogany on oak 2013



Cinnamon Leads the Way
padouk on walnut, Colorado 2016



*Padouk is bright red-orange at first cut, but gradually oxidizes.
A beautifully even and dense carving wood*



*One bright cold day, I
looked up from washing
dishes and saw the figure
waiting inside the marble.
The stone said, Now...I
brushed the wood chips and
cobwebs off my
stone-carving tools...I had
bided my time long enough.
The plaster maquette on top
was my guide.*

marble in process, Jaroso, 2009

In this photo, I'm almost as old as Gordon was when I met him so many years ago when he first saw the artist in me. Sometimes, when I'm out in my stone yard, I can feel him watching.



The author working on Goddess Biding Her Time, 2011

*Goddess Biding her Time,
Carrara marble 2009-2021*



After so many years of doing crunches, watch out for when she stands up

Seashell in progress, marble 2020-2021



How I got through the first year of my cancer diagnosis and the coronavirus lockdown

A Bird in the Hand
padouk and limestone 2021





The sculptor's hands holding Compression, lignum vitae, 1990