

DIGITAL AGNES

Agnes Etherington Art Centre at Queen's University
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Collection Count + Care

Count + Care seeks relationships within and conversations across the collection.

What stories does the collection tell?

2022

SPEAKER

Sebastian De Line, Associate Curator, Care and Relations

FEATURED WORKS

Nobuo Kubota, *Roctoc* and *Tocroc* (from the *Atonement* series), 1986, photolithograph on paper, 23/30. Gift of Nobuo Kubota, 2006

Isah Papialuk, *Head (Hear No Evil)*, unknown date, soapstone. John and Mary Robertson Collection of Inuit Art, 1990

Ted Rettig, *The kindness of others, version 2*, 2004–2006, mixed media: wood, paint, vinyl lettering, limestone, felt, earthenware, steel, mussel shells, glue and hardware. Gift of Alice Wong-Rettig, 2006

Metamorphic Folded Rock, 1.1 billion years old, Salmon River, near Tamworth, Ontario
On loan from the Miller Museum of Geology, Queen's University, donated by Dr D. Carmichael.

KEYWORDS

Contemporary Art, Indigenous Art, Art Collection, Geology

TRANSCRIPT

Sebastian De Line: As one enters the gallery, a table is situated in the centre of the room. This installation by Ted Rettig, *The kindness of others, version 2*, encompasses an interdependency of many beings propping each other up. Bricks on the floor prop up the table legs, while the fourth leg is a branch of a tree with mussel shells. On top of the table, a terracotta dish is placed alongside a piece of limestone. Here, a poem reads,

“the deep kindness of others
the deep kindness of the air
the deep kindness of water
the deep kindness of the warmth of the sun
the deep deep kindness of light
the deep deep kindness of plants and animals
the rich kindness of the earth
the gentle kindness of a peaceful night”

The animacy and agency of beyond-human relatives and our kinships with them as well as the ethics of relations are important themes to the artists, Nobuo Kubota, Ted Rettig and Isah Papialuk.

In Kubota's *Tocroc* and *Roctoc*, you see the artist comfortably, laying down next to a rock, both of them wearing headphones while in one of the images, Kubota is speaking to the rock, and in the other image, he is pointing the mic at the rock listening to a response. The photographs act like stills in what could be an interview for a documentary film, a radio or news broadcast.

In *Head (Hear No Evil)* by Isah Papialuk, a soapstone figure looks outward with pursed lips, cupping his ears with both hands. He chooses not to hear or speak what he sees. Stones are our oldest relatives on Earth, the longest living witnesses to all which has passed amongst them.

In the spirit of Kubota's prompt, we've included the presence of one of the most ancient rocks living in the region, a 1.1 billion-year-old folded, metamorphic rock which came from the Salmon River area near Tamworth, a 45-minute drive north of Kingston. This rock was part of the early creation of the Grenville Mountains, which were at that time, as tall as the Himalayas. The visitor is invited to sit down with this ancient grandparent and listen to what they have to share.