

THE ARTFUL HOME

MY INTENTION, OVER THE COURSE OF 2015, IS TO EXPLORE THE LARGE AND SUPREMELY TALENTED POOL OF EMERGING LOCAL ARTISTS WITH THIS **atHOME VICTORIA** ARTS COLUMN. I HOPE YOU APPRECIATE THE ART WORK AS MUCH AS I DO, AND THAT IT INSPIRES YOU.

GUTHRIE GLOAG:

The Driftwood Poet

BY: EMILY DOBBY



Guthrie Gloag is an artist and a biologist. Raised in British Columbia, he collects driftwood from various locations around the coast (Savory Island and Quadra are his favourite spots) to incorporate into his expressive, true to life sculptures of animals and humans. He also uses found bone, concrete and steel to capture specific character traits of the forms he creates. The animals that he assembles tend to be native to the northwest coast.

Gloag is an emerging talent, starting his creative process only in 2011, but people are definitely taking notice.



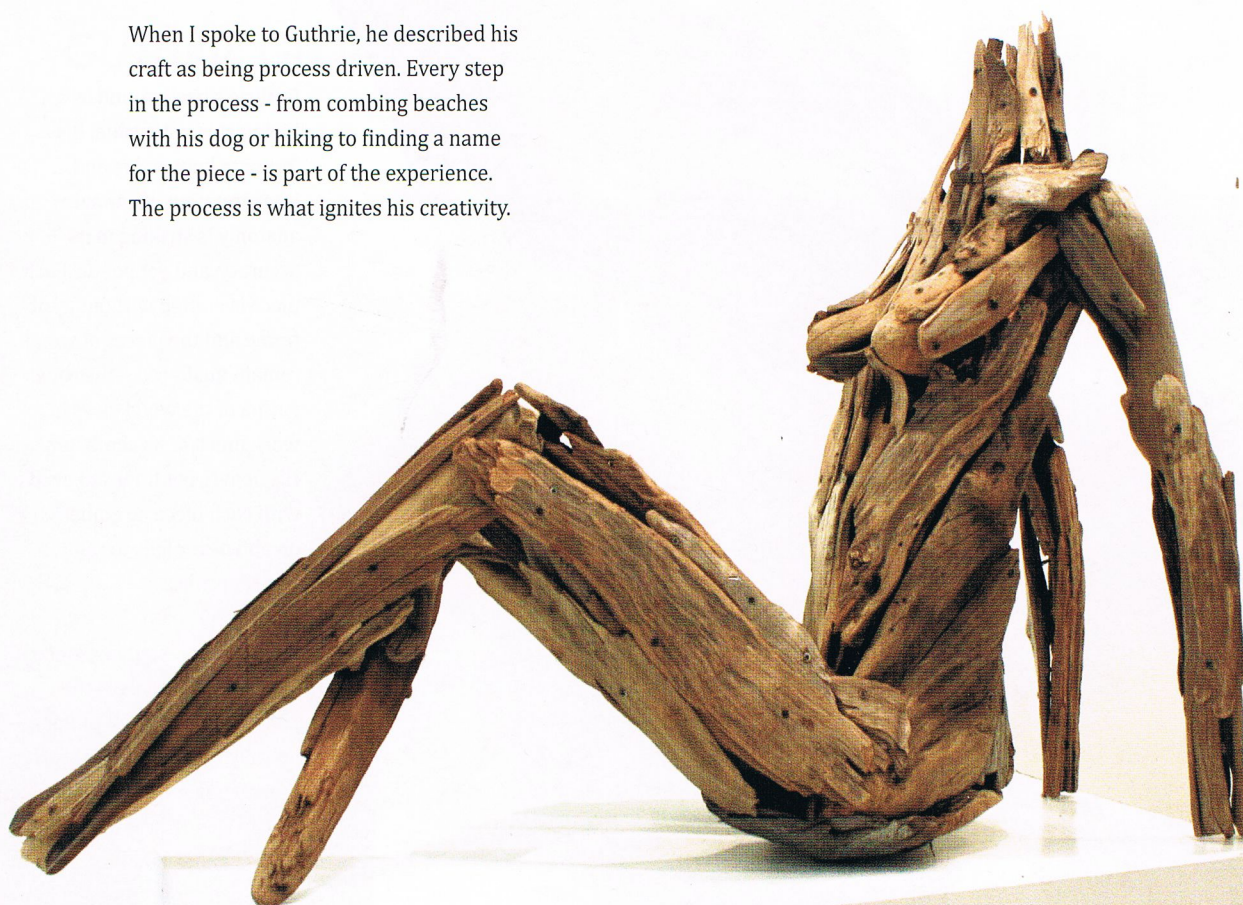
Guthrie's background as a biologist is noticeable; his intimate knowledge and interpretation of animal anatomy is striking in its accuracy, and yet poetic. Each piece is crafted without a sub-frame and the pieces of wood remain unaltered—the rough patina of the wood gives his work much of its character. His oeuvre continues to evolve with each piece he embarks on and never fails to render one speechless.

His animals—stalking, graceful predators or regal perched ravens with intricate plumage—literally turn heads. His work is arresting. Every day, people stop in their tracks and stare at his work through the windows of the gallery, until seeing it up close becomes a necessity.

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aking in his work is a visceral experience; the viewer is transported to a rugged, rainy coastline scene - to touch the rough-hewn and sandy wood, to smell the brine, to see how each piece of driftwood fits into the other like an esoteric puzzle (or to try), to feel the cold, bleached white bone that is sometimes delicately inserted into the jaw, to see how the hind legs are weighed down with beach rocks to keep the sculpture properly balanced on the plinth. It's truly an experience not to be missed.

When I spoke to Guthrie, he described his craft as being process driven. Every step in the process - from combing beaches with his dog or hiking to finding a name for the piece - is part of the experience. The process is what ignites his creativity.



You may have seen Guthrie's work at Wolf in the Fog restaurant, a new culinary hotspot in downtown Tofino that was just named *EnRoute's* Best New Restaurant in Canada for 2014. Guthrie's *Salmon Wolf* sculpture greets you at the entrance to this warm and intimate space. The menu and the decor pay homage to the lush natural surroundings and features vary creative and include inspired ocean-to-table and forest-to-table dishes.

Guthrie's work can be found in Madrona Gallery in downtown Victoria, where it first appeared in a special exhibition in July 2012 when Guthrie joined Madrona's stable of artists. His work has also been exhibited in a number of group shows, namely *Colours of Summer* (2012-2014) and *Deck the Walls* (2014).

At the end of our conversation, Guthrie told me that I should try working with driftwood. I just might...



GUTHRIE GLOAG'S WORK

can be found in various locations around Vancouver Island and also in the Mountain Galleries at Fairmont Hotels.

