

Sailing Together: Charlie Kaplan and Friendship Foundation

“I LOVE THE CHALLENGE of working on large scale stones,” Kaplan says. “There is a special energy in public installations where the work is specifically chosen for the site.”

Sculptor Charlie Kaplan’s recent work *Sailing Together* embodies his world view. Proximity to the ocean in his studios in Southern California and Pietrasanta, Italy was part of the inspiration, but it is his core belief that no one does anything alone that is at the heart of the sculpture. Starting as a maquette in pure white marble on a black base, Kaplan always envisioned scaling up to 10 or 15 feet high, so that the two sails reaching up to the sky could be both independent and interconnected depending on your perspective from the ground.

Working with the global architecture and design firm Gensler, in support of that firm’s mission to create enduring positive change and well-being through civic engagement, *Sailing Together* has been commissioned

to be placed at the entrance of the new campus of The Friendship Foundation in Redondo Beach, California. Because Kaplan has always been involved in his community and is deeply committed to giving back as both an artist and an educator, this welcoming sculpture about unity is a perfect choice. The Friendship Foundation has, for the past fifteen years, promoted growth and self-discovery for special needs children and teens, empowering them to develop both socially and intellectually. The new campus, focused on job skills and training for young adults, enables the foundation to expand its core mission as it works to transform society’s acceptance of those with disabilities. Greeted by *Sailing Together* when entering the new facility, the sculpture sends a message of hope and perseverance as we navigate both smooth and more challenging seas, on our own and in unity.

Charlie Kaplan’s path to making sculpture began with



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his interest in the melding of form and function found in old hand tools: he created his first work out of a piece of abandoned Douglas fir using a set of chisels acquired for the purpose. The experience was life-changing, and ever since Charlie has devoted himself to his art. His inspiration comes from the carefully chosen material itself, often from the historic marble quarries in Carrara, Italy, allowing his mastery of technique and well-honed instinct to join forces. His work has been exhibited steadily in both the US and Italy, notably the 2009 installation of a major large-scale sculpture on the new pier in Pietrasanta, Italy; a solo exhibition at the Sidney Mishkin Gallery at Baruch College in NYC; a solo show at Long Sharp Gallery, NYC; and the 2020 *Sculpture of Scale* group exhibition in Indianapolis. His work is widely collected privately in both the United States and Italy, and Kaplan's large-scale works are installed in notable public collections and spaces, including the William and Anita Newman Library at Baruch College, and the Conrad Hotel in Indianapolis. He has received outstanding critical press. There are four catalogues of his work available, with essays by internationally respected art writers including Christopher Eamon and Sandra Kraskin.

