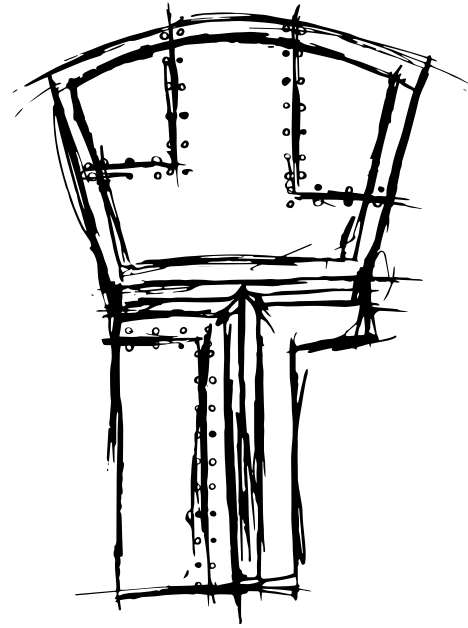




POTLATCH 67-67  
— THE POTLATCH BAN —  
THEN AND NOW





POTLATCH 67-67  
— THE POTLATCH BAN —  
THEN AND NOW

A collaboration between

Kumugwe Cultural Society  
Comox Valley Art Gallery

Courtenay British Columbia Canada



*Hopefully we can touch their  
conscience, so people will start caring  
more and work towards creating  
a world of well-being for all of our  
children and mankind. We as First  
Nations want to move forward  
together in unity with our fellow  
men to create a better world. I think  
this is where we start this notion of  
reconciliation and unity.*

– Chief Beau Dick



A publication of the convergent program Potlatch 67–67: The Potlatch Ban – Then And Now and exhibition Hiltista’am (The Copper Will Be Fixed) held at Comox Valley Art Gallery July 20th to October 4, 2019.

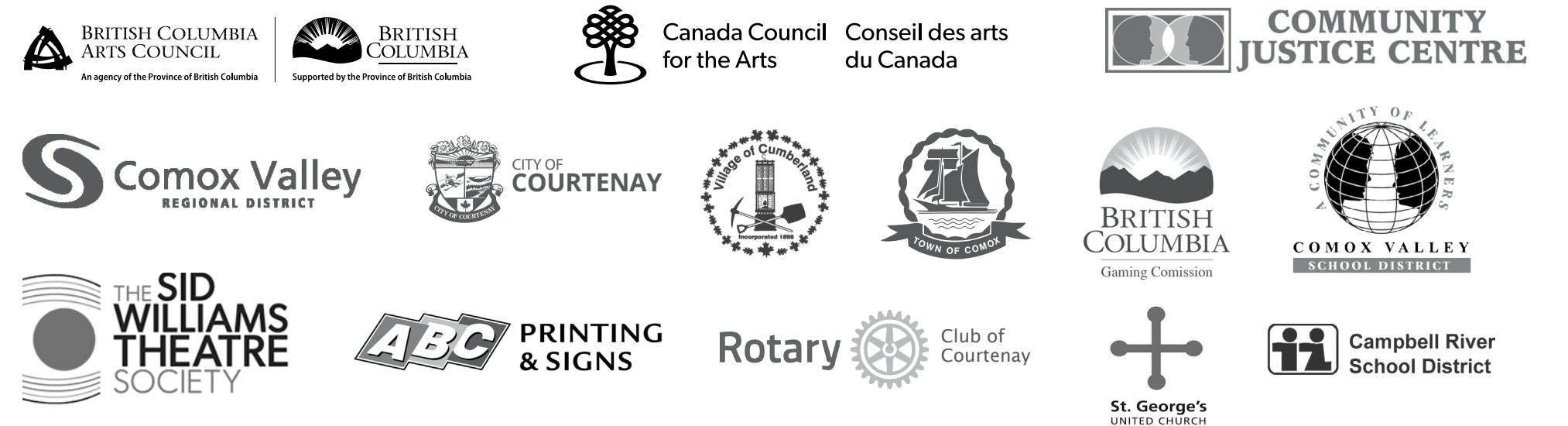
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# POTLATCH 67-67

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## THE POTLATCH BAN

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# THEN AND NOW

**THE BLANKET EXERCISE – A POTLATCH 67-67 TEACHING**

**March 02 + June 08 2018**

Native Son's Hall / 360 Cliffe Ave Courtenay

**FILM SCREENING: POTLATCH 67-67**

**July 05 2018**

Sid Williams Theatre / 442 Cliffe Ave Courtenay

**HIŁTŚISTÁ'AM (THE COPPER WILL BE FIXED)**

**WELCOMING / ART OPENING / CEREMONY / ART TALKS**

**July 20 2018**

Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CULTURAL SHARING**

**July 21 2018**

The Kumugwe Bighouse / 3240 Comox Road Courtenay

**CLOSING CEREMONY**

**October 04 2018**

Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay





# HIŁT'SISTÁ'AM

## THE COPPER WILL BE FIXED

JULY 20 – OCTOBER 04 2018

Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay

### OUR ANCESTORS GUIDE US

Beau Dick / Sam Henderson / Tony Hunt / Mungo Martin

### ARTISTS

Jesse Brillon / Corey Bulpitt / Liz Carter / Rande Cook / Donna Cranmer /  
Andy Everson / Karver Everson / Shawn Hunt / George Littlechild /  
Marianne Nicolson / John Powell / Steve Smith / Connie Watts

### WELCOMING / ART OPENING / CEREMONY / ART TALKS

July 20 / 6pm

Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CULTURAL SHARING

July 21 / 11am–4pm

The Kumugwe Bighouse / 3240 Comox Road Courtenay

### CLOSING CEREMONY

October 04

Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay

The exhibition *Hiłtsistá'am (The Copper Will Be Fixed)* is part of the convergent program *Potlatch 67–67: The Potlatch Ban – Then And Now*, produced by the Kumugwe Cultural Society, led by Cultural Carrier Nagezdi, Rob Everson, Hereditary Chief of the Gigalgam Walas Kwagut and Guest Curator Lee Everson, in collaboration with the Comox Valley Art Gallery.

Visit [comoxvalleyartgallery.com](http://comoxvalleyartgallery.com) and [potlatch6767.com](http://potlatch6767.com) for the full program.



# POTLATCH 67-67

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## THE POTLATCH BAN

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# THEN AND NOW

*The path to true reconciliation will be realized only when the quality of life of Indigenous peoples across the country are equal to other Canadians, when culture and language are preserved and practiced for future generations.* — Chief Rob Everson

*Potlatch 67-67: The Potlatch Ban – Then and Now* examines the impact of the attempted cultural genocide through the potlatch ban and the resilience of Indigenous peoples in maintaining and reclaiming traditional cultural practices and in creating new forms of cultural expression. 2018 marks the 67th year since the Canadian government's Potlatch Ban was lifted, after it was imposed on Indigenous people for 67 years. Nagezdi, Rob Everson Hereditary Chief of the Gílgam Walas Kwagut, recognized many Canadians do not understand the history of Indigenous peoples. He envisioned an Indigenous art exhibition and cultural program that would powerfully engage the local community and fellow Canadians, both Indigenous and settler, about this shared history and the impact. In essence this project provides the community with an artistic, metaphorical and cultural tour through artist stories that will echo the call for *Híłtsísta'ám* – understanding that will lead to restorative work in our families and communities.

The *Potlatch 67-67* exhibition *Híłtsísta'ám* (*The Copper Will Be Fixed*) is comprised of diverse artworks created by Indigenous artists and cultural carriers living on the West Coast and Vancouver Island, who were invited to respond, through their creative practice, to the impact of the Potlatch Ban and its re-instatement within their lives, families, communities and cultural practices.

For the *Potlatch 67-67* cultural program and art exhibition, the curators consulted with Elders to decide upon a name that would encompass the works and the history that the Potlatch Ban relates to. A broken copper being repaired and fixed was settled on.

The *Tlakwa* (a copper shield) is commonly referred to as a "copper." It is an important symbol of wealth among the Kwakwaka'wakw. The copper always had a life, a spirit, a name and a purpose. A copper enabled a chief to potlatch and distribute property. They were often included as part of a dowry. One ancestor put a copper under a rock and claimed the site as his village. Historically, a chief may break a piece of a copper and give the broken piece to another chief to settle a dispute. This gesture was reciprocal and the two chiefs would break pieces of the coppers until the only part left was the 'T' and, until the dispute was resolved. The life of the copper is the 'T' and this could be restored by replacing the broken parts. This was a historical practice. When not in use a copper is "wrapped in a blanket to keep it warm."

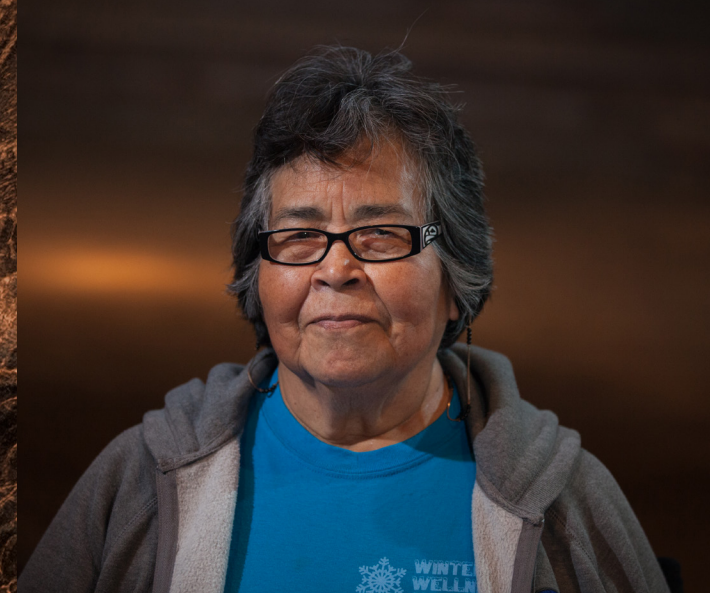
The *Potlatch 67-67* copper of the *Híłtsísta'ám* (*The Copper Will Be Fixed*) exhibiton, is not a Potlatch copper. It has no name, no commerce value and does not belong to a family. Created by Yvon Savoie, it is a symbol being used for educational purposes only and to invite people to consider the concept of *Híłtsísta'ám* as a way forward for healing in our communities.

*Potlatch 67-67: The Potlatch Ban - Then and Now* would not be possible without the support of our community partner the Comox Valley Art Gallery and all our generous contributors. Because of the committed dedication, passion, and creative collaborations, the message of *Potlatch 67-67* is being shared with diverse communities. Through this art and cultural convergent program a thought-provoking learning opportunity is available to students, families, and community members of the Comox Valley and beyond. The Kumugwe Cultural Society and its members are humbled and honoured by the support of this program.

— Cultural Carrier Chief Rob Everson  
Guest Curator Lee Everson







# OUR CULTURAL CARRIERS GUIDE US

**POTLATCH 67-67:**  
**THE POTLATCH BAN – THEN AND NOW**  
Cultural Carriers gathered around the fire in the Kumugwe Bighouse to share memories of the Potlatch Ban and its lifting. Their responses to questions and stories were recorded and filmed. A set of archival videos were created for inclusion in the exhibition and on the internet and as a legacy for future generations.

**POTLATCH 67-67 VIDEO INTERVIEW LINKS  
WITH KUMUGWE HONOURED  
CULTURAL KEEPERS AND ELDERS  
VIDEOS BY ZAC WHYTE**

[OUR ANCESTORS POTLATCHED IN SECRET](#)  
[CHEIF WEDLIDI SPECK](#)  
[ELDER MARY EVERSON](#)  
[DR. EVELYN VOYAGUR](#)  
[DISCUSSION WITH ELDERS](#)

# CHIEF WEDLIDI SPECK

*Our cultural ways open a path to a greater personal experience of life, to a deeper collective knowing and greater community relationship with sacred truth. The culture give us a sense of place and belonging.*

Wedlidi Speck is a member of the Namgis First Nation in Alert Bay, BC. His cultural connections are to the Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuuchanulth and Island K'omoks. Wedlidi is the head chief of the Gixsam namima (clan) of the Kwagul tribe. He has a 'seat' amongst the Naiichaplalamlath of the Mowachat, the Nunemasaqalis clan of the Tlawitsis and is the speaker for his uncle George & E'iksan K'omoks. As a chief and spiritual leader, Wedlidi is recognized for his knowledge on traditional protocols and indigenous relational practices. He is a story keeper and name-keeper for his families. His cross cultural experiences have included jurying and selecting artworks for the BC Arts Council and BC Arts Festivals. He has provided art talks, moderated panels and hosted art shows and supported the refresh of UBC museum collection.

# MARY EVERSON (U'MAGALIS)

*We all have a life story and the history of our loved ones that guided us to this time and space!*

Elder Mary Everson nee Frank, "U'magalis", is Kwakwaka'wakw, K'omoks and Tlingit, and comes from the K'omoks First Nation. She was raised in the old way by her mother and father, Margaret and Andy Frank, and their teachings have impacted how she lives her life today. Mary has also served on the board of directors for Aboriginal Women's Council of BC and Yukon, the BC Native Courtworkers, and was one of the founders of the Upper Island Women of Native Ancestry as well as the Kumugwe Cultural Society where she is President. Additionally, she has served on many councils and committees over the years. Currently, she is working with School District 71 as an Elder adviser. She was a foster mom for over forty-five years, and is, most importantly, mom to eight children from nine to fifty-three.

*Make choices to make life better for each and everyone who are lost and hurt! Culture is not only when you wear regalia and dance, it is a way of life that our ancestors can see! He em*

# DR. EVELYN VOYAGEUR

*Let us all, walk hand in hand now, to a better future.*

Dr. Evelyn Voyageur is a Registered Nurse and holds a PhD in Psychology. Evelyn has extensive experience in health care in the community, hospital and in nursing education.

Evelyn worked with the Indian Residential School Society for four years from 1999, where her work concentrated on isolated villages and support for former students healing from the trauma of residential schools. Evelyn was invited to join the North Island College's Nursing Program to support changes to its curriculum to help bring cultural awareness to their programming after hearing her present on "the effects of the residential school on the health of the First Nations." In 2005, Evelyn received an award in nursing from Health Canada for making a difference in working with the First Nations people. Evelyn was the first Native nurse to receive this award of excellency.

Evelyn has been active in the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada since 1980; serving as the BC representative, vice president and as president (2010 to 2012) and is still active in the association. Evelyn founded the Native and Inuit Nurses Association of BC (NINA) in the early 1980s to help educate those who work with the First Nations communities.





WELCOMING / ART OPENING / CEREMONY / ART TALKS  
 July 20 / Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay





WELCOMING / ART OPENING / CEREMONY / ART TALKS  
 July 20 / Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CULTURAL SHARING  
July 21 / The Kumugwe Bighouse / 3240 Comox Road Courtenay





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / CULTURAL SHARING  
July 21 / The Kumugwe Bighouse / 3240 Comox Road Courtenay





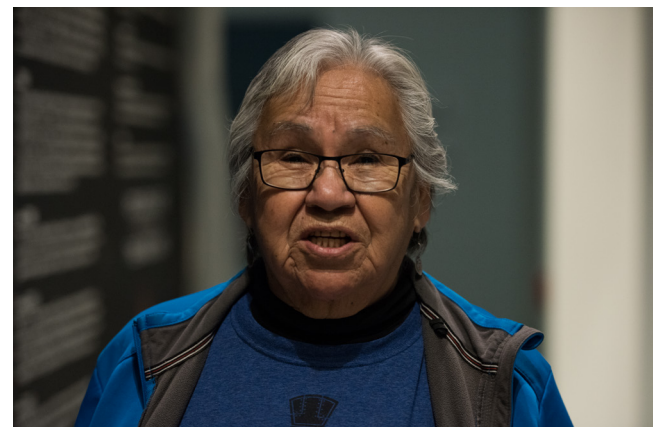
COMMUNITY TOURS  
Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay





CLOSING CEREMONY  
SEPTEMBER 1 / Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay





CLOSING CEREMONY  
SEPTEMBER 1 / Comox Valley Art Gallery / 580 Duncan Ave Courtenay



*Many people have no idea what happened to us even today... I would like the people who come to fully understand what happened to us.*

– Elder Evelyn Voyageur

### TRUST... IS A LEARNING.

*The Potlatch 67–67: The Potlatch Ban* – Then and Now convergent program responds to the Canadian Government's attempt to end the culture and traditions of Indigenous people of the west-coast. For sixty-seven years, severe penalties were the consequence of practicing traditional ceremonies, speaking native languages, and teaching a way of life that had developed over thousands of years. When the ban was lifted, sixty-seven years of emergence from under that shadow followed.

*The Hilt'sistá'am (The Copper Will Be Fixed)* exhibition presents work created by the ancestors, cultural carriers, and contemporary artists that responds to the Potlatch Ban. The narrative of the work reflects the guidance of the Ancestors, Elders, and Cultural Carriers. The past, the future and the present intersect. Pain, resiliency, hope, freedom – words spoken by the artists to describe their work, become touchstones leading into hard truths and deeper understanding.

We come together, we reach towards one another through the practice of our cultures, tenuously, we intersect one another, we open, we become vulnerable. We view the gap between – Potlatch, then and now – the consequence of a shared history. We probe. We reflect. We surface. We imagine the possibility, the beauty, the power of a cultural continuum. We dance our new learning. *The Potlatch 67–67* project has reached within us, around us, ahead of us and behind us. We have been enfolded in a new relationship.

– Angela Somerset / Denise Lawson  
CVAG Collaborative Curators





## ARTS BASED INQUIRY

In thinking about the role of contemporary public art institutions in enacting dialogues and realities of reconciliation, Canadian art curator Andrew Hunter's public resignation in 2017 from the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) is worth considering. In his October, 2017 letter to the Toronto Star, Hunter called the AGO an institution "guided not by public participation, but by the generic, elite consensus that rules the global art market, which sees product over public good". In particular, Hunter takes issue with the institute's hiring of American curators over Canadian, and its "lack of deep engagement with Canada, Canadian art or the diversity of this community" – noting that "for Indigenous peoples, people of colour and many youth, these institutions remain unwelcoming spaces of trauma – spaces where their marginalization remains at the core...". This same critique is at the centre of a series of public letters produced by and in response to Indigenous Curator France Trépanier in her February 2018 resignation from Open Space gallery in Victoria. Here, Trépanier takes issue with the organization's faltering commitment to Indigenous representation and inclusion. Trépanier's letter was taken up by the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, who called for a boycott of Open Space – one that was later, through the organization's apparent compliance with a set of demands issued by the Collective, lifted (Trépanier 2018; Windatt, C., Morin, P., Myre et. al, 2018). These

instances by the power and potency of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its recommendations for change and transformation (2015), contestations surrounding the systemic exclusion of diverse voices from Canada's national art scene have recently risen to the fore within a national arts dialogue – and have been taken up by numerous individuals and institutions in a call for change.

For a small, semi-remote gallery such as ours, this line of dialogue is especially relevant. Positioned, as we are, in an 'outpost' community in a city that carries with it a history of racism and exclusionary practices, the question of how to come to grips with the colonial histories embodied within our field generally, and with in our place and institution specifically, is one that is important to explore. Also important are the ways in which contemporary arts organizations generally, and ours specifically, might engage with concepts of reconciliation.

The Gallery's commitment to arts-based inquiry allows for and encourages a sustained exploration of such issues. In recent years, we have hosted many difficult and multi-faceted conversations centred around themes of colonialism and exclusion – designed to critique and problematize current systems of power and representation within the contemporary art world. 67–67 continues this line of exploration. By working with

this group of Indigenous artists, curators, knowledge carriers, and cultural leaders guided by Elders – all contemplating through their work the Potlatch Ban and its lifting – we've been brought into a space of deep sharing, vulnerability and contemplation. Through this exchange, our deeply-held assumptions have been challenged. As an organization, we have had to face up to the often-times backwards histories that define our ways of knowing and being – have recognized moments of cultural dissonance, and experienced frustrations related to the seemingly slow pace of change. We've also made strong connections, and witnessed both individual and collective transformations that we hope

will continue long into the future. My hope is that the spirit of self-reflexivity, openness, learning and and sharing prompted by the 67–67 exhibition finds its way beyond the CVAG community – to those entering the Gallery from many walks of life. By opening up spaces of vulnerability – in which our core ideas, assumptions and identities are challenged – we can, perhaps, collectively imagine new ways forward – by seeing the world differently, through new eyes.

– Sharon Karsten, CVAG Executive Director



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## THROUGH CONNIE WATTS' EYES

The whole experience of the events surrounding *Potlatch 67 – 67: The Potlatch Ban – Then and Now* was enriching and rewarding: writing the story that was the basis for my artwork; the creation of my artwork; meeting the crew at the gallery for installation; the well attended Gallery opening; the powerful Cultural sharing at Kumugwe Big House; and the friendships created and dialogues shared with the artists. The culmination of all of these brought greater depth of understanding of the richness of our cultural background and the devastation that was imposed upon our Nations.

When I was first asked to participate, I was astounded to know that the potlatch ban was for 67 years. I knew it was a long time, but would have never imagined that it was for a staggering 67 years. The repercussion of banning one of our core sociological centres were devastating enough, but it allowed them to throw some of our most important leaders into jail, leaving them

with a criminal record for basically being First Nations. I had to step back from this, because I couldn't help feeling rage to this appalling violent act to all of our Nations. When I stepped back, I was washed over with a feeling of thankfulness for the amazingly strong women in my life. The ones that imbedded me with understanding of the innate strength and wisdom of our people. The story was born from the feeling of these women being stripped from their cultural centres. I could feel the containment of this oppression, the feeling of her shrouded. I could feel her cautiously reentering the big house and being welcomed by supernatural beings. I could feel how broken she felt and the deep concern from the supernatural beings to help her to heal...bring back her core strength and connection to everything. As the supernatural beings peeled away her hurt and despair, she began to reveal her true nature. Her strength, the thunderbird was freed. As they all worked together to dissipate and move the heavy binding oppressive energy from her and she in turned shared her new found energy with the supernatural being, they were reuniting them as one. With this unity, she revealed her core, the tree of life and a central female figure. This story is the basis for the creation of the Thunderbird Woman regalia.

In the beginning of creating the regalia, I felt like I was doing something wrong. First, creating regalia for a dance in a big house that I so few times experienced. Second, the over arching feeling that this was a man's domain, which I never felt in any of the numerous sculptural works that I have created. And finally, the story that I was telling was not "traditional". As I embraced that the regalia would be made, these apprehensions subsided, but left me feeling uneasy. It was like I was a stranger in my own culture, but what over came this was the teaching from these amazing woman and it propelled me to believe in what I was making. I felt like this is how the ancestors felt as the planned for potlatches. It reminded me that potlatches

were living beings, that represented our culture with it history, but also actively grew and embraced changes. I loved this feeling of knowing, I was working alongside our ancestors, and my me trusting my instincts and internal knowing, I was honouring them.

It took me longer to create the regalia and was sure that the work would not be accepted into the show. But to my surprise, it was embraced and welcomed, just like we were when I was six and entering into our family potlatch in Alert Bay. There is so much in our culture that is unknown in the mainstream society. It made me think back to high school and me knowing the Canadian history being taught in school was a lie and our voices were muted to keep the illusions of mainstream society's perception of being "caring Canadians". This is what came to mind when I reflected on 67 years of a Potlatch ban. This feeling of being muted. The atrocities that happened to our First Nations, taught us that silence was safety and to hide what is most important and sacred to you. With this welcoming of the artwork into the gallery without hesitation and to see the depth of the artwork that was already laid out, filled my heart with hope that healing pathways were opening up.

These healing pathways were numerous obvious in the Gallery opening. From the welcome from the K'ómoks First Nations and the Kumugwe Dancers. The amazing opening speech given by Hereditary Chief Rob Everson of the Gigalgam Walgs Kwagwł. The number of people that came with the intent to gain understanding and to share it. The depth of the artwork representing so many facets of the treachery that we withstood for 67 years. But my favourite part of the opening was when all of the artists shared their stories of their work and their experiences of the Potlatch ban. This opened my eyes to so much more. It was not only of the devastation, but the ingenuity of our people and their creative solutions to keep our culture alive. It filled my soul.

The next day at the Cultural sharing at Kumugwe Big House captured the essence and exemplified the reason for the Art Show. The Kumugwe Dancers demonstrating and explaining many their song and dance and the Big House was filled by mostly non-native people. This felt beautiful, the coming together of everyone to build back understanding of our cultures strength with people that will share the stories.

To hear the teaching being shared so freely is a testament to the growing strength of our Nations. There are so many facets of our culture that have been muted, like our capacity. We had "doctors", "explorers", "pharmacists", "great leaders", "chiropractors" to name a few that created the strong fabric of our communities. We were great stewards of our land, we keep it pristine and flourishing for over 10,000 years and were "green" leaving barely a footprint. We were great and events like the on at eh Kumugwe Big House feels like we are heading back to reclaim our strength and greatness of our communities of the past.

The comradery of the artist, binding together to freely share their experiences and understanding that surrounded the 67 year Potlatch Ban was beautiful. From Liz Carter's richly layered contemporary work in the back, to Karvers Everson's first time made regalia work and the past Master's artwork, there was such a variety of sharing of incredibly deep knowledge. All of the artist were ready to answer question, to be totally open. My mother met Steve Smith and he shared the story of how and why he created his work. Of his past and his desires for the future. This warmth was felt through the Show and the Cultural event.

I was proud and honoured to included. As the true histories of our peoples are told, we can work together to create a more balance, whole society. We can learn and embrace the true nature of living as one.



## LEE EVERSON

Lee Everson is an ally and an advocate for Indigenous Peoples. She is a guest on K'omoks First Nations territory, wife to Nagedzi hereditary Chief Rob Everson of the Gigalgam Walas Kwagw and mother of three. Lee is deeply rooted in her family's culture, making regalia for her family, assisting in organizing feasts and potlatches, and dancing regularly with the Kumugwe Dancers. To ensure she follows traditional protocols she seeks guidance from Elders and knowledge keepers. Lee is fiercely proud of her family and grateful to be part of the Potlatching community. She has volunteered her time in organizing events such as National Aboriginal Day, The Annual Red Dress Awareness Campaign and Installation, Walking With Our Sisters K'omoks (the first location in BC), and serves as the volunteer administrator for the Kumugwe Cultural Society and Dance Group for the past eleven years. Lee was the curator for Potlatch 67-67 where she addressed the importance of reclaiming culture through art since the devastation of the Potlatch Ban.

In 1989 Lee began making regalia for her children and family with support from her husband's grandmother the late Margaret Frank. Lee used the old family blankets as guides and referenced pieces she researched. Lee has spent time learning the ways of her family's ancestors to honour the process and traditions. She has great respect for understanding Indigenous ways of knowing and is fortunate to have master blanket maker John Powell who assists her in her journey of learning. Lee coordinated facilitators to teach regalia making in her community, cedar weaving, cedar headpiece making, button blanket making to name a few courses.

Lee began researching the many regalia pieces the family has lost over the years and with her families permission began making reproductions of these pieces which has become her passion. She has worked with several museums and knowledge keepers for assistance in recreating regalia. This learning has been past down to her children who are proud and honoured to practice their Kwakwaka'wakw and K'omoks culture.







## HISTORY

Indigenous people have been negotiating treaties, trade, travel, technological advances, war, intermarriage, and sustainable harvesting, hunting, and fishing for over 13000 years in Canada.

1493

Doctrine of Discovery which is a document that ensures Spain's exclusive rights to lands discovered by Columbus, all other nations were forbidden to approach the land without a license.

1536 – 1632 “Discovery of North America”

Basque whalers are the first Europeans to regularly visit North America, landing in what is now Newfoundland and Labrador.

1673

The Hudson's Bay Company establishes a fur-trading post called Moose Fort.

1755

The Indian Department was created as an attempt to mitigate concerns of colonial fraud and abuse against First Nations because of the competition for controlling the land between the French and British.

1763

Royal Proclamation also known as “Indian Magna Carta” or “Indian Bill of Rights” stated that Indigenous people reserved all lands not ceded by or purchased from them.

1812

War of 1812 was a military conflict between Great Britain and the United States. Canada, being under British rule, sided with Britain and this war contributed to a sense of Canada's national identity. First Nations fought alongside the British.

1847

Egerton Ryerson recommends and requests the superintendent general of Indian Affairs educate native children with a focus on religious and domestic instruction with agricultural training. This would become the first model for residential schools.

1854

Douglas Treaties - 159 identical marks made for the Indigenous peoples instead of signatures; Indigenous people understood this to be a peace treaty, not a purchase agreement as this was not translated into Indigenous languages. The driving force of the Douglas Treaty was to gain control of Indigenous peoples' land.

1867

The British North America Act - Indians under federal governments control.

1869 – 1870

Red River Rebellion led by Louis Riel. Many Métis feared for their culture and land rights under Canadian government control. This rebellion led to provisions made to negotiate terms to enter Confederation.

1871

BC becomes part of Canada; 90% Indigenous population. The first five numbered treaties are signed, focusing on land in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

1876

Indian Act is created. This is a set of rules and regulations imposed on First Nations that give the federal government power to administer Indian Status, local First Nations government and management of respect for land and monies. The sole purpose was to eliminate and eradicate First Nations culture. The Indian Act has been revised to implement stricter rules over time, between 1951 - 1985 when changes were being made to remove discriminatory sections. The Indian Act is still in place today. Most of the rules and regulations go against the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

1884

The Potlatch Ban is added to the Indian Act to further extinguish any First Nations culture and foundation.

1885

Red River Rebellion and Northwest Resistance.

1914 – 1917

Indigenous men enlist in the army to serve in World War I. Some are conscripted. When they return from the war, Status Indian Veterans are not afforded the same privileges as non-Indigenous Veterans.

1921

Chief Dan Cranmer of the Namgis people hosts a potlatch in Mimkumlis, Village Island; the Indian Agent finds out

alerts the police which resulted in 45 people being arrested. Regalia, masks, and other ceremonial items are seized to prevent them from potlatching again. 22 of those arrested go to Okalla prison.

1929

Indigenous population in BC is 22,605.

1951

The Potlatch Ban is removed from the Indian Act. This ban is lifted passively which means they lifted the ban and did not inform the First Nations.

1953

Chief Mungo Martin builds a big house (named Wawaditla) in Victoria and hosts the first legal potlatch in 67 years.

1959

Chief Andy Frank builds a big house (named Kumugwe) on the Comox Valley Exhibition Grounds in Courtenay, and hosts a potlatch.

1960

Status Indian men and women are given the right to vote in federal elections.

1964

The Gwa'sala and Naxwaxda'xw peoples are promised better housing, a school, a community hall, a mooring dock, and easy access to services IF they relocate their villages to a reserve near Port Hardy. They agree after 10 years of pressure, and relocate to Tsulquate where they are met with 3 incomplete homes for their entire village. When members tried to return home to gather their belongings (as they were promised they could) they returned to villages that were burnt to the ground by the military.

1973

The Supreme Court rules that Aboriginal Title to land exists, citing the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

1974

The big house named Kumugwe is relocated to the K'omoks First Nation on land that was once Andy Frank's garden.



1985

Bill C-31 - a change to the Indian Act so Status Indian women who married non-Aboriginal men regained their Status and that of their children. Those who lost their status for marrying non-Aboriginal men could get their treaty rights but not necessarily their band membership rights creating further division adding codes 6 (1) a - 6(1)f, 6(2).

1990

The Oka Crisis - since the 18th century the Mohawk have been requesting their right to the land, these requests fell on deaf ears until a golf course expansion was proposed in 1961. This nine hole golf course would be built on top of the Kanesatake reserve burial ground. In 1989 the mayor announced the the expansion from 9 to an 18 hole golf course with luxury condos despite the protest by the Mohawk. The RCMP, 2500 regular and reserve troops were placed on standby and 800 members of the infantry including aircraft pressuring the protesters to remove barriers. This crisis made the average Canadian more aware of Aboriginal Rights and Land claims and played a significant role in creating the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

1996

Last Residential school closes in Saskatchewan. the Gordon Residential School was the last federally run facility.

2000

The Nisga'a Treaty. This treaty is the first treaty to be negotiated since 1976, the negotiations for this treaty began 100 years previous. Many of the rules under the Indian Act made it illegal for Indigenous people to raise funds and illegal for land ownership, those laws were repealed in 1951. In 1982 the Constitution Act section 35 recognized that Aboriginal right and title are legal rights.

2008

Prime Minister Stephen Harper formally apologizes to survivors of Residential Schools. "Today we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm and has no place in our country... the government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal people of this country for failing them so profoundly. We are sorry."

June 2008

Truth and Reconciliation Commission is established, the purpose is to discover and reveal past wrongdoings from government agencies with a goal of resolving the conflict.

Spring 2010

Bill C-3 – The Government of Canada introduces legislation to enhance Gender Equity in the Registration Provisions of the Indian Act, giving grandchildren of First Nations Status women the same recognition as the grandchildren of First Nations Status men.

June 2012

Christi Belcourt puts out a call for moccasin vamps to create Walking With Our Sisters and raise awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

July 2013

Chief Beau Dick breaks a copper on the steps of the legislature in Victoria, BC. The significance of a copper on the northwest coast is a measure of wealth and power. Breaking a copper is a measure of "challenge, shaming, and banishment", the cultural significance is to symbolize the deeply fractured relationship between the Government of Canada and the First Peoples. This is a call to repair the broken relationship.

July 2014

Chief Beau Dick breaks a copper on the steps of the Parliament building in Ottawa, Ontario.

June 2015

Truth and Reconciliation Commission releases its report and 94 Calls to Action.

December 2016

The Federal Government launches a National Inquiry into the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

2018

67 years since the Potlatch Ban was removed from law, the same amount of time as the law was in effect.







**HISTORY**  
Indigenous people have been negotiating treaties, trade, new technological advances, war, intermarriage, and sustainable harvesting, hunting, and fishing for over 13,000 years in Canada.

**1763**  
The Royal Proclamation, also known as "Indian Magna Carta" or "Indian Bill of Rights", stated that Indigenous people reserved all lands not ceded by or purchased from them.

eliminate and eradicate First Nations Culture. The Indian Act has been revised to implement stricter rules over time. Between 1951 - 1985 changes were being made to remove discriminatory sections. The Indian Act is still in place today. Most of the rules and regulations on control the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

**1996**  
Last Residential school closes in Saskatchewan. The Gordon Residential School was the last Indian residential school.

between the Government of Canada and the First Peoples. This smoking is a call to repair the broken relationship.

## POTLATCH 67-67



EXHIBTION KEY

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- 2 HEREDITARY CHIEF TONY HUNT SR., *Dance Screen*
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OUR CULTURAL CARRIERS GUIDE US

- 5 *Collective Memories (digital archive)*
- 6 *Potlatch 67–67 Our Cultural Carriers Guide Us (video interviews)*

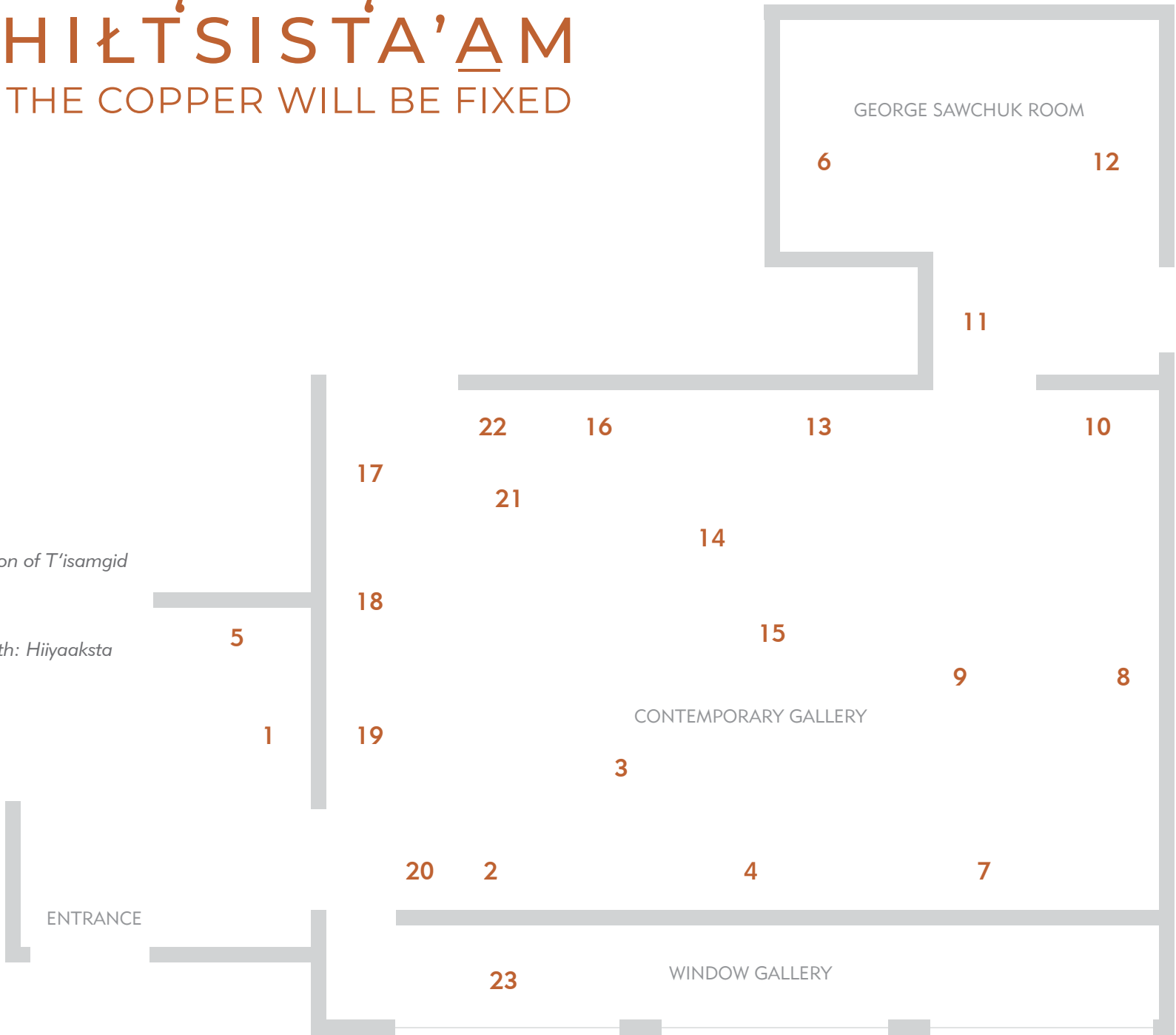
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- 7 RANDE COOK – MAKWALA, *The Copper Will Be Fixed*
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- 14 CONNIE WATTS – NUU-CHAH-NULTH, GITXSAN AND KWAKWAKA'WAKA, *Nuuchahnuluth: Hiiyaaksta yaakwiimit: liickaa maamaati luucma (Amongst the Ancestors: Thunderbird Woman)*
- 15 ANDY EVERSON – KWAMZWALAGALIS, *Concealment*
- 16 DONNA CRANMER – NALAGA, *Chilkat Blanket*
- 17 SHAWN HUNT – HEILTSUK, *Forest Spirit*
- 18 JESSE BRILLON – SKIL XAAW, *Eagle - Eye of the Beholder ;–)*
- 19 STEVE SMITH – DLA'KWAGILA, *Free To Be*

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- 20 Potlatch 67–67 Copper
- 21 Cultural Sharing
- 22 Reclamation Regalia
- 23 Potlatch 67–67 Historical Timeline

HILT'SISTA'AM  
THE COPPER WILL BE FIXED



**COURTESIES:** MARY EVERSON (digital archive: Collective Memories) FAZAKAS GALLERY (on loan: *Supernatural Raven*, Chief Beau Dick) MACAULAY & CO. FINE ART AND ARTIST (Forest Spirit) gratitude to ZAC WHYTE for video support



OUR ANCESTORS GUIDE US





# 1 CHIEF SAM HENDERSON

*Original Bighouse Doors*

98" x 82", cedar

1959

Chief Sam Henderson, born in Blunden Harbour, was a self-taught Kwakwaka'wakw Northwest Coast carver. Chief Henderson was raised to respect his heritage, traditions and knowledge toward cultural protocols and in turn gifted these values to his children. A master in "making wood speak", he mentored many including his sons Master Carver, Bill Henderson and the late, Mark Henderson, a well-respected painter who was best known for his complex and methodical portrayal of Kwakiutl legends. One of the many totems Chief Sam Henderson carved was the Kwakiutl Bear Pole in 1966 as part of the B.C. Centennial Route of the Totems.





The collection of photographs belonging to Elder Mary Everson (U'magalis) are the gateway for remembering the past. The memory is nudged. Public and private histories are revealed. They offer a pathway into stories that help to root the present.





2

**HEREDITARY CHIEF TONY HUNT SR.**

**Dance Screen**  
textile and print

Hereditary Chief Tony Hunt Sr. was born in Alert Bay in 1942 and was considered an ambassador of Northwest culture to the world. Chief Tony Hunt Sr. received his training from his father, professional carver Henry Hunt a descendent of the late great Chief Mungo Martin. Chief Hunt designed and produced hundreds of totem poles, his work can be seen in the Royal BC Museum, Thunderbird Park and the most well-known largest totem in the Northwest Coast in Fort Rupert. He received an honorary doctorate from Royal Roads University and was named to the Order of BC in 2010 but his more proud achievement was his potlatch name sake, Nakapenkem, given by the late chief Peter Knox.





3

**CHIEF BEAU DICK, Walas Gwa'yam****Supernatural Raven**

35" x 43" x 14"

red cedar, acrylic, bark, feathers

Chief Beau Dick, acclaimed as one of the Northwest Coast's most versatile and talented carvers, was born in Alert Bay, BC, where he lived and worked. He began carving at an early age, studying under his father Benjamin Dick, his grandfather James Dick, and later renowned artists such as Henry Hunt and Doug Cranmer. Beau also worked alongside master carvers Robert Davidson, and the late Tony Hunt and Bill Reid. As an artist, he took much of his inspiration and technique from traditional Kwakwaka'wakw art. Beau's art has gained steady recognition and acclaim in both Canada and the international art scene. From 2013 to his passing in 2017, he was Artist-in-Residence at the UBC Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory. For more than three decades, he actively perpetuated the ceremonial traditions of his people.

*My style is sometimes referred to as "Potlatch Style" as it comes from a tradition of ceremony which requires many masks to be made in a short period of time. It takes many years of practice and an understanding of balance in order to create a work that appears finished in a natural and instinctive manner, without seeming overthought.*









**CHIEF MUNGO MARTIN***Untitled, lamp*

11.5" x 30" x 7.5", cedar, paint, found materials

The late Nakapankam, or Chief Mungo Martin was a master Kwakwaka'wakw Northwest Coast artist who made major contributions towards carving, painting, singing, songwriting and teaching for many generations to come. Born in Fort Rupert in 1879, his name "Potlatch Chief ten times over" whose expertise on culture, traditions and songs was recognized and sought after not only by apprentice carvers, but also the University of British Columbia requesting to take over the totem pole restoration program despite the Potlatch ban. Chief Martin Mungo carved during the Potlatch ban which meant risking his freedom, possible jail time or hefty fines to ensure the culture and art form would not be stolen. Nakapankam, was a mentor to greats such as Henry Hunt, Tony Hunt Sr. and Bill Reid, not to mention the irreplaceable work he did with ethnographers recording over 400 stories and songs at UBC and the Royal British Columbia Provincial Museum.





CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS





## 7 RANDE COOK, Makwala

*The Copper Will Be Fixed*

36" x 48"

copper, found material, plexi, paper

2018

Since the beginning we as the Kwakwaka'wakw have been self governed and developed a system where tribes lead in a ranking order. Within each tribe there was internal governance where each namima (house) played significant roles in maintaining the land. Everything came down to land, the tribes who developed along the great rivers could harvest salmon and trade amongst other tribes for other goods and etc. Most tribes had strong trap lines and therefore could obtain furs for trade as a form of currency. All of these played a role in the potlatch system. The potlatch was a place where witnesses came to see the transactions take place between tribes, sometimes dowry was passed through marriage giving the male rights to new lands and resources, or rights were being passed to new generations. All of this again was to make sure the land was active and thriving for generations to come.

Coppers, were our greatest way of recording all of these transactions, very much like a debit card is today every transaction was documented and recorded, there was a value to every copper. Sometimes chiefs would have disputes, in these cases a chief could challenge another over rank or title. And chiefs could pull his copper out and break it, this would show that he was wealthy enough to sink that wealth deep within the ocean to never been again for he had so much. The challenge had to be accepted by another and the chief being challenged would have to break an equal amount from his copper or more to keep the other chief from claiming higher rank, again that piece was thrown into the ocean. The chief who could no longer keep up would have to settle and never challenge that chief again. The copper was the symbol for currency to be exchanged within the

kwakwaka'wakw and neighbouring nations up to Alaska.

1881-1956 a ban was passed and it became illegal to potlatch, the government no longer wanted to see this thriving self governance function amongst the natives. The reserves were put in place, small areas of land where "Indians" were placed and monitored, permits were now in order for natives to leave and harvest or work in their traditional manner. Objects tied to the potlatch were stripped and shipped afar which can be seen today in many museums, and most were set on fire to disappear forever. Children were then stripped from their homes and parents and placed in residential schools, to never speak their language nor go back to their traditional ways. The saddest part was, the people of the villages were moving away, trying to be close to their children they moved to Alert Bay. Some never moved back to their homes and passed with loss and sorrow, a disconnect from all they knew. It was a sad time in history, changes were being created but some chiefs were determined to fight for their children's place both in culture and land. Many chiefs turned to underground potlatching, there they were able to keep the dances and culture preserved with names, positions, dances and mostly hereditary rights from origin to land.

My name is Rande Cook, I come from many of these tribes of the kwakwak'awakw people. My grandmother was the eldest daughter of a great chief, his name was Harry Mountain, he was the head chief of the wiwomasgam of the mamalikala people. When children were being taken away from their parents and placed in residential schools my gran was hidden by her grandfather and travelled from village to village

in this underground world of potlatch. She saw and collected many memories of what was happening and spoke the old language of that time.

My grandfather, he was Ma'amtagila, his father was chief Makwala of the Hamatam house. My grandfather did suffer through residential school but spent summers working with his dad and uncles logging and grew to live in the underground potlatch system as well seeing what was happening within his own tribes ceremonies. The Ma'amtagila people at this time were suffering with the loss of people moving due to the drastic changes. A chief at this time began to work with a neighbouring chief of the Tlowitsis people in Turner Island, together they wrote for months and months having conversations with the Indian agent asking if amalgamating the two tribes would help them to gain more as a tribe to help their people stay in their traditional territories. They had placed a series of requests with the agent, school, hospital etc. So their children could be cared for within their own, the two chiefs of these tribes had their discussions within their own tribes and brought all requests to the table. Minutes were taken and an amalgamation was passed clearly stating these two chiefs would maintain their own territories and even have their own bank accounts over seeing their own territories. All the chiefs signed off on this and it was done.

Over time many of their requests were not granted and many chiefs were not happy with the agreement and wanted to go back to how it was, but the government was in compliance and just kept pushing them forward leaving them with very little to suffice.

After time the government put in place Indian affairs, here a system was developed where each tribe would act under an elected system. Now an elected chief and council would be the voices to comply with Indian affairs.

1996 a BCR was passed claiming the amalgamated tribes of the Tlowitsis/ Ma'amtagila becomes one title, a chief wrote that the Ma'amtagila people no longer wanted their title on the amalgamation and would function solely just as Tlowitsis, here they would relinquish their land, resources and all rights to this one chief solely for he to do as he wishes in agreement with the federal government from there forward. The chief then placed himself in seat forever as a hereditary and dropped the voting system to leave the people with any say.

Around 60 years ago from today a great uncle of mine who was a Ma'amtagila chief found a broken fragment of a copper in Ma'amtagila territory, this was a great find for him because he was a political man. This find meant that coppers were being broken and the people of the Ma'amtagila would never surrender their territory. I obtained this piece of copper and hung on to it for many years. I inherited my great fathers chieftainship and today I am chief Makwala of the Ma'amtagila people, from the house of the Hamatam. Today I ask many questions. First and foremost I ask "why are there no signatures from the Ma'amtagila chiefs on this BCR saying we gave our title up over our own lands?" Secondly, I question my place as a chief now if we don't have land to claim our positions from, what does this mean in modern times now? What does being a chief a mean?



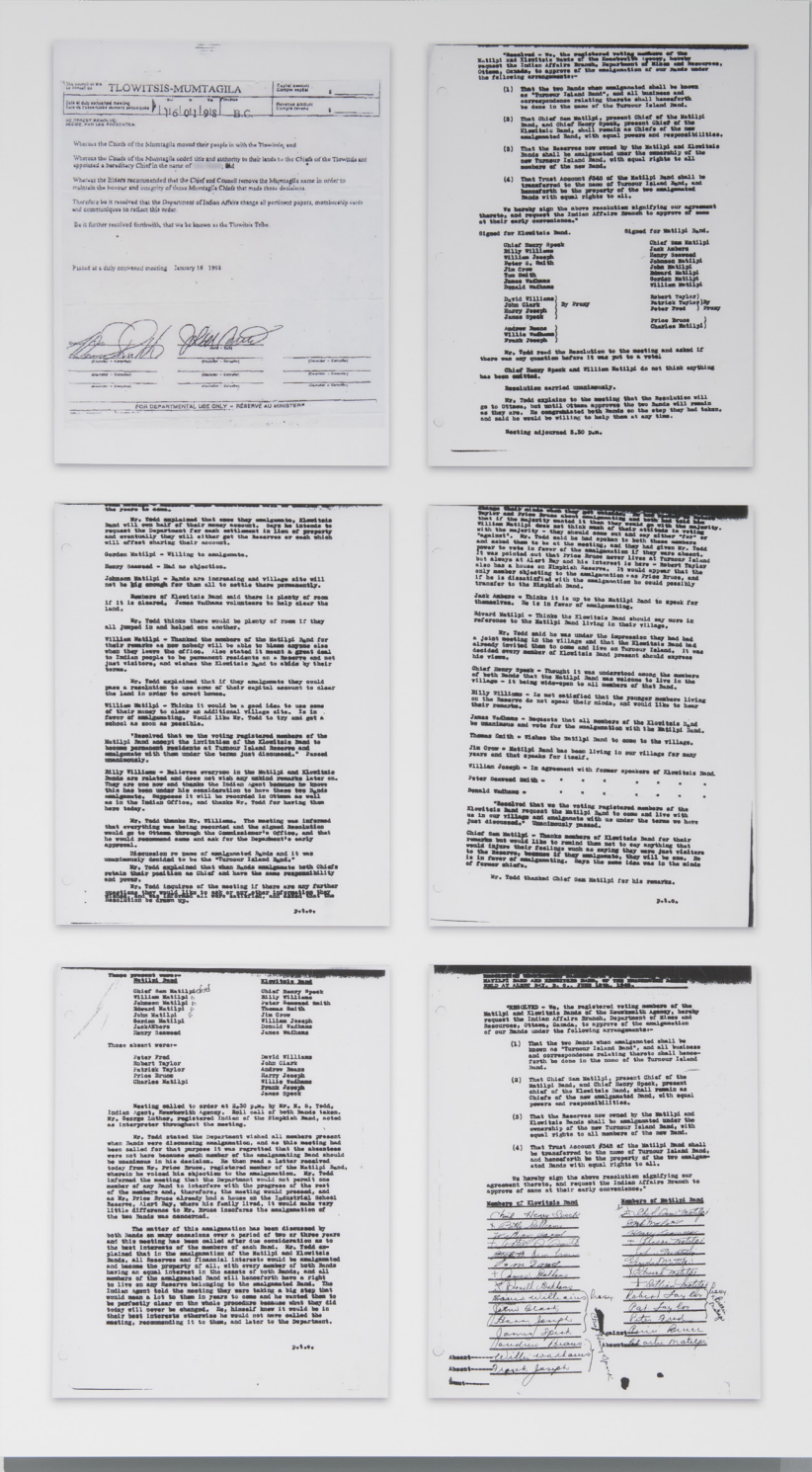
I read the amalgamation signed in the 1940's by all the head chiefs of both neighboring tribes, and I only read 3 signatures on the modern BCR whom none are Ma'amtagila. As an artist I think in two ways, my art can be my voice from the traditional space in which I grew, and my art can speak to those who don't know the traditional ways of my people in the contemporary world. I chose to not go to art school when I was very young, I chose to go back to my roots and learn from our very own master carvers, I wanted to decolonize and separate my way of thinking so I could share in our truth.

My path in life has taken me far in the art work but within in my own country I'm struggling to find space because I chose to not get my Masters from an institution that doesn't know our traditional art form. So just like that of this broken system in place now between hereditary chiefs, land and elected chiefs, the government doesn't recognize our hereditary system, deals are being made daily with big corporations for financial gain but the people have very little say.

I'm an artist, I'm a chief, I'm a father, I'm a son, I'm cultural, I'm a teacher, I'm a leader, I'm a friend, I'm a communicator seeking truth to find answers to heal, I'm kwakwaka'wakw.

So, just like this fragment of copper found deep within the ocean I'm trying to put the pieces back together. I'm trying to seek truth and transparency so we can heal and unite again as one. Altered by perception and capitalism we have been cut short, our voices muddled and our spirits left to sway from shore to shore searching for meaning in this contemporary world, do people really not care enough to help us back up? Or are we really left to disappear and be a thought that there were at one time Ma'amtagila people. The government doesn't see us, and now the new neighbouring tribe refuses to see us too.

– Chief Makwala, Ma'amtagila/ Hamatam





**JOHN POWELL, Winidi**

Sanctuary

11' 7" x 9' 11"

photo transfer, textiles, acrylic paint, thread

*This work speaks to the real lived experience of the people of the Northwest coast and illustrates the degrading practice, not only of denying our peoples their right to celebrate life's passages of right - but actually policing their activities to remove all remnant or possibility to be First Nations and practice the ways of our ancestors. Try as they might our people persevered and our culture lived on, evolving and changed but still existent. What hurt us built up our resilience. We were here first and we are still here and, we have no plans to abandon our commitments to the land, sea, air, or the supernatural ones - We live therefore we are!*

Motivation for my Art is driven by culture. My media is generally textiles. I was schooled in Traditional Kwakwaka'wakw design, Costume Design, Fashion Design (by commission), Interior Design, and Graphic Design. I work a lot in Theatre Costume design. I make clothing on a commission basis. I have also worked with The Vancouver Opera Society. In addition, I have designed a number of Graphics for various First Nations and Non-First Nations organizations. I was Design Coordinator for the Vancouver 2010 Welcome Portion of the Olympics. I was fortunate to have grown up in my Kwakwaka'wakw culture and gained much knowledge from our elders/old ones. I value this above all, and I work hard to provide opportunities for the larger non-aboriginal population to learn and understand who we are Kwakwala-speaking people.

John Powell, Winidi, Mamalilikulla of the Kwakwaka'wakw, is a visual artist and designer who lives on the K'ómoks First Nation.









**KARVER EVERSON, Gayusdisa'las***Namugwis (the first one from above on the beach)*

3' x 6' x 2'

cedar, cloth, feathers, acrylic

2018

For *Potlatch 67-67* I created a piece based on my families first ancestor and origin story. Namugwis came down from the sky and was the first to inhabit the village of Wika'wa'ya'as, present day known as Stories Beach near Fort Rupert. Namugwis means the first one, from above, on the beach. I wanted to create a piece that contributes to cultural practices that are still happening today. It was masks, blankets and other regalia, like this creation that were taken during the potlatch ban; regalia that tells family history and can date back to when our first ancestors inhabited the land. If my piece was danced then it would not be shown publicly unless in ceremony/potlatch; it would be wrapped in a blanket and be kept safely away.

The Potlatch made it so my Great grandparents and my Grandma were not able to practice their culture. When they did practice their culture, it was in secret; If they were caught practicing their culture publicly they faced imprisonment. This went on for 67 years from 1884 to 1951. The Potlatch was not just songs and dances, it was a way of life, it was the very thing that made them indigenous. I chose to create this piece to show how times have changed and to celebrate who we are.

My name is Karver Everson I was born in Comox, BC in 1993 and named Gayustistalas - a name that once belonged to my father, Chief Rob Everson and before him belonged to my great uncle Bob Wilson, both of the Gigalgam Walas Kwakiutl.

I think for many people it is hard to define where they come from, I am fortunate enough to have a direct

link that connects me to the first peoples of Vancouver island. A link that is time immemorial, and runs deep through my veins. For me that rich Kwakwaka'wakw and K'omoks history is what inspires me to make the art I do.

When I design, paint, carve and create I tell the stories of my ancestors and myself. Through the art form I connect to my ancestors and the legacy they fought to preserve. Although my culture is still here and thriving, its existence is threatened by the rapidly changing world. Through my art I attempt to connect both the present with the past and further understand my place within time and cultural history. In doing so shining light on an ancient world that once was and the world that surrounds us today.

I have been blessed by the mentors in my life. Working under the tutelage of Kwakwaka'wakw master carvers Richard Hunt, Calvin Hunt and David Knox. My uncle, Andy Everson, has also taught me to understand multiple facets of Northwest Coast art including rules of form-line and design. I am grateful to have these teachers in my life, as they have contributed so much to Kwakwaka'wakw and K'omoks culture.





10 COREY BULPITT, Taakeit Aaya

*K'aauhl (dagger)*

30" x 8" x 3"

carved wood dagger, paint, fabric, broken billy club

2018

We are not supposed to be doing this, we are not supposed to be proud of our heritage, know our clan affiliation, dances, songs or language. We are part of an anomaly. We are a part of our ancestors that Canada, using all possible efforts, could not eradicate. We are cultural people, we know where we are from, we have deep rooted connection to the water and the land. We are still fighting to regain respect as human beings, we are fighting to stop the eradication of all that is sacred, the cedar and the salmon are in great peril, our languages are just holding on by a thread. This wand, or shamans dagger represents our need for medicine, our need to learn to fight this spiritual battle, we call upon our ancestors for help as the fight against us and our territories always increases with a continued ignorance held by the Canadian government. The moon watches over all of us and is one of my fathers crests, this dagger is inspired by an old Tlingit shamans wand. The end with the moon also creates a peace sign, the ultimate goal of our war, is peace and to give Canadians and the world an understanding of who we are, why these things are sacred to us and why we have no choice but to stand against tyranny and terror bestowed upon us, the original people and protectors of these lands.

Corey Bulpitt, also known as Taakeit Aaya or "Gifted Carver" by the Haida of the Naikun Raven clan, was born in Prince Rupert BC in 1978. He is a great-great grandson of the famed Charles Edenshaw and Louis Collison.

Corey graduated from the Langley Fine Arts School in 1996. In 2001, he apprenticed under Master Carver Christian White for three years in Haida Gwaii, learning

design and wood carving. Corey has worked beside and learned from many master carvers such as Sharon Hitchcock, Wayne Alfred, Donny Edenshaw, Phil Grey, and Jay Simeon. His biggest influences are the old master carvers of the 17th to late 19th century whose skills are left unmatched. Through his study Corey creates functional pieces that can be used in the traditional context of song and dance.

Corey has carved many totem poles, including ones carved with Christian White, Jim Hart, Dwayne Simeon and Beau Dick and a pole in New Zealand with Maori Master Lionel Grant and North West Coast carvers Dempsey Bob, Joe David and Christian White. In 2010, Corey assisted in crafting a 30' pole with Klatle Bhi for the Winter Olympics.

He is also an avid painter, jeweler, wood and argillite carver who enjoys exploring different mediums such as spray paint and performance art. His contemporary graffiti art pieces can be seen in many museums, festivals like W2's New Form Festival, and urban landscapes and the Vancouver Art Gallery. Corey is a member of the Beat Nation Live-Arts Collective and crafted a performance art project for the Sydney Biennale. In 2017, Corey received a BC Creative Achievement Award for Aboriginal Art.





**MARIANNE NICOLSON, 'Tayagila'ogwa***Always the New Day Dawns or The Ressurrection of T'isamgid*

15' x 15'

glass, wood, light

*A light mechanism moves the light up and down casting a shadow onto the floor which emerges and retreats imitating the motion of escape and return or the back and forth of movement in the ceremonial house during the daylight dance. It is called "Always the New Day Dawns" and looks at the residential school, suppression of Kwakwaka'wakw culture and its return.*

Marianne Nicolson ('tayagila'ogwa), is an artist of Scottish and Dzawada'enuxw First Nations descent. Dzawada'enuxw People are a member tribe of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nations of the Pacific Northwest Coast.

Her training as an artist encompasses both traditional Kwakwaka'wakw forms and culture and Western European based art practice. She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Emily Carr University of Art and Design (1996), a Masters in Fine Arts (1999), a Masters in Linguistics and Anthropology (2005), and a PhD in Linguistics and Anthropology (2013) at the University of Victoria.

She has exhibited her artwork locally, nationally, and internationally as a painter, photographer, and installation artist, has written and published numerous essays and articles, and has participated in multiple speaking engagements. Her practice engages with issues of Aboriginal histories and politics arising from a passionate involvement in cultural revitalization and sustainability.

*I do this because I believe that Indigenous worldviews can benefit all peoples, in particular, our notions of community connection to one another and to the land.*





## 12 LIZ CARTER, *Tłakwe't*

*Renunciation #4*

8' x 5' x 7'

installation, video, interactive blackboard

2018

### RENUNCIATION #4

Gerald Vizenor is an Anishinaabe cultural theorist who coined the word 'survance' in his essay 'Manifest Manners.' He explains that 'survance' is about survival, the refusal of dominance, and refusal of victimry and examines the active presence of Native's in the world. The 'refusal' is Vizenor's survance paradigm. Our teaching's of a manifested destiny starts early in life, we learn from inclusion of Native history and from exclusion of Native history that Aboriginals' live in a world of drunkenness, barbarism, romanticism and dominance that Vizenor's 'Postindian warriors' continually fights with stories of survance." (Vizenor 4)

'Renunciation #4' explores the 'Post Indian Survivance' of Residential Schools. It's a story of attempted genocide and survival. Survivance is about education of the historical trauma and healing through continual present-day storytelling. 'Renunciation #4' examines the historical element of putting our children in schools and attempting to infuse them with colonial ideologies. The infusion in 'Renunciation #4' is filled with organic life giving materials that connect us to the land, a place of sustainability. The broken copper pattern on the desk is surrounded by healing medicine, suggesting a survival and refusal of dominance. The 'Indian Warriors of Survivance' is at work fighting racism, discrimination with an active sense of presence and self-determination.

"The grass is [not always] greener on the other side of the fence" as the old proverb suggests, but 'Renunciation 4' is hopeful, its repetitive writing on the chalk board is an act of taking back, and reclaiming, its infusion of organic land based materials suggests healing and growth. Survivance is a departure of the

manifestation of privilege and imperial powers. Our 'warriors' are present day First Nations peoples who fight the falsehoods that exploit their culture, and their tools are the tradition tribal stories, stories of active presence and a renunciation of victimry. As 'warriors' we must continue to light the fires with yesterdays embers so we understand the social and political power relationship that lead to the colonial reality of domination so it may never happen again.

### THE BLACKBOARD PROJECT

The copying and repetitiveness of "Line Writing," was used to punishment misbehaving students by teachers. Line writing publically and privately humiliated students and portrayed them as weak and powerless not unlike the method of corporal punishment where punishment was inflicted on ones body. The offending student's finger's and hand's become sore and cramped from the mindless repetition, enhancing the penance supplied by their educators. The "Blackboard project" I am envisioning is to turn the negative shaming into a positive prayer.

The prayer I would like to see on the "Blackboard Project" is what Gerald Vizenor calls "survivance." Vizenor is a cultural theorist and he writes, "The Postindian warriors are new indications of a narrative recreation, the simulations that overcome the manifest manners of dominance." (Vizenor 1979) The native warrior is present and active in "the simulation of survivance in new stories" (Vizenor 1982) of presence rather than deracination. *The Native Warrior of Survivance* is the continuance or stories in the present.

The stories on the 'Blackboard' will be stories of continuance, stories of presence, a chant filled with goodwill for the future. The Blackboard will be interactive, a place where everyone can contribute to the Prayer.

Visually expressing herself has been a lifelong commentary for Liz Carter. Drawing and painting came first, followed by an introduction to many different art forms and mediums in College. Not being able to settle with one medium Carter creates work using an array of mixed media in visual and performance art.

Liz Carter is a person of First Nations ancestry who has been displaced from her cultural roots, this has had profound affect upon Carter's work as an artist. Carter says, "It is a life riddle" that has taken her upon a biographical journey full of unanswered questions about displacement and loss of tradition. Carter's search has uncovered a realm of commercial images of the 'Imaginary Indian' that profoundly impacts our perception. It has also revealed the determined struggle of Kwakwaka'wakw culture to carry forward ancient symbols and meanings into a contemporary life.

Originally from Alert Bay, Carter currently resides with her family in Campbell River. She is a graduate of North Island College's Fine Arts program. She has received numerous awards including the VADA, (Visual Arts Development Award) A First Peoples, Heritage, Language and Cultural Award, BC Arts Council Award, and recently had work purchased by the Canadian Art Bank in Ottawa and Awarded a commission of a permanent piece for the 2010 Olympics.







I will Celebrate my Culture, I will speak my Language.  
I will not Feel Shame, I will sing my Songs.  
I will honor my children, I will not feel shame.  
I will Potlatch, I will celebrate my family.  
I will dance my dances, I will pass on my teachings.  
I will not feel shame, I will dance, I will sing, I will be proud!  
Be Happy Be Proud Be happy with yourself! dance Be Happy APOLOGY  
Be happy Be yourself! Always be yourself! Be yourself Never lose hope  
Believe Be Free BE FREE, SING! Be you♥ Positivity© REGRET  
Hold on for life be joyful Joy Occurrence Love Live Low, Laugh! DANCE! It is one of the worlds  
It is a mercy for your loss. show respect! <sup>Strength of the human spirit that</sup> Patience <sup>most of those who lived and their children</sup>  
I wish you peace, hope & health. <sup>After they remained sane and attached to the</sup> Love Hope Be <sup>stronger new world they found their relief in</sup>  
Never give up on the dream. FREEDOM LIFE HOPE Peace be nice Be Brave be free! Peace  
WILL BE BOLD <sup>know of hope, I will be potlatches</sup> Be your self Be Brave I'm listening  
FUTURE be happy Love You had lots of courage & Love be happy Happiness Love be nice Positive  
Personal and Cultural Be happy Kindness & have faith be happy have faith Patience  
Strongly returns I had your hope Love Be yourself have faith have faith Patience  
Kindness counts. Have faith! In the other side of fear lies freedom. dont worry. I will believe!  
Be happy be happy be Joyful©  
SPEARHEADS



13 **GEORGE LITTLECHILD, Nanekawasis**

*They Tried To Keep Our Eyes Closed*

4' x 4'

digital archive print on aluminum

2018

*Regalia was ordered to be stacked into piles, piles that were ignited and committed to fire, as were the sacred pipes and bundles, desecrated – destroyed.*

*Forbidden, STOPPED in order to degrade our sacred ways and knowledge/teachings, in order to correct our pagan, savage minds. Names unknown to the ancestors brought by the colonizers, Indian Agents and government bureaucrats.*

*Belittlement, abuse, starvation was put upon my Plains Cree ancestors. Discontinuing the continuum of time and connectedness to our Sacred Mother Earth. They knew everything that they needed to know to live harmoniously with our Sacred Mother! Each season was regarded with ceremony and honour.*

*Only to be pricked with the pen of the white mans orders, control and confinement. Reserves were created which were like prisons, guarded by the RCMP and Indian Agents. The buffalo were mass murdered to starve us to submission in order to make us comply, to cave, to cave to their ways. Little by little our blood memory was eroded, reshaped.*

*To those who survived the reserve system, residential schools, the sixties scoop and genocide dysfunction carry on, shadows of what our ancestors were. Reclaiming what was our ways. Fragments, pieces have survived.*

*I thank those who knew to hide their teachings and went underground and when the bans were lifted and the time was right, brought back their knowledge and teachings,*

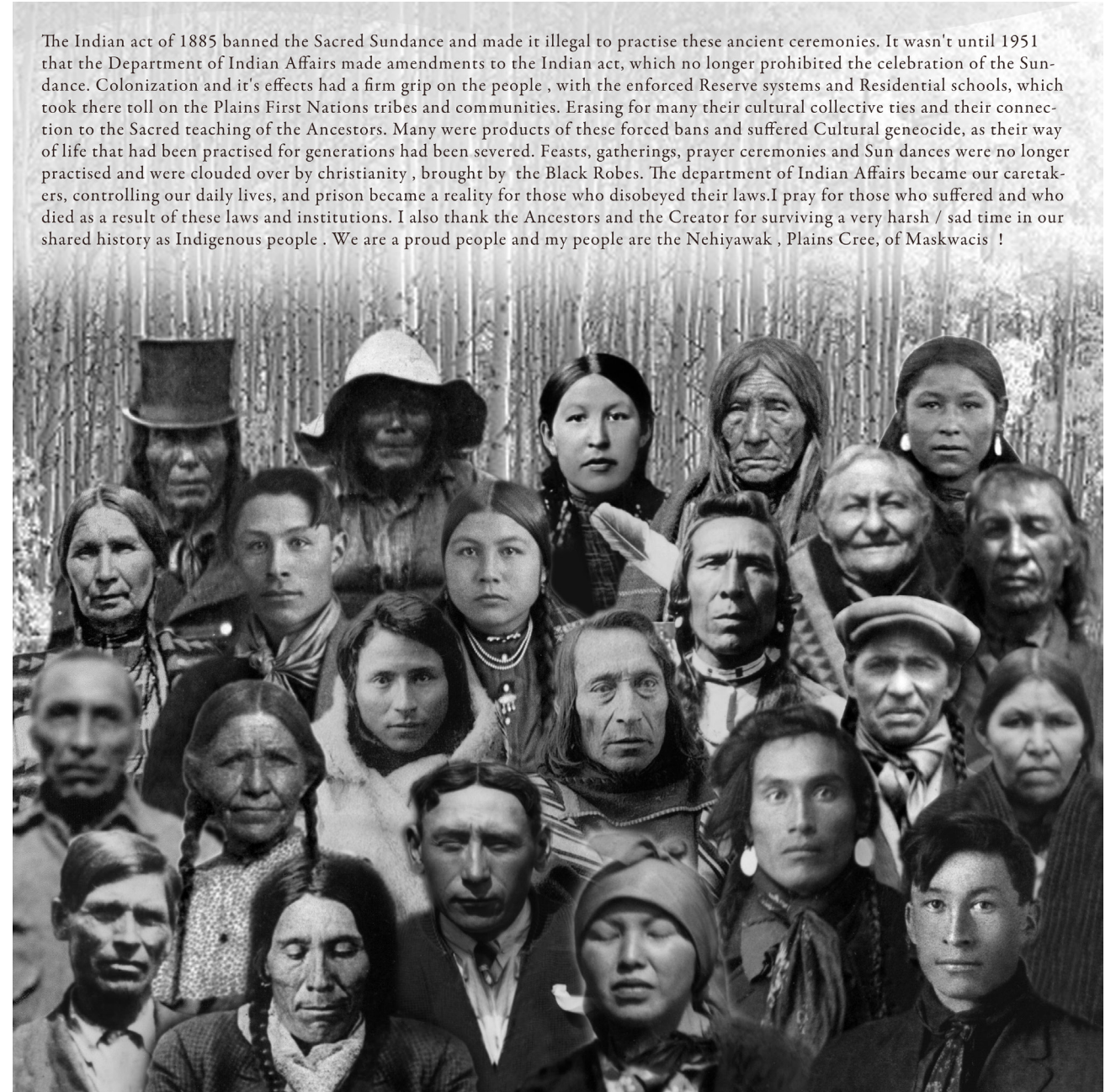
*as we continue to shape the world and our connection to Mother Earth and the Star Nations.*

*In my work, I am committed to righting the wrongs that First Nations peoples have endured by creating art that focuses on cultural, social and political injustices. As an artist, educator and cultural worker, my goal is a better world. It is my job to show the pride, strength and beauty of First Nations people and cultures, and contribute to the betterment of mankind.*

George Littlechild is a Visual art, performance artist with a strong international reputation. Born in Edmonton, Littlechild is Plains Cree and has lived on the K'òmok's Nation for over 20 years.

Since graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Art Degree from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1988, George has shown work in numerous solo and group exhibitions across Canada, the United States, Europe and Australia. He has received many awards and honours which include most recently an Honourary Doctorate of Letters 2013, Fraser Valley University and the 2017 Reveal Indigenous award, The Hnatyshn Foundation.

The Indian act of 1885 banned the Sacred Sundance and made it illegal to practise these ancient ceremonies. It wasn't until 1951 that the Department of Indian Affairs made amendments to the Indian act, which no longer prohibited the celebration of the Sundance. Colonization and its effects had a firm grip on the people, with the enforced Reserve systems and Residential schools, which took their toll on the Plains First Nations tribes and communities. Erasing for many their cultural collective ties and their connection to the Sacred teaching of the Ancestors. Many were products of these forced bans and suffered Cultural genocide, as their way of life that had been practised for generations had been severed. Feasts, gatherings, prayer ceremonies and Sun dances were no longer practised and were clouded over by christianity, brought by the Black Robes. The department of Indian Affairs became our caretakers, controlling our daily lives, and prison became a reality for those who disobeyed their laws. I pray for those who suffered and who died as a result of these laws and institutions. I also thank the Ancestors and the Creator for surviving a very harsh / sad time in our shared history as Indigenous people. We are a proud people and my people are the Nehiyawak, Plains Cree, of Maskwacis!





14 CONNIE WATTS, Nuu-chah-nulth, Gitxsan and Kwakwaka'waka

*Nuu-chah-nulth: Hiiyaaksta yaakwiimit: liickaa maamaati luucma*

*(Amongst the Ancestors: Thunderbird Woman)*

60" x 36" x 18"

red cedar, fabric, paint, abalone, buttons

2018

I grew up in Kwakwaka'wakw territory in Campbell River. We were surrounded by rich culture, many potlatches, and amazing artists. We never attended many potlatches, and I found out later it was because my grandma and grandpa kept much of our culture away from my mom and siblings because they knew it was dangerous. This bleed down to our generation.

Even if we weren't involved in the culture ceremonies, my Mom raised us to know the strength, integrity and wisdom of our people. When I was six, we attended a potlatch from our Mountain family side in Alert Bay. The big house was still hidden and I remember popping out of the trees to see the enormous building. Walking inside to a packed house where we were embraced, included, and loved. I just remembered the passion, variety of dances and the laughter. It felt like beauty; all that my mom taught us...our connection to everything. When I was thinking of the impact of the ban of one of our core sociological centres for 67 years. The violent removal of our freedom of expressing our essence of our culture, a story popped into my being. I could feel the containment of this oppression, the feeling of being shrouded. I could feel a being cautiously reentering the big house and welcomed by supernatural beings. I could feel how broken she felt and the deep concern from the supernatural beings to heal her...bring back her core strength and connection to everything. As the supernatural beings peeled away her hurt and despair, she began to reveal her true nature. Her strength, the thunderbird was freed. As they all worked together to dissipate and move the heavy binding oppressive energy from her being and she in turned shared her new

found energy with the supernatural being, they were reuniting them as one. With this unity, she revealed her core, the tree of life and a central female figure.

This was a hard piece for me to create. The feeling to hide it was forefront, born from the decimation of our culture and the attempted genocide. As the true history is told, we all can share the deviation and rise like thunderbird woman to create a more balance, whole society. We can learn and embrace the true nature of living as one. Hiiyaaksta yaakwiimit, amongst the ancestors, was my Nuuchahnulth name given to me. I feel a sense of all time, where past present and future are one. The birth of this story arose from being in all time. I believe that if we create from our true core, it is a truth that needs to be heard and shared. I believe this story is that for us now, when we are destroying our own home, the world. Living from our core feelings of working towards balance and wholeness will build paths of healing. I wish this from the deepest centre of my being.

For the show, *Potlatch 67-67: The Potlatch Ban – Then and Now*, I have created liickaa maamaati luucma (Thunderbird Woman) regalia. She is a representation of the life, vitality and richness of our culture. The Potlatches were a living beings, growing and changing with strong roots. This work is honouring this.

The Story of Hiiyaaksta yaakwiimit:

In the story I tell, "Nothing" is the centre of what is brought into the big house. It is met by four supernatural beings that move and give it energy, that breath it back to life. The first supernatural beings is the Ancestors; it







is the essence of everything we are. The second is the Earth; she is everything we are grounded to. The third is from the Fluidity; she is the air and water that sustains life. And the fourth is the Universe; she is everything we are connected to. They slowly work their way around her, removing all of the white cloth that shrouds her inner being. They pack up fragments of the shroud in their little pouches. They each approach her differently, they slowly and carefully bring her life.

The last shroud covers her whole body. Each of the supernatural beings take one corner and remove the shroud up over her head, to reveal wrapped up wings. The supernatural beings reach up to their back to pull their instrument of healing. The Ancestor pulls rattles created from all of the shells from the sea and the hooves of the many land animals. She shakes this rattle around the hunched over winged being, slowly bringing back her connection to everything that is our culture. The Earth pulls a staff woven from the spruce, hemlock and cedar trees. She slowly moves this around the being, to bring her spirit back to her. Fluidity pulls two wave shaped sweeps from its back made from the feathers of the birds and creates the strength of the wind and water rebuilding her essence of life. The Universe has two staffs, created from lightning, the sun and the moon. She hits the ground around her and hits the ground around her, in all four directions and on the last blow to the ground the wings open up to reveal the Thunderbird women.

The supernatural beings guard her four corners as she rebuild her strength. She starts to open up her wings, flexing them. Her head lifts and moves side to side as she sees everyone and everything; bringing in all the strength that surrounds her. She lifts her head up and opens her mouth. We hear a loud exhalation,

and she calls out, feeling the strength from within. She makes her way around to all four supernatural beings. In front of the Ancestor, she bowing her head and calling out. As she moves to the Earth, as the Ancestor being moves into the centre and throws the pouch of shrouds into the fire. In front of the Earth mask, she bowing her head and calling out, giving thanks. She makes her way to all four and they in turn, burn the pouches full of the shroud.

With all of them in the centre of the floor, the supernatural beings circle the Thunderbird woman: they circle her, she turns; they circle her, she turns; they continue doing this as the energy grows. She then starts to spin and spin and spin and as her arms lift up to reveal the inner parts of her wings. As Thunderbird woman spreads her wings straight out and up; she transform into the tree of life. With a tilt of her head the thunderbird mask turns to reveal her female face. She is the strength of the generations of past, present and future.



15 ANDY EVERSON, Kwamzwalagalis

*Concealment*

4' x 4' x 4', installation, modified kitchen table  
2018

During the potlatch ban, many families risked imprisonment to continue our sacred ceremonials. In isolated communities, they waited until the weather got bad before they would begin their potlatches. In this way, they knew that it would be difficult for the Indian Agent and the RCMP to get to the village and arrest the participants. In communities that were surrounded by a non-Indigenous population, however, this tactic could not work. Here, our people would condense and conceal our ceremonies and invite their guests under the guise of socially acceptable Canadian institutions such as the tea party.

In the 1930s and 40s my grandparents, Chief Andy “Nagedzi” and Margaret “U’magalis” Frank, did just such a thing. They would invite people over to discuss ceremonial prerogatives and give out names to their family members which were sometimes recorded in ledger books. Because they had invited their guests as witnesses, they would distribute gifts and disburse money to them. After the anti-potlatch law was dropped for the Indian Act, my grandfather bought a reel-to-reel recorder and starting recording these sessions which are used as reference to this day. I honour his foresight by including his actual recorder in this piece.

Concealed under the table is a design that represents the hamátsa dances in my grandparents’ box of treasures. It is this particular dance and its imagery of cannibalism that frightened the Canadian government and contributed to the creation of the potlatch ban. Painted with the traditional use of graphite in the paint and mica flakes to reflect firelight, this piece harkens back to an early aesthetic. Like a sacred dance screen — a łgmilas — it can be raised and lowered

and concealed from view. To the casual observer, it may look like a typical tea party, but for our people it was a critical way to keep our culture alive under the oppressive watch of the Canadian government.

Andy Everson was born in Comox B.C. in 1972 and named after his grandfather Chief Andy Frank of the K’ómoks First Nation. Andy has had the honour of being seated with the ‘Namgis Tsítsa’walagame’ name Kwamxalagalis l’nis and being initiated into the hamátsa dance society with the name Tanis. His cultural interests lay with both his K’ómoks and Kwakwaka’wakw ancestries and are expressed through dancing, singing, and even the completion of a Master’s degree in anthropology. Andy feels that his artwork stands on par with these other accomplishments. From early self-taught lessons, Andy has tried to follow in the footsteps of his Kwakwaka’wakw relatives in creating bold and unique representations that remain rooted in the age-old traditions of his ancestors.









16 DONNA CRANMER, Nalaga

*Chilkat Blanket*

20" x 30", weaving

2018

We Kwakwaka'wakw continue to celebrate the fact that through all that pushed against us, trying to change who we were put here to be, we continue to follow the path which our ancestors laid down for us. My cedar bark and Chilkat weavings are a continuation of the style which my ancestors created. Much of my cedar weavings are used in ceremony, and made following the traditions of our people. My inspiration comes from visiting our cedar bark and chilkat regalia in museum collections. I consider these pieces not only works of art but medicine. When we put on our regalia we gain strength. I love creating regalia for family and friends and then see it worn during our ceremonies. There was a time in the late 70's and early 80's when there were very few Kwakwaka'wakw working with cedar bark. Today I am proud to say that every community now has weavers. I feel a sense of pride that my daughters are now learning the art of working with cedar and wool, creating regalia and using the materials as our old people did.

'Nalaga Donna Cranmer (the dawning of a new day) is a master weaver of international renown. She is 'Namgis from Alert Bay, BC, of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation. Her great, great, great grandmother Mary Ebbetts-Hunt was a Tlingit woman from Tongass Island, Alaska, and was a Chilkat weaver. Donna's direct family lineage gives her the right to weave Chilkat and to dance these beautiful pieces in potlaches today.

Donna describes her background and commitment to cultural knowledge in her own words in "Knowing Home: Braiding Indigenous Science with Western Science", edited by Gloria Snively and Wanosts'a7

Lorna Williams (2016):

"I am 'Nalaga Donna Cranmer, the dawning of a new day. I live in 'Yalis (Alert Bay), British Columbia (BC). I am a 'Namgis woman from the River Gwani (Nimpkish River), the daughter of Gwi'mo'las Elder Vera Newman and O'waxalag a' lis Chief Roy Cranmer. I am the second of five children and have been fortunate to grow up in a very culturally and politically active family. I have heard our Kwak'wala language all my life, but I am not a fluent speaker..."

"To this day my family continues to potlatch. My grandparents on both sides of my family continued to potlatch even when a large majority of Kwakwaka'wakw gave up this important practice for a number of reasons, not the least of which was a Canadian federal statute. The majority of potlatches I saw when I was younger were memorials for family members who had passed on. My maternal grandfather T'lakwagila Chief Arthur Dick, hosted four potlatches during his lifetime. The last three of his potlatches were T'li'nagila-T'li'na potlatches, which means he gave gallons of t'li'na (oolichan grease) away to his guests. My gramp used to say, 'Giving away t'li'na was the highest thing for a chief to do, it took a real man to have the means to be able to go and make t'li'na and then give it away.'

Donna received her BEd from Simon Fraser University and her MA from the University of Victoria. Donna feels it is important for children to learn 'Namgis traditional ecological and cultural knowledge. She has served as Principal of Wagalus Elementary School in Fort Rupert, and worked for 16 years as a Kwakwala language and culture teacher at T'isalagilakw School in 'Yalis (Alert Bay).





17 SHAWN HUNT, Heiltsuk  
*Forest Spirit*  
51" x 72", acrylic on canvas, 2017

THE STORY OF THE FOREST SPIRIT

There was a time in our history when our culture and our way of life were under attack and it crippled the spirit of our ancestors. To survive the spirit of our people fled the villages where they once flourished. They sought refuge in the deepest, darkest and most wild parts of the forest. In the forest our spirits found a place that was safe from the negative forces that swept through the villages. For survival our spirits huddled closely together, so close that their bodies became intertwined and it was here in the forest where no man dared to go that they waited for the opportunity to return to the people. Raven, Eagle, Frog, Wolf and all of the other spirits became one creature. They became one creature that possessed all of the individual qualities of each spirit. This newly formed magical creature spent its time in exile gathering strength. It went about practicing the old ways, the original ways of our people. It protected in its heart the stories and the history of the people, preserving what could have been lost. Over the years this magical forest spirit became stronger and stronger. It became more balanced and harmonious with the land and when it had sufficient strength it returned to the villages. The Spirit kept its distance at first, living on the outskirts of the villages. On occasion the Spirit would make itself visible, testing the people to see if they were ready for their spirit to return. Children who saw the it were enthralled by it and neither feared nor ran from it. They knew that the Spirit meant them no harm. They could feel in the Spirit all of their ancestors. The children would talk often of the Spirit. At first their parents thought that the children were making up stories, but over time they began to see changes in the children. Some of the elders began to see that the children had begun practicing the old ways. Soon even the adults began to see and converse with the Spirit. With each encounter the Spirit would give a piece of itself to that person. The Spirit became weaker but each person that received a piece of spirit became stronger and stronger. And everyday their spirit increased until they were stronger and more powerful than ever before. This was not their original spirit but a new spirit. One that had experienced and retained the knowledge gained from coming together as one. Our people came to realize that they



were not separate from each other, they were not separate from the animals, or the land. Old problems and disagreements were put aside. They understood that they were no longer individual spirits separated by families, clans, and nations. We realized that our power was now dependent on each other, for we are truly all one spirit.

Visual artist, Shawn Hunt, was born in Vancouver Canada in 1975. He is of Heiltsuk, French and Scottish ancestry. Shawn comes from a family of artists. His father is Bradley Hunt, a prominent Heiltsuk artist with whom Shawn apprenticed for 5 years, learning wood and jewelry carving as well as traditional design. Shawn apprenticed with Coast Salish painter Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun from 2012 to 2015. Shawn has a diploma in studio art from Capilano college as well as a BFA from the University of British Columbia where he majored in sculpture and drawing.

Shawn works with the traditional Northwest Coast design principle known as formline to create abstract, surreal, and sculptural paintings based on ancestral Heiltsuk Cosmology. Depicting creatures both human, and animal; and sometimes mythological, you will find hiding both the positive and negative spaces created. The image is ever changing, moving, morphing, transforming, and shapeshifting.

*I have never felt like I really belonged to any one particular movement, culture, category, or clique. As an artist this has given me an incredible amount of freedom. I don't feel that my work is conceptual, traditional, artifact or craft. It is neither ancient nor modern. Instead, I feel as though my work has elements of all of these categories. This is a freedom that allows me to distort, subvert, hijack and remix these categories in order to offer new points of view. I want to challenge the viewers' preconceptions. I like the idea of art being like a catalyst, or a flash point. I think art is most powerful when it poses questions, not when it gives the viewer the answers. My goal is to make the viewer think.*



18 JESSE BRILLON, Skil Xaaw

*Eagle – Eye of the Beholder ;–)*

2' x 6' x 1'

silver bracelet, cedar, fiber,

2018

*When I reflect about the history of my people, and contemplate about the time between pre-colonization to now, I feel torn. While I feel rich to have such a connection to my culture and to the art form, at the same time I am struck and wounded by what has been lost. Haidas have lost all practices pertaining to specific dance societies, and most detail around the intricate workings of our potlatch system. A contrasting difference between Haidas and other tribes on the coast— such as the Kwakwaka'wakw for example, is not only did the Kwakwaka'wakw continue potlatching when other groups ceased to practice — their culture was thoroughly documented. Whereas the Haida had very little written works, film or photographs for future generations to draw from to reinvigorate such traditions.*

*Another contrast, is that Haidas were early adopters to the ways of white people. I imagine this as a reaction to every literal “survival mode” from population loss from the small pox epidemics. Village after village was wiped out. Along with them infinite amounts of cultural knowledge. One can only imagine what the loss of more than 90% of your peoples population within mere decades could do to the soul of the survivors. In hopes of living through this period of sweeping change, it is my assumption that Haida survivors were at a loss as to how to recover from such devastation. Without the ability to restore cultural traditions, they fell away.*

*The one thing that not only survived this period, but continued to proliferate was Haida art. This comes as no surprise. From the earliest contact, our art was sought after by explorers, settlers, wealthy travellers, and of course, both private and museum collectors. Haida*

*artists have always been able to make a living from the art form. Like my ancestors, my primary income is from commercial fishing and hand-sculpted/engraved jewelry in precious metals and wood carving.*

*While engraved jewelry was a post-colonial invention, it was also born out of necessity of the times. Historically, Haida's tattooed their clan and crests on their bodies. After being heavily missionized, Haida's had to adapt to a method of showing their crests in a way that could be easily removed and concealed. Engraved bracelets in copper and silver became a prized and highly revered potlatch gift. Haida bracelets were disseminated up and down the coast, presumably through the potlatch system and intermarriage.*

*Traditionally, bracelet stacks were standard potlatch practice. Today, stacks of bracelets are incredibly rare and it comes down to economics. Not only do contemporary artists not have the ability financially to stockpile in such numbers, but Chiefs rarely have the means to pay artists to create such quantities either. And so I have created only one. The significance is to demonstrate the contrast to our history, and to indicate the economics of most contemporary artists, and their financial inability to “stockpile” for potlatch or even for sale.*

Born in Prince Rupert, BC, Jesse Brillon is a visual artist whose interest in Haida Art began as a boy. While accompanying his grandfather on fishing excursions to the islands of Haida Gwaii, the mystical richness of the land unfolded to his creative and spiritual senses. He developed a love for the many unique islands and adopted an intense respect for the ocean. He was

impressed by the ecological richness, the abundant fish and animal species and how they wove themselves into the cultural canvas of the Haida People.

Jesse was Influenced strongly by his Haida-Cree heritage and many art books as well as his exploration of the works of master artists Bill Reid, Robert Davidson and Don Yeomans. Upon his graduation from school his family presented him with a repousse bracelet by Don Yeomans and this gift sparked the desire to learn to carve. Jesse met with Don Yeomans, in Vancouver, BC, and began a one-year apprenticeship. He later apprenticed under Gitksan master jeweler Phil Janze. It was from Janze that he learned the advanced techniques of chasing and repousse. Jesse's pieces are individualized by their boldness and depth, which are techniques found in traditional Haida art.

Jesse has emerged to be one of the top jewelry carvers of his generation. He has achieved a mastery of silver and gold and one of his pieces was included in the popular exhibition in 2003 “Totems to Turquoise: Native North American Jewelry Arts of the Northwest and Southwest” curated by the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Brillon continues in his art, and has applied his carving skills to working in wood as well.









19 STEVE SMITH, Dla'kwagila

*Free To Be*

36" x 48"

acrylic on cradle wood panel

2018

*The Potlatch ban is a travesty and a most unfortunate thing to have happened. So, to un-ban something that should not have been banned in the first place seems ironic... and yet here we are. Sixty seven years have gone by since the 'unbanning' of the Potlatch and with that, for me, comes a chance to be able to create contemporary First NaQons artwork. I am fortunate to get to play with color, form line and shapes and to rearrange the artwork in a way that challenges the viewer to see it in a way they may not expect to see it.*

*To me, this painting is an invitation to the viewer to just 'be' with the artwork. See the artwork and feel it in your heart. Let it rest there awhile before the thoughts in your head start to interpret what you are seeing.*

Steve Smith (Dla'kwagila) has been carving and painting since 1987. Initially taught by his father Harris Smith, in the Kwakwaka'wakw style, Steve has since developed his own distinct and innovative style. Steve's pieces include original paintings, sculptures, masks, limited edition prints, etched glass, totem poles and drums. His cutting edge work has been featured in several major exhibitions throughout North America, and has been purchased by collectors around the world.

In 2005, Steve was featured in the 'Changing Hands: Art Without Reservation 2' exhibition that opened at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York. In 2006, Steve created two public works for the City of Vancouver's 'Spirit Bears in the City' project. In 2007, his work was included in the Burke Museum's 'In the Spirit of Our Ancestors' exhibition, in Seattle. In 2008, Steve received

two major commissions for works to be placed in the Vancouver International Airport. These monumental installations were completed in June 2009. Also in 2009, Steve was included in the 'Challenging Traditions' exhibition at Ontario's McMichael Gallery, a show that was dedicated to exploring innovative and experimental works from the Northwest Coast. Steve's work is continually evolving and he is always experimenting with form, colour and symbolism.







POTLATCH 67-67  
— THE POTLATCH BAN —  
THEN AND NOW

