

National Indigenous History Month – Art Hunt 2025

“People Amongst the People” by Susan Point, 2008

xʷməθkʷəy̅əm (Musqueam)

Stanley Park, Brockton Point

Step through history at Brockton Point, where three monumental gateways honour Coast Salish culture and welcome you to the land. Created by *xʷməθkʷəy̅əm* (Musqueam) artist Susan Point in 2008, *People Amongst the People* blends traditional forms with contemporary strength, reflecting the history and thriving culture of the local First Nations peoples, the *xʷməθkʷəy̅əm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish) and *səlilwətał* (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

As you explore, look for these striking details:

- **Male and Female Welcome Figures:** A male and female figure, hands outstretched in a traditional Salish welcome, wear intricately carved blankets. The back of each figure holds design elements: the male with classic Salish motifs, the female with a woven berry basket pattern.
- **Grandparents and Grandchildren Portal:** A braid of hair binds three women together symbolizing the powerful matrilineal ancestry of the Coast Salish and the stories and teachings that pass down from generation to generation. The design on the back of the pole represents the salmon that were once so plentiful in the area, a tribute to what was and a symbol of hope for the future of the salmon and the Salish people.
- **Salish Dancer and Killer Whale:** A dancer holds a sea serpent rattle beneath a Thunderbird. Look for tree roots reflecting our deep connection to the natural world, and five whales that embody the close link between humans and orcas.



Photos by Josephine Daumich and Eve Middleton-Meyer

Rose Cole Yelton Memorial Pole by Robert Yelton, ancestral name Haliyat Sewano, 2009

Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish)

Stanley Park, Brockton Point

Raised in 2009, this pole honours Rose Cole Yelton, her family, and the community who once lived in what we now call Stanley Park. Rose was the last living resident of the Brockton Village site, where this pole now stands, right in front of her family's former home. The pole was carved by many hands, led by Rose's son, Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) carver Robert Yelton (Haliyat Sewano), with support from a team of dedicated artists. A nearby plaque shows photos of Rose as a young woman at Brockton Point, as an Elder commemorating her community, and carvers at work.

Look closely at the figures carved from top to bottom:

- **A Thunderbird** with a human face between its wings (symbolizing family lineage)
- **A Raven**, representing Robert Yelton's Haida clan ties
- **A Wolf** for his son Peter, holding a Killer Whale in memory of ferry trips with Rose's mother
- **A Woman** holding game bones. This is Rose, honoured through the traditional lahal game



Photo by Josephine Daumich

“Sea and Land Creatures”

by Chrystal Sparrow, 2022

xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam)

(Sunset Beach by concession stand)

Let your imagination lead you to this whimsical ground mural by Chrystal Sparrow, an artist from the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nation. These colorful shapes invite you into a world of curiosity and joy, inspired by Coast Salish design and storytelling. Chrystal's playful creatures are full of personality and are sure to stir childlike wonder in all who witness them. As you look at the mural, invite your own imagination to take flight!

Look for:

- **Rabbit-like beings** deep in conversation, sparking laughter and connection
- **A large seal-like character** who quietly rests and observes, bringing calm to the scene
- **A halibut hook creature** who listens closely to all the others, reminding us of the power of presence



Photo by Eve Middleton-Meyer

“sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 banners”

by Kitty Guerin, Candace Thomas & Ray Natraoro (Ses Siyam), 2022

xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish) and *səlilwətał* (Tsleil-Waututh)
(Smithe & Richards Streets, Downtown)

This is the first park in Vancouver to be gifted a name by the *xʷməθkʷəyəm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish) and *səlilwətał* (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. *sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7* (click [here](#) for the pronunciation guide) means “rainbow”—a name inspired by the misty marshes that once filled this area, where sunlight would form rainbows through the trees. *xʷməθkʷəyəm* (Musqueam) Elder and Interim Manager of Language & Culture, Larry Grant, reflected on the meaning of rainbow as “two places joined together after the rain, when the earth has been cleansed, and everyone’s thoughts are cleared.” The rainbow also symbolizes healing, diversity, and the bridging of communities, including the 2SLGBTQIA+ history of the surrounding West End.

Wander through the central plaza and look closely at the six towering metal sky frames, each one displaying a story through Coast Salish art:

- **Kitty Guerin, *xʷməθkʷəyəm* (Musqueam)** – Two women’s faces: one with her eyes closed, one open. Their contrasting expressions show how different emotions—grief, reflection, hope—can come together in beauty and balance.

- **Ray Natraoro, a.k.a Ses Siyam Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish)** – A bold Thunderbird, bringer of balance and spiritual power. Look for black thunderbolts and red waves symbolizing medicine and healing from land and water.
- **Candace Thomas, səliwətał (Tseil-Waututh)** – A powerful wolf, *Takaya*, guardian of family and the land. Surrounding colours reflect the four directions, four seasons and all races—red, yellow, black, and white.



Photo by Josephine Daumich

“Salish North Star”

by Xálikwium, Tłuya'la, a.k.a Mintle-e-da-us or Wade Stephen Baker, 2010

Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl) Musgamgw Dzawada'enuxw, and Łingít (Tlingit)

(Near Creekside Community Recreation Centre)

Shining bright in Olympic Village this stainless-steel sculpture merges two symbols: a Coast Salish North Star and a maple leaf. Created by Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl), Musgamgw Dzawada'enuxw and Łingít (Tlingit) artist Xálikwium (Wade Stephen Baker), the piece was part of the Vancouver 2010 Aboriginal Art Program. The program supported the creation and installation of over 30 works by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) artists from across the lands now known as Canada. Installed at 15 public venues throughout the Lower Mainland and Whistler, these artworks offer enduring expressions of FNIM presence and artistry. This sculpture in particular speaks to how, for millennia, people have looked to the stars for guidance and hope.

Look closely and you will see:

- **A stylized North Star**, symbolizing guidance, perseverance, and the light that leads the way—a beacon for those on a long journey, much like the journey of an athlete striving toward excellence.

- **A bold maple leaf**, acknowledging the territory now known as Canada and its role in hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.
- This elegant fusion of symbols offers a gesture of welcome to the world, rooted in respect for First Nations culture and history, while celebrating the spirit of global connection shared through the Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Photo by Eve Middleton-Meyer

“A Salish Sun”

by Jordan Gallie, 2022

səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)

(Mount Pleasant Community Centre)

Artist Jordan Gallie is a proud member of the *səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh)* Nation who studied art at the Native Education College just a few blocks away from where this work is found. He draws inspiration from cultural legends passed down through many generations and knows he has found the right path that he will proudly walk on. Jordan creates jewelry, murals, glass works and graphic design. You can find more of his work in Council Chambers at Vancouver City Hall.

You can find 3 works, one by an artist from each Local Nation, in the Mount Pleasant Community Centre lobby. In addition to Jordan’s Salish Sun, you can also see Coast Salish Eagle Spindle Whorl by *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam)* artist Chrystal Sparrow and Coast Salish Design Elements by *Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish)* artist Cory Douglas.

Look for:

- **A stylized Sun** rendered in Coast Salish formline design
- Jordan forms the silhouette of the sun, balancing positive and negative space, using a repetition of **u-shape** and **split u** - both elements of traditional formline design in Northwest Coast Art. Can you trace the U shapes with your eyes?



'Cycles' mural by Indigenous artists Bracken Hanuse Corlett, Ocean Hyland, Atheana Picha and Kelsey Sparrow

“šx^wq^weləwən ct Carving Centre Bear Mural”

by James Harry, 2015

Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish)

(Britannia Community Centre)

In the heart of East Van, where creativity and culture come together in one powerful place. Named *šx^wq^weləwən ct*, ([listen here](#) to learn the pronunciation) meaning *One Heart, One Mind* in *hənq̓əmin̓əm̓*, this carving centre honours the deep connection between artistic expression, feeling, and ancestral land. It's a space where First Nations artists carve, teach, and share their stories, culture, and spirit through their work. The pavilion doors are adorned by the striking **Bear Mural** by James Harry, a *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish) artist. The bear symbol is recognizable by its wide mouth showcasing its teeth, short round snout, clawed feet, and in this case, a tongue sticking out. Its striking green eyes watching over the entrance.

Look for:

- **A wooden structure** alive with the scent of cedar.
- **A green-eyed guardian** stretched across its doors—tongue extended, teeth bared, claws ready—watching with quiet strength.



“Kayachtn Pole”

by Darren Yelton, also known as Knákweltn, 2024

Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish)
(Britannia Community Centre)

Step toward **šxʷqʷeləwən ct**, the place of One Heart, One Mind, where stories are carved into cedar and tradition moves with the wind. Nearby stands the **Kayachtn Pole**, raised in ceremony and carved by renowned *Sḵwxwú7mesh* (Squamish) artist Knákweltn, also known as Darren Yelton.

“Kayachtn” (pronounced Kay-ach-tin) means welcome, and this pole invites all to gather with respect, curiosity, and an open heart. It rises with intention, arms and faces turned outward to greet those who arrive. It is a gesture, a breath, a welcome made visible.

At its raising, community members were invited to act as witnesses, an important responsibility in Coast Salish tradition. Witnesses are called to be fully present, engaging all their senses to observe and remember events of significance so that they can create an oral history to pass on. As you stand before the Kayachtn Pole, take a moment to engage your own senses: notice the scent of cedar, the feel of the carved lines, the expressions in the figures. If you’re with others, share aloud one detail that stands out to you. In this small act of attention and reflection, you are honouring, remembering, and carrying forward the story of the Pole in your own way.

Look for:

- **A bold, carved pole** standing tall, arms and figures inviting you in.

