

NEWS RELEASE

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Indigenous artists collaborate on art for Harewood Skatepark

Design by Joel Good & Bracken Hanuse Corlett to be installed in late June

The City of Nanaimo is pleased to have two Indigenous artists collaborate on an art project for the new skatepark currently being constructed in Harewood Centennial Park. Snuneymuxw artist Joel Good, known for his carving and graphic illustration, has teamed up with Bracken Hanuse Corlett, an interdisciplinary artist hailing from the Wuikinuxv and Klahoose Nations, to create artwork for the new Harewood Skatepark in Nanaimo. Their work is scheduled to be painted onto the concrete surface of the new park during the last weeks of June, as soon as the freshly poured concrete has cured. The park will be ready to officially open shortly thereafter.

Good and Corlett were matched up by Nanaimo Art Gallery curator Jesse Birch, who thought they'd be an ideal fit for the project and for a collaboration, based on their respective art practices, their bold graphic styles, and their connection to skateboard culture. The artists spent time visiting the site and talking with Snuneymuxw Elder and language champion Gary Manson who shared stories about the significance of the river that runs adjacent to the skatepark, which was travelled by salmon making their way back home. The artists felt it was important to acknowledge that history, the land, and the salmon who have belonged there since time immemorial. The Supernatural Eagle carrying salmon, designed by Joel Good, represents an origin story of the Snuneymuxw people.

For both artists, skateboarding was an important part of their lives growing up. Speaking from his experience as a young person who remembers his local skatepark as both a refuge and place of hierarchy, Bracken Hanuse Corlett says: "My hope is that this new park will be used by the full spectrum of skaters, and it will give space to kids trying to learn and progress. We all started with the kick-push at some point. The two skaters I designed are of youth who are just learning to shred."

The City invited Nanaimo Art Gallery to take the lead on developing an art project for the new skatepark, which was originally intended to coincide with a nationally touring exhibition of art by Indigenous artists, called 'Boarder X.' Organized by Winnipeg Art Gallery, with artwork by Indigenous artists who skateboard, snowboard and surf, including Bracken Hanuse Corlett, the exhibition explores how these activities are an assertion of identity and relationship to the land. The exhibition plan has been altered because of COVID-19.

The artwork at Harewood Skatepark was envisioned as a legacy piece for our communities in Nanaimo and a meaningful addition to a skatepark that has been a big dream of area skateboarders and many years in the making. Gallery curator Jesse Birch says, "I grew up skateboarding in Nanaimo and I know how precious this new skatepark in Harewood is to the community. Skateboarding is an inherently creative pursuit, and it follows that many skaters go on to work in art and culture. From the start, Joel and Bracken considered how their paintings could tell a story in synergy with the place, and with the flow of skating."

ARTIST BIOS

*BRACKEN HANUSE CORLETT is an interdisciplinary artist hailing from the Wuikinuxv and Klahoose Nations. His practice fuses painting and drawing with digital-media, audio-visual performance, animation and narrative. He studied at both the En'owkin Centre of Indigenous Art and Emily Carr University of Art and Design. He has also practiced Northwest Coast art, carving and design through the mentorship of acclaimed Heiltsuk artists Bradley Hunt and his sons Shawn Hunt and Dean Hunt. He was a recipient of the 2014 BC Creative Achievement Award for Aboriginal Art and has exhibited in numerous galleries and has produced public art commissions from the City of Vancouver and the City of Victoria.

*JOEL GOOD is a traditional Coast Salish artist from the Snuneymuxw First Nation. He carves in red and yellow cedar in the original Coast Salish style that has been revitalized by his father and mentor, William Good. In

addition to carving alongside his father, he also works in drawing and graphic illustration, and collaborates with his sisters and mother for Ay Lelum–The Good House of Design. Throughout his career, Joel has had works commissioned by Nanaimo Art Gallery, The City of Nanaimo, BC Hydro, The Canadian Museum for Human Rights, The Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre, Leadership Vancouver Island, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and many others.

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