

Siwul tu Tumuxw (*Notice the Land*)

(see-wuhl tuh tuh-muh-H [hard guttural H sound])

ELIOT WHITE-HILL, KWULASULTUN

Siwul tu Tumuxw poses an artistic intervention on the urban landscape that draws traditional Snuneymuxw knowledge and stories about the land back to the surface. Prior to the city being here, there were various ecosystems and the old growth forests which sustained them. What beings lived in the places the urban landscape now inhabits? I have investigated through our stories and oral history and am sharing about what has changed and what remains. This project seeks to raise awareness about our Snuneymuxw *snuw'uyulh* (teachings) and the impacts of colonization on the land and invites the audience to be present as they navigate our territory.

The specific locations of the sound installations are not disclosed; this is intentional. As you walk here you are very likely to hear the sounds of birds. It may or may not be the artwork I have installed, but I want you to think about that when you hear them. I want you to be reminded that there is knowledge and *snuw'uyulh* (teachings) carried on the voices of those birds and that comes from the land regardless of whether or not we are aware at this moment of its meaning.

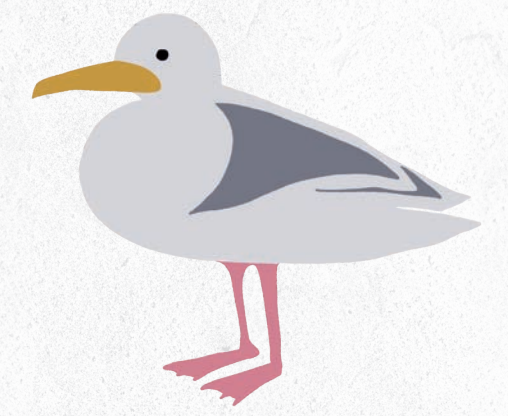
Tied into this project is the *Birds of Nanaimo: A Hul'q'umi'num' Field Guide* (2024) by Cory Landels and Eliot White-Hill, Kwulasultun. This walking guide book identifies local birds by their Hul'q'umi'num' name with a pronunciation guide. Please feel free to take a copy with you.

I would like to acknowledge Cory Landels/Common Foundry Design Studio and Liam Seward-Ragan as collaborators, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology - Cornell University, Dan J MacNeal, and John G Woods for sharing audio recordings used in this project.

Qwuni' (kwuh-knee)

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL

The Seagull has always been here. They continue to live here. When I lived nearby on Franklyn Street Seagulls nested on the roof of our building (it was very loud). One of the



major stories in Coast Salish culture is Raven Steals the Sun. In our version, which is different from that of other Northwest Coast Indigenous cultures, Seagull kidnaps the Sun. Seagull is greedy and wants the Sun and all the light in the world all to himself. Raven and others come together to free the Sun and restore light to the world.

AUDIO CREDIT: LIAM SEWARD-RAGAN

Qule:qe' (kuh-lay-kay)

AMERICAN CROW

Crows have lived alongside humans for a very long time. Prior to contact, when my Snuneymuxw ancestors lived in villages in this area, Crows were always around. There are teachings associated with the Crow about what it



means to coexist and to live together in a good way. In the story shared by my late great-grandmother, Dr. Ellen White, Kwulasulwut, The Marriage of the Seagull and the Crow, a young couple are shown. The husband is shown to be disrespectful to his wife and children. Teachings about how we should be (and shouldn't be) in relationship with our spouse and others are shared.

AUDIO CREDIT: LIAM SEWARD-RAGAN

Tutumiye' (tuh-tuhm-ee-yuh)

PACIFIC WREN

Tutumiye' (Little Wren) is an important figure in Coast Salish mythology and traditional stories. Wren is shown as wise and determined, despite its small stature. In my artwork *Tutumiye' (Little Wren)*



Shrieks of Existential Dread, the wren is shown screeching. We hear the birds singing their songs, but how do we know that they sing happily? How can we know that they don't actually carry existential angst with them?

AUDIO CREDIT: DAN J MACNEAL

Mi:t (meet)

RUFFED GROUSE

The Grouse is shared here to speak about the disruption of the environment by development. Grouse are often seen in the mountains and forested areas, and only rarely on the outskirts of towns. I think about where we are



standing. Before Nanaimo was developed, this would have been a forested area quite a ways uphill from the shore. There would have been grouse living around here where you would not find them today.

AUDIO CREDIT: JOHN G WOODS