

#SLCCWhistler



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler hosting Master Carver Xwalacktun of the Squamish Nation carving a house post for the Salish Summer Carving Series.

June 30, 2023, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and Liłwat7úl Territory (Whistler, BC) – The Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler (SLCC) is hosting live carving for the *Salish Summer Carving Series*, with Master Carver Xwalacktun (Rick Harry - Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh / Kwakwak'wakw / Namgis), mentoring SLCC Apprentice Brandon Hall (Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh / Squamish Nation) from June 21 - September 3rd, 2023. Carving throughout summer at the entrance to SLCC's Great Hall, the house post commemorates the 100th anniversary of Squamish Nation's Amalgamation, incorporating designs that honour the sixteen villages who came together to form what is known today as Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation).

The fourth installment of SLCC's *Salish Summer Carving Series*, the carving began with a cedar log blessing ceremony on Wednesday June 21 as part of celebrations for National Indigenous Peoples Day and for Indigenous Peoples History Month. Part of a two-year immersive experience creating a pair of carvings, featuring one Master Carver from the Squamish Nation this year and one Master Carver from the Lil'wat Nation in 2024, each mentoring an apprentice from their Nation and carving on-site at the SLCC. The two carvings will be sisters, telling a complimentary story and bringing them new life as a carving authentic to the territory, and will eventually rise to stand at the SLCC's entrance on Lorimer Road.

Xwalacktun shares "It is always an honour to share our culture and history and meet people from abroad here. This work makes me think about what the ancestors and hereditary Chiefs thought about at the time of the Amalgamation. There wasn't a lot of written language, or stories from Elders. My little guy is learning more than we were able to, we weren't able to learn who we were. Now we are trying to grasp everything we can, learning from one another."

"The presence of our Master Carver Xwalacktun mentoring an Apprentice at the SLCC allows for deep and meaningful conversations that go beyond carving. We continue the longstanding education system of our Ancestors, youth working side by side with Knowledge Keepers and Elders and at the end is a beautiful carving, a visual reminder that transforms the intangible into tangible wealth, a reminder of how our families connect to the land." Says Mixalhítsa7 Alison Pascal. "Xwalacktun is a renowned artist and teacher of traditional work and contemporary style using Salish forms, it's an amazing opportunity for Brandon to work with him this summer."

The carving will feature in a curated guided tour Tuesday through Saturday until September 3rd, 2023. The *Salish Summer Carving Tour* will be a guided journey with an SLCC Ambassador, beginning with a welcome drum song, storytelling will showcase art and oral traditions from both the Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation throughout the Great Hall telling of their distinctive connection to the land of the shared territories. The tour will then introduce this year's *Salish Summer Carving* an immersive carving session connecting with Master Carver and Apprentice. Guests will learn about the Tree of Life and the spirit of each carving, continuing to give to land and culture long after they have fallen. Included with Museum Admission, the *Salish Summer Carving Tour* can also



be booked as a private group tour for any age including school groups, and can include add-on interactive craft workshops.

Through the *Salish Summer Carving Series*, the SLCC cultivates the distinctive Skwxwú7mesh and Lil'wat7úl ways – the authentic Indigenous culture of the shared territories that Whistler stands on, sharing a truly meaningful cultural experience with the community, guests and global audience.

The Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre gratefully acknowledges the Government of Canada and the Resort Municipality of Whistler for their generous support of the Sister Posts and the Salish Summer Carving Series.

Guests are encouraged to join Master Carver Xwalacktun, and Apprentice Brandon Hall to witness the *Salish Summer Carving Series* on Tuesday through Sunday at the entrance to the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre until September 3, 2023, and can join a *Salish Summer Carving* guided tour at 11am Tuesday through Saturday included with Museum Admission.

The SLCC is open Tuesday through Sunday, 10am – 5pm (Closed Monday). The SLCC occasionally closes early for private events and updates can be found at slcc.ca/visit

To learn more about this Press Release, Events and Tours visit: slcc.ca/carving

About Xwalacktun O.B.C. (Rick Harry)

Xwalacktun is proud to be Skwxwú7mesh and Kwakwak'wakw/Namgis, whose focus is on the Salish style. He uses these forms traditionally, allowing him to easily move into contemporary art space, and his works have become treasures, landmarks and lasting art. Xwa-lack-tun was born and raised in Squamish, and his mother is originally from Squamish and Alert Bay (Coast Salish, Kwakiutl) while his father was Coast Salish (Squamish). Xwa-lack-tun was given his indigenous name by his father, Pekultn, who was a hereditary chief, originally from the Seymour Creek area. This artist gained his skills and education from Emily Carr College of Art and Capilano College, but also feels he learned a lot through trial and error. In 2022 he was the recipient of an Emily Carr University Honorary Degree. In 2012 he received the prestigious honour of the Order of British Columbia for his many artistic contributions to communities locally and worldwide, and in 2013, he received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Healing and growth have become a central theme around the work Xwa-lack-tun does. By focusing on how the traditional stories relate to his own life, he shows us how to use this ancient knowledge to help heal ourselves. Respect for all people, regardless of race or religion is a central theme for him. The giving out of positive energy and seeing it come back through the kids is the reward that continues to feed Xwa-lack-tun's spirit. This spirit of love is pervasive through his work, whether it is in wood, paper, stone, and glass, metal or simply with people. All things grow and are healed through love.

Huy Chexw (thank you) Wa Chexw Yuu (take care) – Squamish Language
Kukw`stumc`kalap (Thank-you all) – Lil'wat Language

MEDIA CONTACT

Nadija Veach, Marketing Manager, Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre
nadija.veach@slcc.ca | M: 604.964.0990 | D: 604.964.0995 | I/FB: @SLCCWhistler

About Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC)

Spo7ez Cultural Centre and Community Society is a registered Canadian charity and the first centre of its kind in Canada. The Squamish and Lil'wat Nations came together to celebrate and share our cultures with the world while creating meaningful employment opportunities for members of both nations. By sharing where we are from and where we are going, our visitors acquire a greater understanding of our Nations and the shared territories that Whistler resides upon. www.slcc.ca



Skwxwú7mesh Lil'wat7úl
SQUAMISH LIL'WAT CULTURAL CENTRE
WHISTLER

604 964 0995
marketing@slcc.ca
4584 BLACKCOMB WAY
WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA V8E 0Y3