

***River Whorl*, 2018**

GreenLight (members Sarita Baker, Alan Kind, Aaron Nelson, and Shane Pointe)

Any art intending to represent the history of Marpole must include the Fraser River and its first people, the Musqueam. Timeless and enduring, the river provides sustenance, transport, communication, and trade for those living along its banks whether in *čəsnaʔəm* (sesh-nahm) 4,000 years ago, or Marpole today.

The backboard of up-cycled and repurposed old growth fir and maple, forms waves representing the Fraser. ‘Pebbles’ containing found objects, flora and fauna, or local historical and present-day photos, border the work. These are fragments of past and present that inform the history of Marpole. Carved in the Coast-Salish tradition from sustainably harvested yellow cedar, a Sturgeon (representing the river’s health), a Dog-nosed Salmon and a Herring (representing the river’s bounty), and several Oligan (a traditional medicine representing the river’s healing power) swim in a circle. The Salmon was textured using ancient tools: a whale’s tooth and stone hammer, a bear’s claw, and an eagle’s claw. These natural harvesters of the salmon contain a living history within themselves and their marks upon this fish show this salmon to be strong—a survivor. The living circle serves as a metaphor for both the cycles of life and an evocation of a spindle whorl. The spindle whorl, central to Musqueam weaving traditions, gathers fibres to make wool. Here it serves as a powerful metaphor for bringing together the diverse elements of community into a stronger coherent whole. In the centre of the River Whorl, we find Vancity transformed into the thread that through bringing people and commerce together, connects the diverse elements of today’s Marpole.

GreenLight is an artist group whose goal is creating multi-cultural collaborative artistic projects for the betterment of its community. We believe that the only effective route to reconciliation is through cultural collaboration. Each collaborative project produces a legacy—the artwork—revealing the beauty of understanding, openness, and diversity.