

## Stuart Pagaduan – Artist Statement Sq'uq'iptul' (Journey Together)

This image tells the story of our Quw'utsun people who paddled the ancient highways. Large cedar canoes would be used to travel up and down the coast. All living things were respected and valued. None more than the cedar tree. It is also known as the tree of life because of its multiple uses and more importantly its spiritual value. The canoe is respected as a living being and not just an object. We need to be in a good place before we touch it or get in it. We take care of the canoe like you would a child, or yourself.

The sun is always a reminder of gratitude and humility. Each day we wake up and give thanks for the new day and the things we are blessed with. The images inside the sun are salmon. Each Fall the salmon start and complete an epic journey to where they were born. Once again we are taught sacrifice and humility. The sun in the image is also an ancient Salish tool called a spindle whorl, used to spin wool.

The humans represent unity and understanding. The elders of yesterday and today will always encourage you to help one another. The number of paddlers is four, a sacred number to the Quw'utsun people that is reflected in the balance of nature and seasons. Work together as one and continue to respect all living things great and small. No one is more or less than, we all work together and have different gifts to share.

The elements were chosen to keep the image simple and let it be as large as possible. Raspberry pink colour was chosen to bring brightness to the artwork and as a modern tone.