

Or
Gallery

A glowing, abstract sculpture titled "The Seventh" by Kwikwi. The sculpture is a dark, elongated, teardrop-shaped object with intricate, illuminated cutouts that create a complex, organic pattern of light. It is mounted on a simple, white, rectangular pedestal. The background is a dark, vertical-slatted wall, and the sculpture is surrounded by lush green foliage, including a large bush with small white flowers and various leafy plants in the foreground.

The Seventh

KWIKWI

October 13, / February 10,
2023 / 2024

THE Seventh

Lauren Brevner &
James Nexw'Kalus-Xwalacktun Harry

CURATED BY
Jenn Jackson

Or
Gallery

x^wməθk^wəy^{əm}, Skw^xwú7mesh,
and səlılwətal Territory

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COLOPHON

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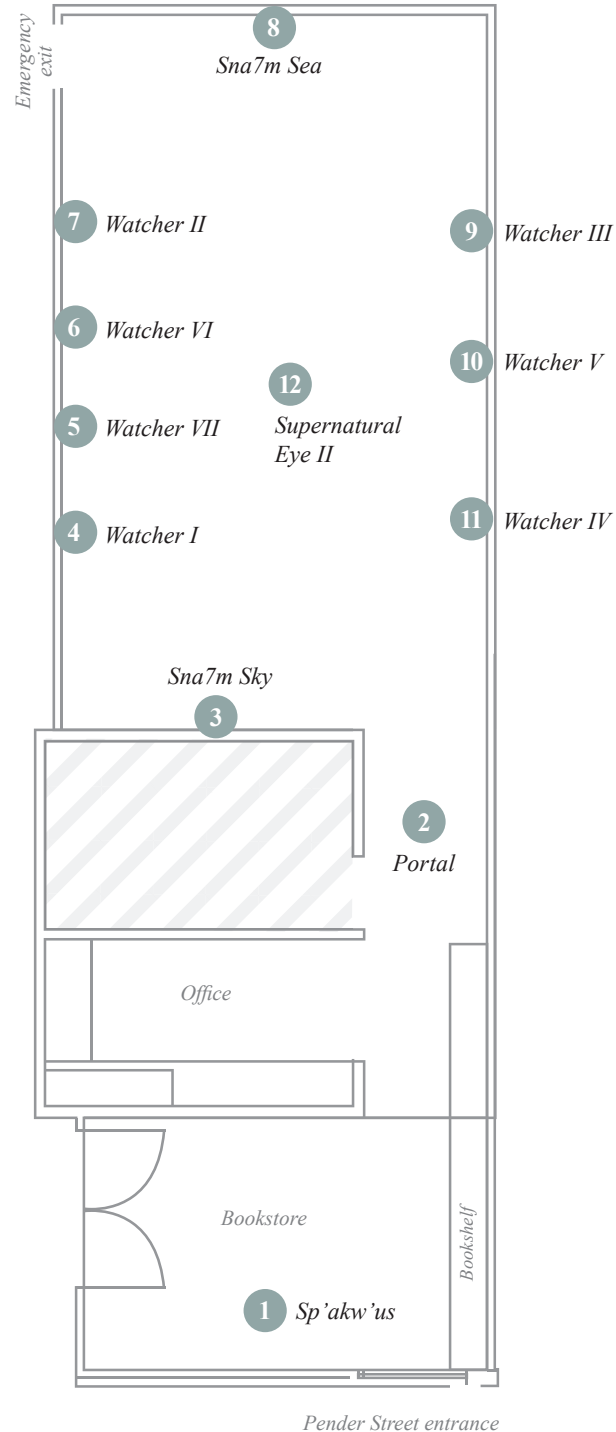


THE AUDAIN FOUNDATION

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Exhibition Map



List of Works

1. **Sp'akw'us**, 2023, copper with 24kt gold leaf, LED light fixture, powder coated stainless steel base, 48 x 24 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
2. **Portal**, 2023, acrylic paint, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the Artist.
3. **Sna7m Sky**, 2023, yellow cedar, copper leaf, oil and acrylic paint. 91 x 38 x 2.5 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
4. **Watcher I**, 2023, anodized aluminum, oil and acrylic paint on wood panel, 36.5 x 36.5 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
5. **Watcher VII**, 2023, anodized aluminum, oil and acrylic paint on wood panel, 12.375 x 12.375 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
6. **Watcher VI**, 2023, anodized aluminum, oil and acrylic paint on wood panel, 12.375 x 12.375 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
7. **Watcher II**, 2023, anodized aluminum, oil and acrylic paint on wood panel, 36.5 x 36.5 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
8. **Sna7m Sea**, 2023, yellow cedar, copper leaf, oil and acrylic paint. 84 x 41 x 2 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
9. **Watcher III**, 2023, anodized aluminum, oil and acrylic paint on wood panel, 36.5 x 36.5 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
10. **Watcher V**, 2023, anodized aluminum, oil and acrylic paint on wood panel, 12.375 x 12.375 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
11. **Watcher IV**, 2023, anodized aluminum, oil and acrylic paint on wood panel, 36.5 x 36.5 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.
12. **Super Natural Eye II**, 2023, treated aluminum, acrylic paint, LED light fixture. 108 x 30 inches. Courtesy of the Artist.



Foreword

The Seventh marks the first solo exhibition by KWÍKWI: Lauren Brevner and James Nexw'Kalus-Xwalactun Harry. The discursive project explores a pivotal moment in the artists' decade-long collaborative practice and builds upon their significant contributions to intersectional conversations around Indigenous representation and land-based gestures in contemporary art.

The newly commissioned sculptural works presented within *The Seventh* engage familial supports and knowledges, including Brevner's Japanese and Trinidadian heritage and Harry's ongoing commitment to sharing Sḵw̱wú7mesh stories, forms, and designs. The exhibition pays homage to innovative material traditions while engaging experimentation through collaboration and cross-cultural exchange. From monumental public artwork to intimate portraiture, the multiple registers of scale and breadth of materials invite opportunities for diverse expression and experience. *The Seventh* will be the first public viewing of each artwork presented within the exhibition, and will include the activation of two large cedar carvings entitled *Sna7m Sea* (2023) and *Sna7m Sky* (2023).

OPPOSITE: *Yéwyews*, 2023

TOP RIGHT: Brevner and Harry in their studio



Together KWÍKWI recognizes that the Sḵw̱wú7mesh, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, and səlilwətał people and territories are timeless. Their explorations pay honour and respect to how these vast relations have shaped the many publics that have emerged out of the history of this place—specifically, the rich and culturally diverse local community in the area immediately surrounding the Or Gallery in Chinatown, Strathcona, the Downtown East Side, False Creek Flats, and adjacent neighbourhoods.

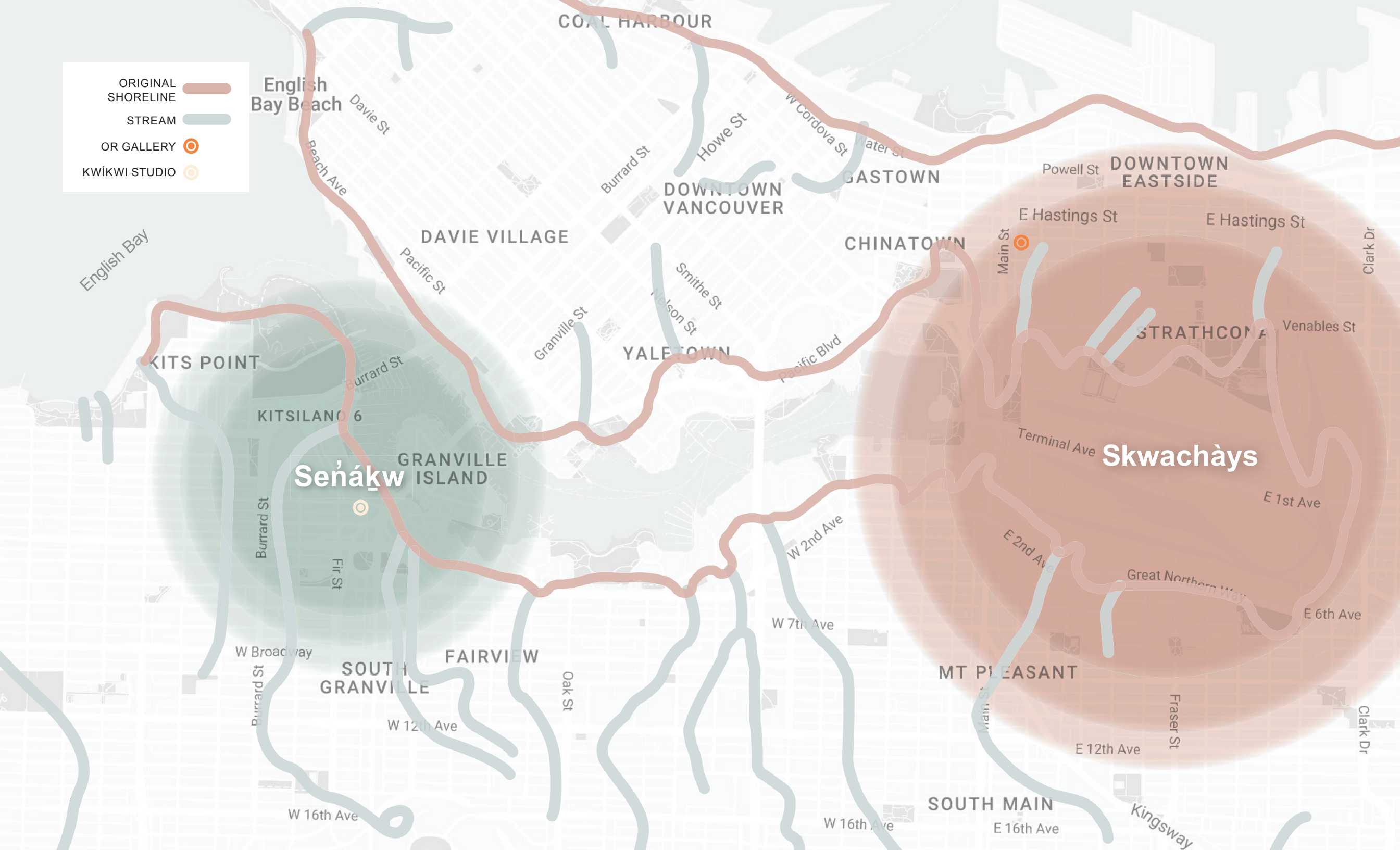


VIRTUAL TOUR



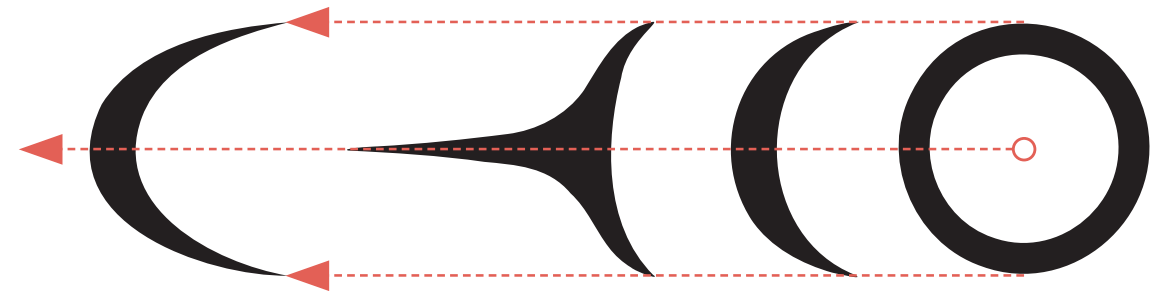
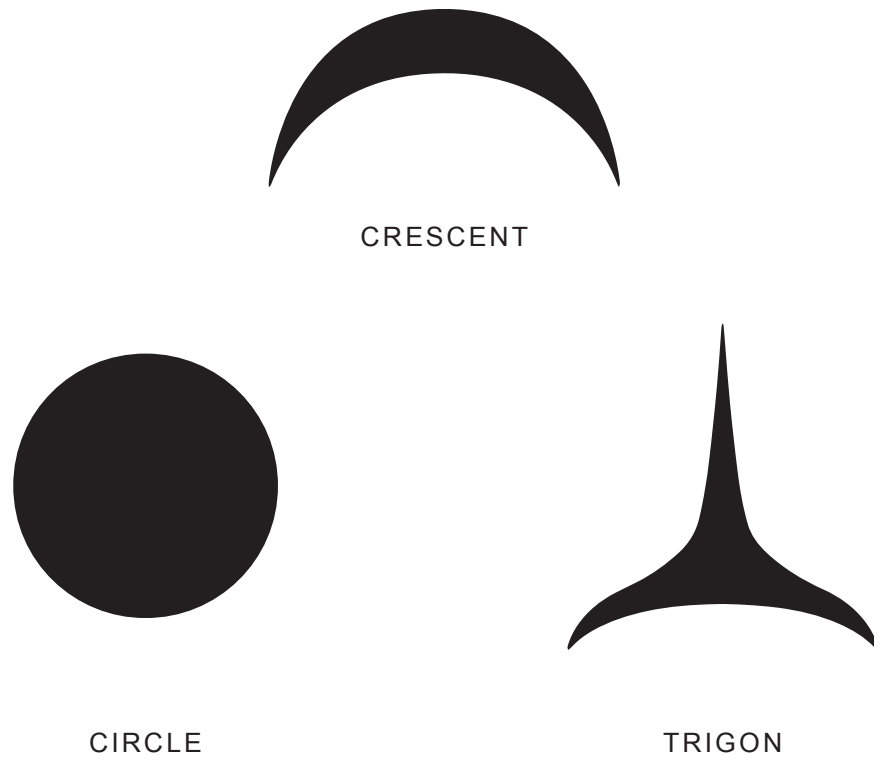
ABOVE: Brevner and Harry in their studio
OPPOSITE: *Sna7m Sky*, 2023, in progress

- ORIGINAL SHORELINE
- STREAM
- OR GALLERY
- KWIKWI STUDIO



Elements of Coast Salish Design

Coast Salish Design is comprised of circles, trigons, and crescents as well as their extended shapes





They Will Guide Us

JENN JACKSON

The Seventh spans a vast horizon—a horizon that holds a timeless expanse of encounters with the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh, x̓m̓əθk̓əy̓əm, and səliłwətał people and territories. The exhibition pays honour and respect to how this expanse of interconnected relations has shaped the many publics that have emerged out of the histories that blanket this place.

Lauren Brevner and James Nexw'Kalus-Xwalacktun Harry have spent the last decade cultivating a collaborative practice that weaves aspects of their individual identities together, forming a collective vocabulary and intersectional conversation around Indigenous representation and land-based gestures. The sculptural works presented within *The Seventh* engage familial supports and knowledges, including Brevner's Japanese and Trinidadian heritage and Harry's ancestral connection to Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh stories, forms, and designs. Under the collective name KWÍKWI, Brevner and Harry explore innovative material traditions and engage experimentation through cross-cultural exchange. From monumental public artwork to intimate portraiture, the multiple registers of scale and breadth of materials invite opportunities for diverse expression and experience.

For Brevner and Harry, the bringing together of diverse historical and cultural contexts is urgent. In 2022, they welcomed their

*To enact powerful change,
one must always be thinking
seven generations ahead.*

| Gwen Mildred Harry and Xwalacktun Rick Harry

daughter, Hana Kimiko Kwílayus Harry, to the world and began dreaming of *The Seventh*. Each work within the series embodies a transformative potential to share knowledge with future generations. As Brevner and Harry worked toward the exhibition, they spent time with elders, knowledge keepers, and storytellers from their communities. Through these dialogues, a cosmology of past and future reciprocity flows.

In conversation with Gwen Mildred Harry, James Harry's Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh grandmother, the artists learned that their daughter's birth marked the seventh generation since European contact on this territory. Gwen Mildred Harry shared that, in Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh teachings, the number seven holds a significant connection to the vast expression of time—to enact powerful change, one must always be thinking seven generations ahead of one's own life, and importantly, that it takes seven generations for a past wound or trauma to heal. This learning opened conversation towards the story of the great Thunderbird and the symbolism of its seven symmetrical tail feathers. The three

OPPOSITE: Installation
view of Yéw'yews, 2023

feathers that reach to the left represent the past, a central feather represents the present, and the three feathers spreading out to the right represent the future. From ancestors to new life, the tailfeathers link multiple generations through vast folds of deep time. This teaching transcends a more familiar human scale of time and expands into an interconnected web of life, where human and non-human beings make contact and coexist. For Brevner and Harry, *The Seventh* manifests a powerful future through representation of identity, stories of belonging, and mutual healing.

The vocabulary that connects Brevner and Harry to this territory centres on the guiding principles of the Salish Eye—a concept of seeing beyond or looking inward to connect with the watchful presence of past and future ancestors. The visual representation of the Salish Eye gestures to a ripple in the water, and the impact of a single pebble dropping—how energy from a small gesture moves from a central point outward in all directions. Teachings of the Salish Eye as a visual language have been generously shared with Brevner and Harry, by James' father, Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh artist and master carver, Xwalacktun Rick Harry.¹

The Salish Eye is a foundational tenet of Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh design language: the insinuation of movement which emphasizes direction and the flowing of energy from one place

to another. In this visual language, there are often unseeable currents of energy that inform the resulting design. The Salish Eye is made up of the three primary markers of Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh visual language: the crescent, circle, and trigon. Together these forms build rhythms outward from a central node. Each form sequentially impacts the next, building complexity beyond the original gesture. As the gesture expands outward, the potential for powerful energy transference exponentially grows.

SEEDS

In Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh visual language, forms are represented through subtractive gestures where the removal of material and/or light informs the emerging design. In carving, for example, the gesture takes shape as delicate layers of wood grain are withdrawn. This process is often a starting point for Brevner and Harry's sculptural works. *Yé̓w̓yew̓s*, 2023, and *Sp'akw'us*, 2023, began with Harry carving yellow cedar into ovoidal shape. From there the solid form was pieced to create a silhouette of interconnected crescents, circles, and trigons. Through this initial carving, the insinuation of movement evolved to larger scales and models in which the seedlike structure

became completely evacuated of its interior and transformed into a human-scale copper lantern, embraced with a dark exterior patina and an illuminated glowing core.

Yé̓w̓yew̓s, 2023, and *Sp'akw'us*, 2023, are sister works. The intricate patterns within each sculpture individually connect to the many relations and points of contact between the surrounding sea and sky. In the Or Gallery installation of *The Seventh*, *Sp'akw'us*, 2023, sits on the edge of gallery's architectural interior, against a façade of expansive glazing that faces outwards onto Pender Street. For the duration of the exhibition, *Sp'akw'us*, 2023, beacons across the city from Skwachàys, where Or Gallery is located, to Se̓nákw̓, where *Yé̓w̓yew̓s*, 2023, illuminates Brevner and Harry's studio. The golden glow of both *Yé̓w̓yew̓s*, 2023, and *Sp'akw'us*, 2023, gently envelop their interior spaces and graciously spill out through glass windows onto the urban landscape. Transferring energy through light and shadow, *Yé̓w̓yew̓s*, 2023, and *Sp'akw'us*, 2023, gleam forth out of darkness. Brevner and Harry consider this emergence from the shadows as a form of guidance from their ancestors. The powerful glow resiliently returns each day as a vessel—a seed of

knowledge for new understanding, out of the earth, from the ground, of this place—a symbol of change, ready to propagate and expand towards new futures.

WATCHERS / PORTALS

Within the Or Gallery, Brevner and Harry have created a threshold that connects the front-facing façade of the gallery, which hosts *Sp'akw'us*, 2023, with the back exhibition space. The interstitial span is integrated within the architectural elements of the building and acts as a gateway, welcoming visitors into the realm of the *Watchers*. From the centre of the gallery, the faces of seven *Watchers* gaze inward, observing the motions of each guest. For Brevner and Harry, the *Watchers* act as a conduit between the spirit and the physical world. Each *Watcher* has materialized into physical form through supernatural and ancestral guidance. The painted portraits of these first ancestors represent the collective identities of Brevner and Harry. In honour of each ancestor, a Salish armour has been created to protect their teachings. This armour allows the *Watchers* to permeate the room while limiting entry into their veiled spirit world. The *Watchers* offer a dialogue with the viewer, an opening between expanses of geological time and those who came before us. Reciprocally, the guardian *Watchers* bear witness to



the present, honouring the stories that have shaped Brevner and Harry's collective identity as KWÍKWI. The *Watchers* extend a vision toward a future of greater understanding and respect for ancestral teachings.

TRANSFORMERS

Emerging from the surround of the *Watchers*' eyes are two *Transformers*: *Sna7m Sea*, 2023, and *Sna7m Sky*, 2023. Facing a counterclockwise direction, the *Transformers* indicate the movement and flow of Sḵwǰwú7mesh ceremony and reciprocally represent the natural current of swirling air on this territory within the northern hemisphere. The massive cedar carvings monumentalize the capacity for shapeshifting between worlds. Each grain of wood expands multiple layers of meaning which memorialize the powers of ancestors past. These moments of transformation mark change whereby land bears witness to movements between sea and sky—the journey between ocean, rivers, ravine creeks, and fluctuating bodies of water. Sea represents water as giver of life and sky, holder of all things, bringing connection to the spirit world. The *Transformers* are a profound visual story of the land. They hold a spiritual essence of resilience, harmony and the interconnectedness of life.

OPPOSITE: Detail of
Sna7m Sea, 2023

The act of transformation is a central reference for Brevner and Harry. Throughout the creation of *The Seventh*, the duo accessed intuitive approaches and subconscious states of mind to allow forms and resulting stories to emerge from the subsequent works. Each intuitive gesture results from a spiritual connection to nature—to fire, water, earth, and air. This philosophy of making centres on bridging a connection with natural elements. It is a gesture that, due to the decimation of our natural world, is becoming more and more difficult to achieve and to sustain. Rising temperatures and sea levels, environmental degradation, extreme weather, natural disasters, as well as food and water insecurity, have foreclosed many communities' ability to engage with the land through traditional practices of physical and cultural sustenance. Through the process of making *The Seventh*, Brevner and Harry awaken and open these connections and conduits towards new ways of understanding and being in the world.

SUPER NATURAL EYE

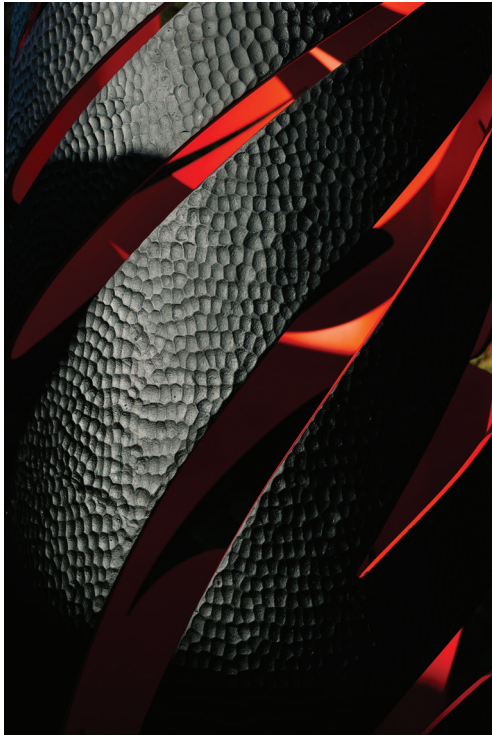
The sculptures within *The Seventh* invite community to awaken stories of the land. Stories that date back thousands of years and have marked this territory and beyond. As the stories emerge, they reverberate outwards through multiple generations and descendants. The call to illuminate and draw out stories from the shadows is especially present in the *Super Natural Eye* series. The

towering black columns glow with intensity and reflect light upon the surrounding ground. Marked by a hand carved exterior reminiscent of charred cedar, the *Super Natural Eye* evokes the sensation of gathering around the hot embers of a fire, of magma erupting from the ground, and subsequently, of the new growth that emerges from a forest that has been engulfed in flames. Visions of destruction and creation mingle between the sensation of fire and its multiple connections to earth, of awakening something from deep within the ground. They emphasize the monumental markings within the natural world and the ways that these references are spoken about over millennia.

The *Super Natural Eye* columns elaborate a connection between the land, sea, and sky, of the architectures that support and bridge these connections and of the broader spiritual supports that uphold a community through powerful values. Moving out from *The Seventh*, Brevner and Harry place the utmost trust in their community to share and shape the meaning of their work, to elevate and activate the multiplicity of their manifestations. They place trust on the ways in which each storytellers' words will bring light to a darkened horizon.



Installation view of *The Seventh*,
Or Gallery, Vancouver 2023



ABOVE: Super Natural
Eye (detail), 2023

RIGHT: Installation view of
Super Natural Eye, 2023



FUTURES

Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, and səliłwətał people and territories are timeless. Since time immemorial, the ancestors of the Sḵw̓xw̓7mesh, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, and səliłwətał people have lived on these lands, and the present generation of rich and culturally diverse descendants represents a continuum of multiple cultures and aesthetic traditions into the future. *The Seventh* marks a chapter of this journey where representation of Salish visual language and distinct artistic tradition are imperative to understanding this place and its multiple geographical relations. Through *The Seventh*, Brevner and Harry have initiated a visual declaration of powerful change and cultural understanding. Together, they are actively carrying forward a legacy for future generations and for providing representation for many communities to come.

ENDNOTE

1 Xwalacktun Rick Harry has dedicated his life to sharing Sḵw̓x w̓7mesh teachings regionally, nationally, and internationally. On this journey, he has thoughtfully involved all members of his family, including his wife, children, and grandchildren. From a young age, James Nexw'Kalus-Xwalacktun Harry has been guided by the steadfast mentorship of his father and accompanied him on many travels stewarding Indigenous representation around the world. A central component of Xwalacktun Rick Harry's work involves expansive educational programs for school-aged children from kindergarten to grade 12. Long before Brevner and Harry met, Xwalacktun visited Brevner's elementary school class and shared Sḵw̓x w̓7mesh teachings, which to this day she distinctly remembers as a pivotal moment in her life.

Skwxwú7mesh Dictionary



↪ LISTEN

RELATIVES *Skwtsi7ts*

SEVEN *Takw'usāch*

ORCA *Yéw̓yews*

EAGLE *Sp'akw'us*

THUNDERBIRD *Íninyáxa7n*

RED CEDAR *Xápayay*

WATER *Stakw*

SKY *Kwáyel / Skwáyel*

LAND/DIRT/
EARTH *Temixw*

PEOPLE *Stēlmexw /
Steltélmcxw*

THANK YOU *Hyu Chexw a*

THANKING
SOMEONE
RESPECTED *O'siem*

About KWÍKWI

Artists Lauren Brevner and James Nexw'Kalus-Xwalacktun Harry have been collaborators since 2014. Brevner's practice is deeply inspired by her Japanese and Trinidadian heritage as well as matriarchal influences, while Harry's practice combines traditional Słwǰwú7mesh histories, forms and designs. Under the name KWÍKWI, they create meditative compositions that invite cross-cultural dialogue and embrace multiple expressions of personal, political, social, and spiritual practices. Their work ranges from large-scale public artworks to intimate portraits, incorporates a wide breadth of materials and engages in bridging community through generous relationality.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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—LAUREN BREVNER, JAMES HARRY,
AND JENN JACKSON

For Hana, the Seventh.

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Installation view of *Watcher II*,
2023 and *Yéwyews*, 2023

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