

BRIGHT FUTURES

REBECCA BAKER-GRENIER · TAMARA BELL

SHERRI DICK · SHOSHANNAH GREENE

MAYNARD JOHNNY JR. · KEITH KERRIGAN

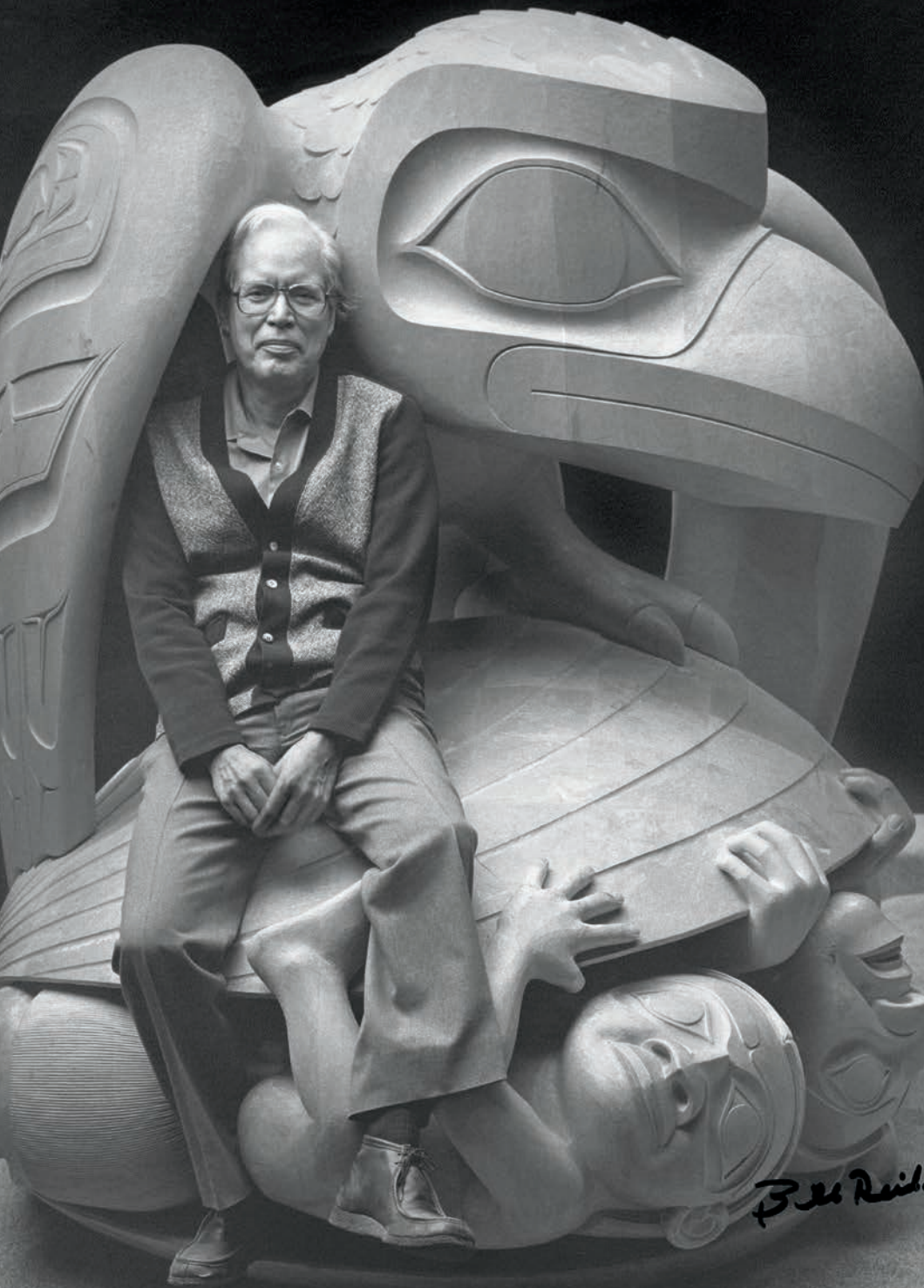
CODY LECOY · LATHAM MACK

CALVIN MORBERG · **BILL REID**

KELLY ROBINSON · NATASHA SEYMOUR

DUSTIN SHELDON · KRYSTLE SILVERFOX

YOLONDA SKELTON



Bill Reid 2/4/44

WHO WAS BILL REID?

*“Joy is a well-made object, equaled
only by the joy of making it.”*

—BILL REID, 1988

Bill Reid (1920–1998) was an acclaimed master goldsmith, sculptor, writer, mentor and community activist. Reid was born in Victoria, BC to a Haida mother and an American father, and only began exploring his Haida roots at the age of 23. Through his mother, Bill was a member of the Raven clan from T’anuu with the wolf as one of his family crests. In 1986, Reid was presented with the Haida name Yaahl Sgwansung (The Only Raven) by Florence Davidson. This journey of discovery lasted a lifetime and shaped Reid’s artistic career.

The Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art was created in 2008 to honour his legacy and celebrate the diverse Indigenous cultures of the Northwest Coast. Bill Reid infused Haida traditions with his own modernist aesthetic to create both exquisitely small as well as monumental works that captured the public’s imagination and introduced an ancient vocabulary to the modern world.

Reid lived at a time of great transition for Indigenous artists and communities in Canada. He became a pivotal force in building bridges between Indigenous people and other peoples. He became a student of Haida visual language and mastered the rules and concepts of traditional formline design. Bill referred to himself as a “maker of things” rather than an artist.

Bill struggled with Parkinson’s disease for the last 30 years of his life. Despite this, he never stopped creating, even when the disease robbed him of his dexterity.

BRIGHT FUTURES

“These were objects of bright pride, to be admired in the newness of their crisply carved lines, the powerful flow of sure elegant curves and recesses—yes, and in the brightness of fresh paint. They told the people of the completeness of their culture, the continuing lineages of the great families, their closeness to the magic world of universal myth and legend.”

—BILL REID, 1967

Bill Reid's eloquent words continue to remind us of the deep and essential connections between art and people on the Northwest Coast. Inspired by the above quote, this exhibition is both a retrospective on how Indigenous art has evolved in the past 25 years and an invitation for the next generation of artists to continue to create bright futures.

Bright Futures brings together some of the most magnificent pieces of Bill Reid's art from our permanent collection with new works by 14 contemporary emerging and established Indigenous artists of the Northwest Coast. To commemorate the life of Bill Reid 25 years after his death, we selected artists working in a variety of disciplines and asked them to ponder and critique the question: How is Bill Reid continuously inspiring contemporary Northwest Coast artists?

Throughout his career, Bill Reid celebrated the traditions of Northwest Coast art from the past but was not afraid to push towards the future. He carved out fresh pathways as a leader in combining traditional Haida elements with new techniques and materials. He constantly saw inspiration and opportunities.

What would Bill Reid think of the state of Northwest Coast art today? The Haida expression, "deeply carved" refers to an object that is well-made and speaks to one's emotions. Given the technical quality of these artists and their selected works, as well as the traditions they pay tribute to, the questions they pose and the boundaries they push, we are confident that Bill Reid would have been thrilled with the direction of art today.

—**ALIYA BOUBARD** and **BETH CARTER**, *Co-curators*



DETAIL. REBECCA BAKER-GRENIER

REBECCA BAKER-GRENIER

Ancestral Strength, 2022

wool, cedar bark, ermine, gold plated beads, Swarovski crystals, jingles
16"H × 20"W

Collection of the Artist

This cape, *Ancestral Strength*, is a testament to our ability to innovate our traditional art forms, techniques, and materials while incorporating important aspects of our culture into current art. Cedar is one of our most precious sources of life, culture, art, and function. *Ancestral Strength* is about looking within ourselves to learn and connect with who we are. It is a necessary process to heal from colonial trauma and strengthen ourselves and communities. To express who we are is empowering; to be proud of who we are is inspiring.

REBECCA BAKER-GRENIER is of Kwakiutł, Dzawada'enuwx, and Skwxwú7mesh ancestry. She is an emerging multidisciplinary artist with a BA from UBC in First Nations and Indigenous Studies. Rebecca began fashion design in 2021 and is apprenticing with Indigenous designer and artist, Himikalas Pam Baker.

TAMARA RAIN BELL

Reconciled Bills, 2023

crayon and watercolour on Canadian and US currency

Frame holding 40 bills, 30 × 40"

Collection of the Artist

I wanted to transform the mundane into a strong political statement, repurposing and indigenizing Canadian and American dollar bills with vibrantly painted female and male profiles that proudly assume their rightful position. I was always enamored with the \$20 currency that incorporated Bill Reid's artwork. This artwork is meant to celebrate the life and legacy of Bill Reid. I always appreciated his creativity and knowledge, and I am sure he would be ecstatic to see Northwest Coast art flourishing today.

TAMARA RAIN BELL is a contemporary multi-media matriarchal Haida artist. Her artistic passions stem directly from her Haida roots and Raven clan moiety. Her Haida grandmother and grandfather were artists and her creative roots were formed through her lineage. Tamara's prolific body of work has a rebellious commentary that challenges Canadian perceptions of Indigenous people.

DETAIL. ALIYA BOUBARD





ALIYA BOUBARD

SHERRI DICK, SGAANJAAD

Brother (Xil Gwalee), 2018

merino wool, calf leather, beaver fur, seed beads, deer hooves

22"H × 10"W, without strap

Collection of the Artist

This ancestor face bag, called Brother, is one of two that I created for my sons. I like to break boundaries in Chilkat weaving, while also remaining traditional. This bag is mostly black, which is rare. It combines geometric designs from the back of a tunic with the face, which has spiritual eyes, showing a connection to our creator. Almost all my pieces are for the community—I want them to be used.

SHERRI DICK, SGAANJAAD (Woman of the Killer Whale) is a traditional Chilkat and Ravenstail weaver, with a focus on returning these ancient artforms back to the Haida Nation. She was inspired by her great grandmother Isabella Edenshaw, one of the greatest historic weavers. All of Sherrí's work is used in traditional ceremony.

SHOSHANNAH GREENE, S̱IḎGANG.XAAL

Raven in the City, 2023

gouache on watercolour board

20"H × 16"W

Collection of the Artist

Nang Kilslaas, or Raven, disguised as a human, walks through the city landscape. Being away from home is a mix of different feelings and excitement. The juxtaposing sense of isolation and the claustrophobic feeling of everything being so close together, while working hard for new opportunities rural life can't always offer. There are gentle reminders throughout that we're not too far away from each other. Nang Kilslaas's true form glimmers, comforted after seeing this wall adorned with an artist's graffiti.

SHOSHANNAH GREENE, S̱IḎGANG.XAAL, was born and raised on Haida Gwaii. She is a member of the Staawaas X̱aaydaGaay, from Hlkinil lnagaay (Cumshewa village). From a young age, Shoshannah has always had a strong drive to be creative. Shoshannah works as a full-time artist, with a creative practice focused on Haida design, both traditional and digital painting, and illustration.



SHOSHANNAH GREENE

MAYNARD JOHNNY JR.

Protector, 2023

serigraph print

30" diameter

Collection of the Artist

Our ancestors worked hard to protect the future generations. They helped us to get through the effects of colonialism to get to where we are today. In this work, the killer whale represents the ancestors. I love to use bright colours as a symbol of freedom and joy and our ability to be open to new things. My dad was a residential school survivor and I grew up in a difficult home. I am so lucky to be able to do things that my ancestors could not do. And my grandchildren will do even more.

MAYNARD JOHNNY JR. is of Coast Salish descent on his father's side from Penelakut Island and Kwakwaka'wakw descent on his mother's side from We Wai Kai, Cape Mudge on Quadra Island. Since 1993 Maynard has dedicated himself to the Coast Salish style. Primarily self-taught, Maynard has studied ancient Coast Salish spindle whorls, rattles and comb designs.





KENJI NAGAI

BILL REID

Children of the Raven, A/P 1977

serigraph print on paper

27"H × 21"W

Bill Reid Foundation collection, 2002.1.41

Bill Reid was a trickster, like the Raven, who is a mischievous supernatural being full of curiosity. Raven transforms the world. He is not the Creator, but often finds himself in the thick of creation. Like Raven, Bill was inquisitive, quick and witty. True to his Raven roots, Bill Reid actively worked to transform understanding and awareness of Indigenous art, culture, and issues.

KEITH KERRIGAN

Raven, 2014

cast sterling silver, mahogany base, found driftwood

7"H × 4"W × 2"D

Collection of the Artist

This Raven was inspired in part by found driftwood branches, and also by the many miniature and monumental ravens that Bill Reid created throughout his career. I see the Raven as a catalyst for change, having seen the world as it was and knowing what it could be. This is something that we all need to do. Everyday. Be the change. Make the world a little bit better.

KEITH KERRIGAN is a member of the Haida Nation, and the Yahgulanaas clan. His family originates from the village of Dadens on Langara Island in Haida Gwaii. Keith's current practice focuses on the creation of contemporary jewelry featuring Haida designs inspired by those learned from his family, Haida stories, and the stories of his clients.





ALIYA BOUBARD

LATHAM MACK

Lhulhulnimut 'Grizzly Bear Frontlet', 2017

alder, abalone, sealion whiskers, rabbit fur, ermine

Frontlet: 9"H × 6"W × 5"D

Collection of the Artist

I gifted this Grizzly Bear clan frontlet to my late grandfather Lawrence Mack, because he shared so much knowledge with our family. My older brother Derrick Mack carries on his name "Lhulhulnimut" and also uses this piece in our traditional ceremonies. Bill Reid set the standards very high for Northwest Coast art. By studying my ancestors' work, it allows me to grow as an artist.

LATHAM MACK is Nuxalk First Nation from Bella Coola. His traditional name is Quuluun (Beaver) and he is a member of the Grizzly Bear and Raven clans. He was inspired by his culture, participating in traditional dancing and starting to carve at a young age. Latham states: 'I believe with the knowledge I have gained from my teachers and mentors I have the ability to form my own unique style with each piece I complete.'

CODY LECOY

Against the Current, 2023

acrylic on canvas

36"H x 72"W

Collection of the Artist

“Could we ever know each other in the slightest without the arts?” This quote by Gabrielle Roy accompanies Bill Reid’s art “The Spirit of Haida Gwaii” as it was featured on the \$20 note, issued in 2004. I chose to commemorate this banknote because, for me, it represents a triumph of the human spirit because, for a time in this nation, arts and cultural practices for Indigenous peoples were banned. Expressions of the spirit through song, dance, story and art have been carried forward through the generations. This painting is a celebration of resilience, innovation, creativity and joy that has persevered beyond the forces of control, oppression and assimilation.

CODY LECOY is a painter of Syilx and Lekwungen ancestry. His work has been featured in several exhibitions, murals and community projects. “Surrealism has been my preferred style of expression. This has allowed me to portray qualities of the interior life and the external environment within the same plane of the canvas.”





VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

BILL REID

The Spirit of Haida Gwaii, The Jade Canoe, 1996

bronze, jade green patina

3.9mH × 3.5mW × 6.0mL

Collection of the Vancouver International Airport

The Spirit of Haida Gwaii was Bill Reid's final major work. He crowded this magical Haida canoe with his favourite beings from oral traditions. He depicted them full of energy and personality, making them fresh and meaningful to a contemporary audience. An earlier version, *The Black Canoe*, was unveiled at the Canadian embassy in Washington D.C.



ALIYA BOUBARD

CALVIN MORBERG, YAXKASEI

Eagle Hat, 2022

copper, ermine

9"H × 16"diameter

Collection of the Artist

Hammered from a flat sheet of copper using the technique of raising, repousse, and chasing, this copper hat has been made to resemble the old Tlingit spruce root hats. The use of copper predates European contact and was a highly valued metal among the many nations of the Northwest Coast. Since I began my journey as an artist, I have worked towards creating traditional ceremonial pieces that are known to my people as our At.óow (clan property). It is a way to show our identity and celebrate who we are.

CALVIN MORBERG, YAXKASEI is an Inland Tlingit artist working in the traditional northwest coast style. He is a citizen of the Teslin Tlingit Council and belongs to the Dakhl'awédí clan (Eagle/Killerwhale crest). Calvin works primarily in wood and copper, fusing them to create traditional regalia, custom jewelry and ceremonial works of art.

BILL REID

Beaver and Eagle Bracelet, 1970

22k gold

2.5"H × 2.5"diameter

Simon Fraser University Bill Reid Collection 2006.1.2.1

Gift of Anton and Hildegard Cavelti

Bill Reid had a lifelong passion for working in gold. He remembered the bracelets worn by his Haida aunts and was especially inspired by two bracelets carved by Charles Edenshaw. Bill Reid notably introduced the *repoussé* technique to Northwest Coast art, creating a three-dimensional sculptural effect in metal jewelry.





ALIYA BOUBARD

KELLY ROBINSON

Nuxalk Creation Story, 2023

silver

2"H × 3.25"W

Collection of the Artist

The bracelet represents the very first ancestors of Nuxalkmc People. In the beginning, our creator and his four carpenters made raven. Raven then travelled the Bella Coola valleys in search of light for his fellow relatives. He found that his people lived in great sorrow at this time. They would pray to the Great Spirit Beyond who is depicted on the bracelet. The bracelet also shows the Grizzly Bear, an Eagle, and the mountains, rivers and valleys of the Nuxalk territories.

KELLY ROBINSON is a Nuxalkmc carver, designer, and jeweler. He feels privileged to be a teacher of his culture, to enjoy its beauty and live each day by its teachings. Robinson uses his art to tell stories of supernatural, potlatch societies, as well as the land and the sea in his artwork.

NATASHA SEYMOUR, NATADESLĪN

Button Blanket and Floral Earrings, 2023

melton cloth, Czech seed beads, charlotte cut seed beads, bicones, abalone buttons, moosehide

9.75"H × 2.25"W (each earring)

Collection of the Artist

These earrings take two old, traditional art forms—the button blanket and floral beadwork, and modernize their beauty by transforming them into wearable art. My work is always guided and inspired by my significant life experiences to express and celebrate love, culture and beauty—which is universal across all Nations. I was taught beading by my older sister during a time of healing in my life. I learned that while beading, you must come from a positive space, a place of love in thoughts and emotion.

NATASHA SEYMOUR, NATADESLĪN, is a Tahltan/Tsimshian/Nisga'a beadwork artist. She comes from the Etheni family in the Tahltan Nation and is Crow clan. She grew up in Hazelton, BC, on Gitksan Territory, and her people reside in Iskut, Terrace, and Kinkolith, BC. She is also an educator who graduated from the Native Indian Teacher Education Program.





KRYSTLE SILVERFOX

KRYSTLE SILVERFOX AND DUSTIN SHELDON

Stealing the Light, 2023

photography

22"H × 28"W

Collection of the Artists

In this collaborative series of photographs, we have created formline images using long exposure black and white digital photography, with a light source “painting” an image through simple lines. This artwork pays homage to Bill Reid’s wire works, where he created animal and human sculptures using only wire—using linework to create shapes and images.

KRYSTLE SILVERFOX is a member of Selkirk First Nation (Wolf Clan), and interdisciplinary visual artist. Her artistic practice explores different materials, methodologies, and symbols to create conceptual works. Krystle Silverfox is inspired by Indigenous feminism, trans-nationalism, decolonialism, activism, and lived experience.

DUSTIN SHELDON’S native name, Calm Rivers, was gifted to him by a Great-Grandmother before her passing & after his birth in Victoria, B.C. Raised in Whitehorse, the Yukon Territory has been his family’s native homeland throughout generations.

BILL REID

Angry Cat and Camel, 1980s

wire

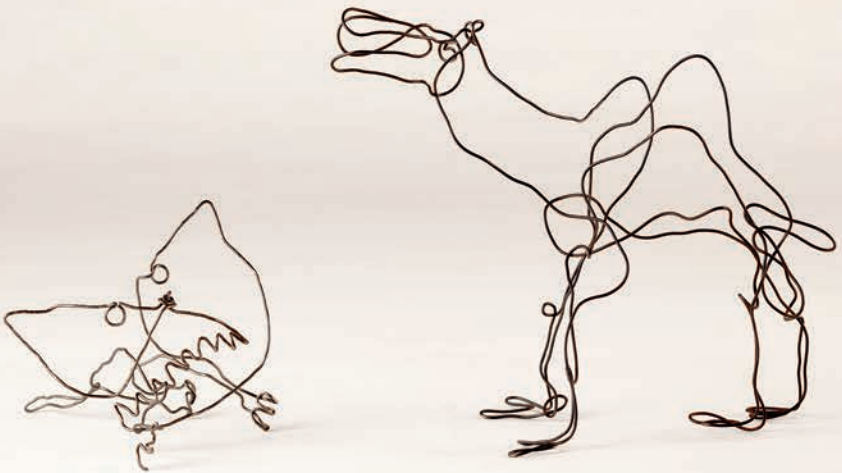
Cat: 4"H × 5"W × 6.5"L

Camel: 9"H × 10"L

Bill Reid Foundation Collection 2006.2.5.1

Simon Fraser University Bill Reid Collection 2002.1.65

Bill Reid loved to doodle. As his Parkinson's disease progressed, sketching became more difficult and he started to doodle in wire. According to Martine Reid, Bill Reid could often be seen holding his "knitting kit"—a spool of wire and a pair of pliers— conjuring lively, whimsical creatures from a single wire and space.



YOLONDA SKELTON, SUGIIT LUKXS

Ancestral Threads - Chilkat Eagle Dress and Train, 2022

ultrasuede applique on ponti and wool suiting, pleated chiffon and beaver fur
Hips: 34"– 40" Waist: 25"– 30" Bust: 34"– 38"

Collection of the Artist

My overall design philosophy is to create modern day robes of power for people of all nations who seek connection, empowerment, and understanding of our culture. When you wear a piece I have made, you become an educator and storyteller. This dress was commissioned by the lovely Haida singer Carsen Gray. It was inspired by our ancestors' style and use of the Chilkat blankets. These were worn by dignitaries and high-ranking tribal members for dancing and ceremonial occasions.

YOLONDA SKELTON, SUGIIT LUKXS is a fashion designer, textile artist and former high school teacher. She is from the Gitksan Nation and the House of Hax-be-gwoo-txw of the Fireweed Clan. Skelton is self-taught, and her practice begins with knowledge of her ancient Gitksan history or Adawak, as told by her maternal grandma, uncles and aunties.



Twenty-five years after his death, what would Bill Reid think of contemporary Northwest Coast art being produced today?

I lived and worked with Bill for over 20 years, and I truly believe that he would feel optimistic about the state of Indigenous Northwest Coast art today. As I look back at his writing and reflect on his favorite way of saying things, I think Bill would have said:

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.”

A strong sense of aesthetics has always existed among Indigenous Northwest Coast nations. It flourished for centuries but then almost vanished. It re-surfaced with Willie Sewid, Mungo Martin, Bill Holm, and Bill Reid.

Thanks to a turning point in its appreciation (in 1967 at “The Arts of the Raven” exhibit at the Vancouver Art Gallery), the perception of Northwest Coast Indigenous Art changed from curio to ethnographic art to fine art. Art styles moved from traditional classic, to modern, to contemporary. From heraldic crest art to environmental art that reclaims land; from wall art to street graffiti.

Bill would be delighted by the sheer number of young artists and the vitality of their subject matter and materials; he would be in awe with the quality and diversity of textile and bead works. Certainly, he would be especially pleased at how artists from all Coastal First Nations feel welcome and supported in the Gallery that bears his name.

Bill might have said to the emerging artists:

“Regardless of your practice and materials you use, continue the quest for the well-made object. Joy and pride partner with the-well-made object.”

“You must know the basics that make up the recognizable elements of Northwest Coast Indigenous art styles and acknowledge your source(s).”

“Pay attention to the works of your forebears but keep your youthful courage to innovate techniques and materials.”

—**DR. MARTINE REID**

Honourary Chair, Bill Reid Foundation

DR. MARTINE REID is an author, independent curator, and scholar in anthropology of art and aesthetics. Born and educated in France, she moved to Vancouver in 1975 to pursue her doctorate in anthropology from UBC. Her collaboration with the Kwakwaka'wakw people resulted in the award-winning biography, *Paddling to Where I Stand: Agnes Alfred, Qwiqwasutinuxw Noble Woman*, (UBC Press, 2004). She was adopted by the Kwakwaka'wakw and Haida people.

Martine was married to the late Haida artist Bill Reid and was instrumental in the creation of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, for which she was director of content and curator (2010–2013) and is currently Honourary Chair. Martine is currently compiling the *Bill Reid (1920–1998): Catalogue Raisonné* and writing *My Life with Bill Reid*.



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billreidgallery.ca

This brochure features a selection of artworks from the **BRIGHT FUTURES** exhibition at the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, April 26, 2023 – January 14, 2024.

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Thank you!

We are deeply grateful to all the participating artists for sharing their artworks, cultural knowledge, and personal stories.

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BILL REID

Self Portrait, 1966

photostat camera image, ink, paint

40"H x 30"W

Private Collection

Created for the book, *Raven's Cry* by Christie Harris

This revealing self-portrait gives us some sense of Bill's connection to his ancestors in the mid 1960s. He said: There were ghosts there the whole time I worked...They watched every move I made, I felt their criticism. I had to do it their way.

—Bill Reid, 1966

*“These were objects of bright pride,
to be admired in the newness
of their crisply carved lines, the
powerful flow of sure elegant
curves and recesses—yes, and
in the brightness of fresh paint.”*

—BILL REID, 1967