

"I used (the salmon) as the motif for this proposal, as it represents a kind of *Spiritual Journey*, salmon swimming up from the earth to the heavens. The image of climbing and intertwining (suggested by the artwork) also represents the idea of today's generation, regardless of background, mingling to create new cultures for the future."

Harumi Ota



Arts Vision: Saanich as a lively and creative community accessible to artists, to a broad range of artistic expression and to the participation of all its residents.

The District of Saanich's 1% for Public Art Policy encourages the creation of new works of art to enhance public spaces throughout our community.



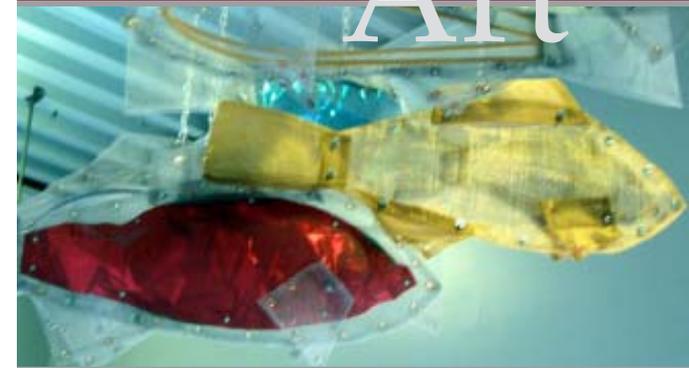
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Saanich Public Art



Flying Fish
Harumi Ota



“perseverance”

In late 2005, the District of Saanich issued a Public Art proposal call to artists on Vancouver Island, and the Gulf Islands. The purpose of the call was to seek out an artist to create a piece of public art for the stairwell, leading up to the newly renovated training center. A jury composed of three local artists, a representative from the local neighbourhood association, and a staff member from the Parks and Recreation Department determined that the public art competition should address the broad theme of “West Coast”, and that the chosen artwork should acknowledge the existing artwork and colours found in the facility.

When Saanich Commonwealth Place was originally constructed First Nation artist Roy Henry Vickers was commissioned to create artwork for the facility that would reflect the west coast landscape, and recognize the significance of the coastal aboriginal peoples in British Columbia’s and Saanich’s history and culture. The relief murals on the exterior of the building, and the totem pole in front of the building were both designed by Mr. Vickers.

“intertwining”

“ In the world of art, a sense of locality, or a feeling of indigenouness is, I think, largely a reflection of the landscape and climate of the area where the artist lives. ” Harumi Ota

“Here on the West Coast, the migrating salmon are, to First Nations, mystical creatures with a strong symbolism attached to them. Because of this, when they eat salmon, they gain something spiritual from the experience.”

Harumi Ota

The artist selected for the public art project completed in conjunction with the newly upgraded training centre was Harumi Ota. Mr. Ota is an interdisciplinary artist, who formally trained in ceramics at the Kutani Ceramics Institute in Terai Japan, and has exhibited his work in Japan, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada. Mr. Ota and his family make their home in Saanich.



Harumi Ota created his artwork called “Flying Fish” based on an intermingling of West Coast First Nations and Japanese, culture and imagery.

“climbing”

“journey”

“In Japan, where I am from, we pray for the health, and happiness of children each May 5th. As part of this celebration (Kodomo no hi) we fly streamers shaped like carp. We have a story (in Japan) according to which carp swim upstream, and then up a waterfall, and away into the sky, to eventually turn into dragons.” In Japanese culture, the carp stands for courage and perseverance because of its strength and determination to overcome all obstacles, while the dragon in this circumstance represents eternal happiness.

According to West Coast First Nation legend Salmon were actually humans who enjoyed eternal life and lived in large villages, far under the ocean. In the spring, they put on their Salmon disguises and offered themselves to the villagers as food. The First Nations believed that when entire fish skeletons were returned to the sea, the spirits would rise again and change into Salmon people. In this way, the cycle could begin again the following year.

“eternal”

