

The background is a deep blue gradient. It features several stylized, light blue fish swimming in various directions. There are also stylized seaweed or grass-like plants in the corners. In the top right corner, there is a small, solid lime green rectangular shape.

Marj Yung Park

LEARNING THRU OUR WRITTEN LANGUAGE

ANDREA WILBUR-SIGO



Teaching our Children thru our written Language. Our artwork is our ABC's

Meaning of Coast Salish Art and Artist

Salish sculpture and carving leave many questions to the public to ponder. It is full of history and culture of people whose written language was not necessarily written in a form on which others may understand. The written language has always been in the form of what is now called art. Our stories and lives were and are documented on and within these pieces.

Today we may have cameras to capture what we are looking at and recording devices to tell the story. But there are still a few of us who leave a story behind for our grandchildren in the form of art.

Where do the stories come from? Many places, everyday life, old stories passed down from our grandparents, dreams or spiritual powers. Every native artist is different, and every native artist is the same. To explain this, it is impossible for someone like me to do. It is not my place nor is it my job to read into something that doesn't need to be read into. You see this is the life of my family.

Saying that I will explain why Salish art is Salish art in a way that I hope educates the people who are reading this or have interest in understanding co-Salish artwork and its people

"Art" is not part of our native language, art is a new word to our people, coming from the word "artist" which is also not recognized in our language. But saying that the concept is not new. Instead, it was common knowledge that individuals as well as family groups tended to be highly specialized. so much so that it is quite accurate to speak of hunters, harpooners, expert basket weavers or wood workers etc... as professionals who spent the major portion of their time in pursuits connected with their main occupation, just as it is today. They took care of everything connected with it, from engaging in the actual occupation to doing their special tools to complete their job.

How the Honey Bee got their Stinger



Back in ancient times, when the people were purer and could converse with the animals. The Creator would visit with them. The people asked the Creator for something that was "sweet" to the taste. So, the Creator sent the Bee, but the Bee had no stinger. Down came the Bee and it found a suitable tree in which, they could build their hive, live in, produce honey, multiply and feed its young. Soon the people came to the Bee and asked for some of the sweet syrup and the Bee gave each person a container full. The people loved the syrup and greedily ate it, then went back to the Bee for more.

But the Bee replied, "I have no more to give you for a while. You will have to wait." The people were not happy, as they craved the sweet syrup. So, they called upon the Creator, saying, "the Bee does not give us enough of the golden syrup. We want more!!!" The Creator listened and sent down the Flower People. The Flower People began to spread all types of flowers across the land giving the Bees greater access and variety of flowers to pollinate and make more honey. The Flower People spread all kinds of beautiful wild flowers around to attract the Bees; bright blue, red, orange, purple and yellow. More Bees were created to help pollinate the flowers. The hive grew to be very large. The people seeing how big the hive was, went to get more of the sweet syrup. So, the Bees gave all the syrup to the people but left enough to feed their young. The people devoured the syrup and wanted more. The Bee responded, "We don't have anymore, you will have to wait."

The people were angry and asked the Flower People to make more flowers, so they could have more of the golden syrup to eat. The Flower People responded, "we made all the flowers we could, and they are all pollinated. You will have to wait until spring. "No", said the people, "we want more now!!" So, they went back to the bee's hive and tore it apart killing almost all of the Bees and taking the syrup. The remaining Bees were angry. They asked the Creator what to do. The Creator was also annoyed at the behavior of the people, so he told the Flower People to create some "briar bushes" and for the Bees to eat the briars.

The Bees did as the Creator said, they ate the briars, and these were transformed into stingers. The Flower People created an entire briar patch around the Bee's tree. The next day, the people came back and started toward the Bee's hive for more syrup; but the briars around the tree scratched and tore at their bodies. Some of the people made it through the briars to the hive. Covered in welts, they yelled at the Bees, "Give us some more syrup now, or we will do the same as we did yesterday, kill your young and destroy your home!" The Bees became angry and a loud hum came from the hive in the tree, and out they swarmed. The Bees stung the people all over until they were covered in welts and sent them running.

After that day, the people treated the Bees, flowers, and plants with great respect and always promised to replace whatever they asked for and never be greedy or take more than they needed.

Grandfather Octopus

A long time back, there was a storm coming from the south wind! South wind was blowing and blowing, and Grandfather Octopus was getting worried for his grandchildren.

Grandfather was calling for his babies, but they were way out in the deep waters in the Hood Canal and Puget Sound the babies could not hear him, and the stronger the South wind blew the darker the waters became. Grandfather swam out to the deep water and started waving his arms and calling their names. As time went on, Grandfather was getting really worried and all of a sudden, his inter spirit was throwing light so that the babies could find their way back to their grandfather and safety! This light is now called phosphorus. And to this day Grandfather Octopus is watching over past, present and future grandbabies





Native Butterfly Legend

As a gift to His human children, the Great Spirit created butterflies. He took black from the maiden's hair, yellow from the warm summer sun, and blues from the lake and sky. Once he gathered the most beautiful of colors, He made them into butterflies.

If you want a special wish to come true, capture a butterfly and whisper your heart's desire to it. Since butterflies make no sound, they cannot tell the wish to anyone but Him. Being so colorful, the butterflies will easily be seen and the heart's prayers quickly answered.

By making a wish and releasing the butterfly, it will be taken on the wings of love to the heavens and granted. Softly whisper your wish for their eternal love and bliss, then carefully release and free the beautiful creature.



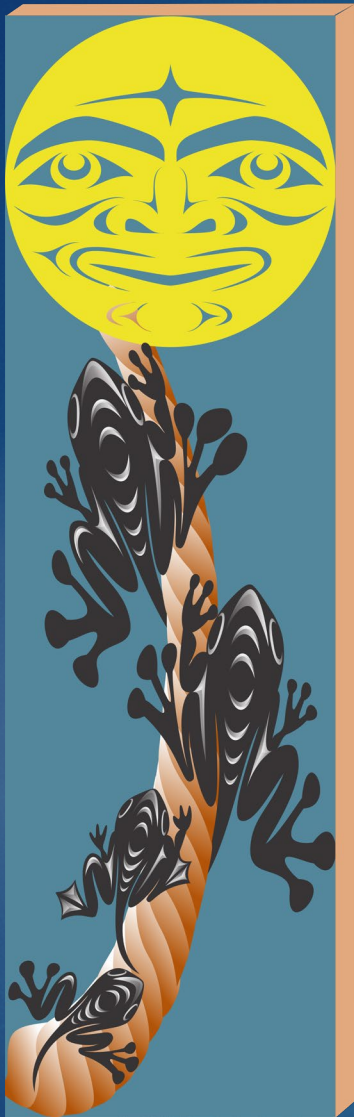
Why the Salmon Return

Long ago the salmon were actually people with superhuman abilities and eternal lives. The Salmon people lived in great houses under the ocean but since they knew that humans on land needed food, they offered themselves to the land-based tribes as food by turning into salmon fish. Their spirits were returned back to the ocean where they were reborn again. One tribe on land was short of food because the salmon never came to their waters. But they heard about the Salmon people. So, the chief sent out an expedition to find these Salmon people in order to ask them to come to their waters. After many days of travel, the expedition arrived in a new land where the Salmon people were. The chief of the Salmon people ordered four of their villagers to go into the sea where they became salmon as soon as the water reached their faces. He ordered others to retrieve these new salmon fish which were then cooked as a welcoming feast for the guests in the expedition.

The chief told the guests to eat as much but the bones of the salmon fish, even the smallest ones, were not to be thrown out. All of the salmon bones were collected by the villagers after the guests were careful enough to lay them into little piles. The Salmon people then threw these bones back into the water. Minutes later, the four individuals who originally turned into the salmon fish reappeared and joined the others.

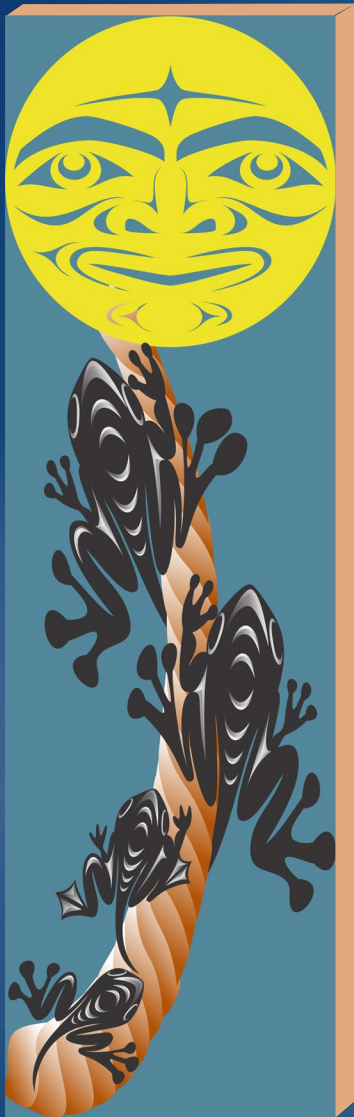
Over the next few days, the guests watched the Salmon people repeat this process with the salmon bones over and over again. However, during a subsequent feast, one of the guests from the expedition secretly held back some of the salmon bones. This time, when one of the Salmon people came back from out of the water, he was covering his face and said that some of the bones must be missing since his cheeks were gone. Another said that she was missing her chin. Alarmed by what had happened, the guest brought out the missing salmon bones he had previously held back. The two Salmon people with missing body parts then went back into the sea with these bones. Upon their return back to land, both Salmon people had their complete bodies again.

The expedition asked the chief to let some of his Salmon people visit their waters and streams to help supply much needed food. The chief agreed to do so as long as the tribe agreed to throw back all the salmon bones into the water so that the Salmon people could return home intact. If this was not respected, the tribe was told that the Salmon people would refuse to return to the tribe's waters. So the tribe always honored the return of the salmon to their streams every year and respected the rules set by the Salmon people chief. This ensured an adequate food supply for the tribe every year.

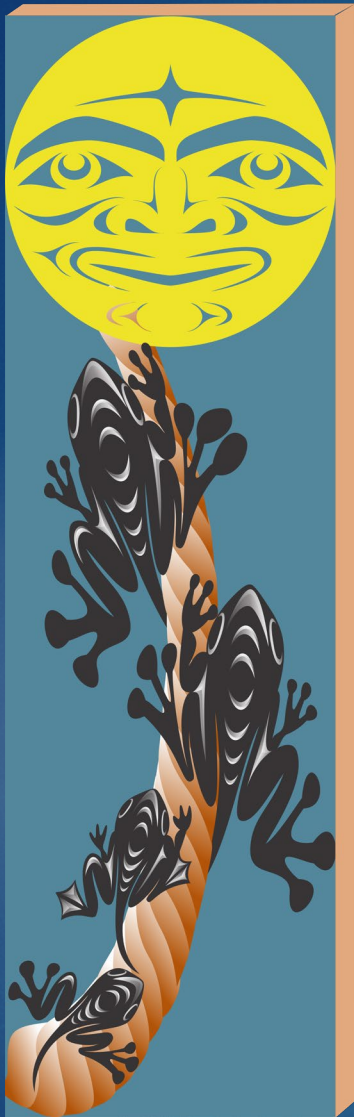


Dukabal and Grandmother Frog

Long ago there were two young sisters and one of them had a baby, they would leave the baby with their blind grandmother while they went to work gathering wood and roots. The grandmother was told to never call the child a boy or address him as her grandson! While the sisters were working the grandmother would keep the baby in a cradle board, this cradle board for some unknown reason would bounce the baby up and down all on its own. So, the grandmother would just sit and sing to her grandchild. When grandmother would sing to the baby, she would refer to the baby as her granddaughter like the sisters had asked her to do. But one day while the sisters were out working, and grandmother was watching the baby she referred to her grandchild as her grandson.... Quickly she corrected herself and said oh granddaughter, my granddaughter. What grandmother did not know was that there were two women secretly watching and when the grandmother was taking a nap the women swept in and took the grandbaby and replaced him with a rotten piece of wood. So, when the sisters got home, they heard the grandmother singing away but it was a new song the grandmother was saying "oh my grandchild you smell like a rotten piece of wood, you smell so rotten ha-ha, oh how you smell so rotten" The sisters both looked at each other and thought what grandma is singing about so they went to check on the baby and the baby was gone.... Where had the baby went who has taken this baby.... So, they called on all the neighboring nations to please help find the baby and they searched and searched but after looking high and low for the baby they had no luck.... What they did not know was that the baby was taken to the Great Sky World because of his great Tamanmis powers. His mother went on to have another child but never lost hope in finding her son.

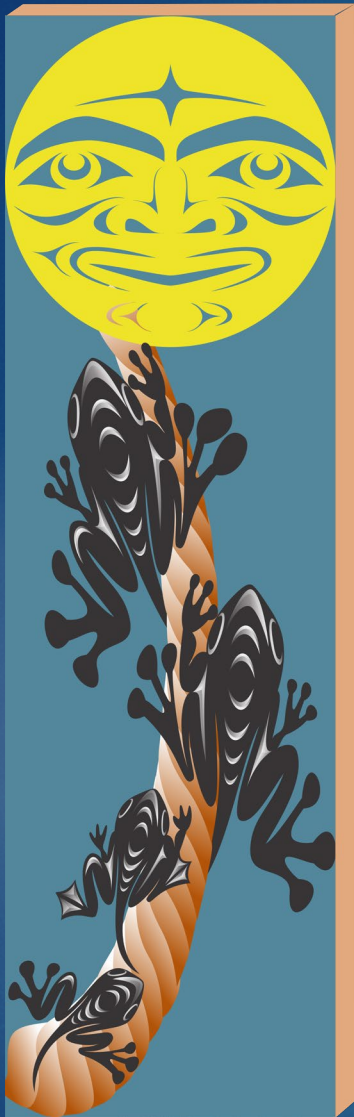


Her other son was born with health issues but always enjoyed retrieved water at the nearby spring. One day while there he was looking at his reflection and he seen two reflections he was so startled, so he quickly looked away and when he looked again sure enough there was a second reflection, but this one was much older about 10 years older. He Crawled home and told his mom... "Mom I seen two of me in the water. His mother just smiled and thought oh my son you have a great imagination" But the next day the same thing happened but, on this day, the older reflection touched him on the shoulder and for the first time he did not crawl home.... He was able to Run home. And say mom, mom look at me my reflection has healed me and with great surprise and happiness sure enough her son could walk for the first time.... The next day the son went to get water like he had done every day, but he danced all the way there and sang as loud as he could with pure love and happiness! When he got to the water once again, he seen his reflection, the older version of himself, but this time the older him could talk He said, "go home and tell our mom her oldest son has come home and to come see me tomorrow". The younger son turned and said, "what I thought it was just my reflection in this

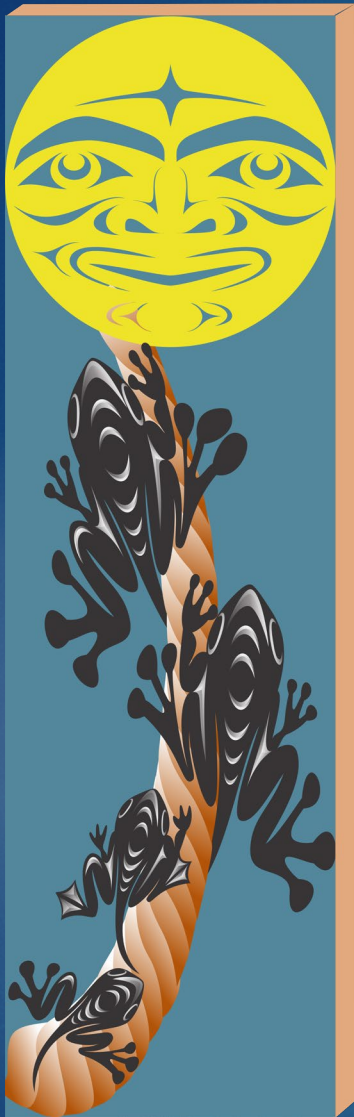


water I was seeing the past few days and you are here... the brother I have only heard of mom will no longer be sad". So, the younger brother ran and sang and danced all the way home with the great news that his brother was back and that he was the one who healed him and is the reason he could walk.

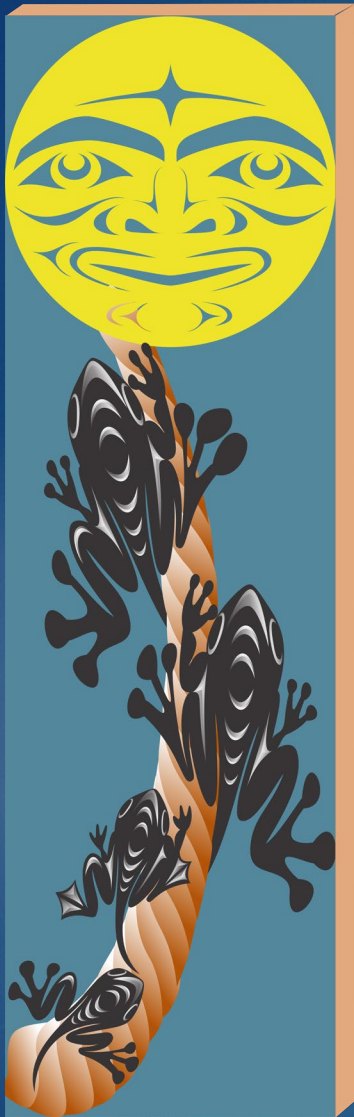
With much excitement the younger sister who were now older could not wait to go to the spring the next morning she always knew he was somewhere, she always felt he was nearby. So, first thing when the sun came up, they ran to the spring and loved on and hugged the baby who was now all grown, he was now a handsome mid aged man, her son had the great Tamanmis powers of being able to heal all people. He told his mom and aunt I am here to Clean the house so after he had done his work, they put on a big feast to let all know, the child has returned so everyone who had searched for him years earlier came to feast and celebrate together.



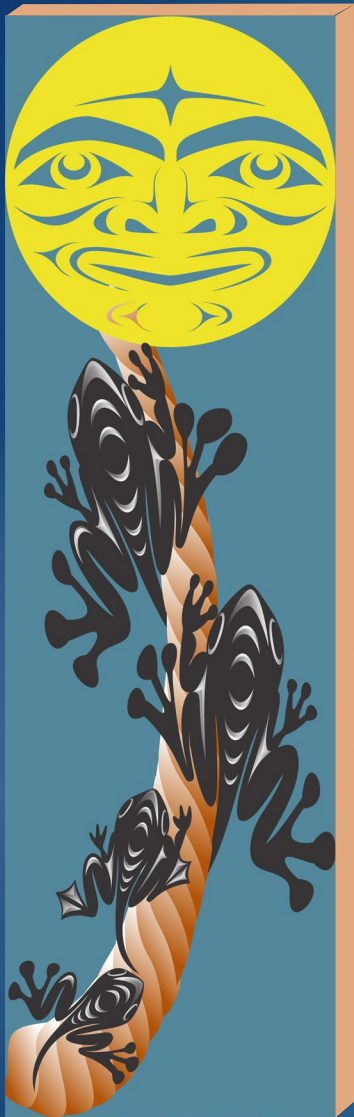
The oldest son explained to all that I have been raised in the sky world and I really miss it so much all I want to do is go home. Dukabal's Mother and sister just wept at the idea of him leaving them again. He then told his mother before I go, I must find me a wife, not just a wife but his life partner. So, he and his brother went into the house and made the announcement that he was here to find his bride. Well, all the unmarried women were already there and everyone there wanted to be the wife of the oldest son now known as Dukabal, the healer who was raised in the sky world. So, he said I have this huge bundle of spears and I will take for my bride the woman who can lift this bundle of spears.... Day turned into night one after another they tried picking up these spears to no avail. Nobody could even budge this bundle and the woman tried and tried. Suddenly the door to the Big house opened and everyone now full and tired stopped to look who could be opening that door as everyone who was anyone was already there from the richest to the poorest.... as word had traveled so fast as to this mysterious man from sky world with such great powers was wanting a partner.



So, they traveled over the mountains from the east as far east as Coeur D'Alene and over the mountains and threw the water from as far west as Quinault, they traveled from as far north as Nooksack and Lummi and as far south as Chinook.... but there stood in the doorway "The Woman of the Night.... Toad" with her granddaughter Frog woman! Everyone shook their head with disbelief as frog was a tiny little lady who never made a sound what was Toad thinking.... But toad had great powers and she said step aside I want my granddaughter to have her turn, and everyone laughed I mean how was a woman as quiet as frog going to be with Dukabal... But they all parted the room to humor grandmother Toad and along her side stood a shy little frog who followed her grandmother to the bundle of spears and as she looks around, she reaches over and picked up the bundle and threw it over her shoulder and onto her back with such ease and so gracefully. She turned and walked back and so gracefully. She turned and walked back to the door to where Dukabal was awaiting his bride. Everyone in shock had nothing to say and they quietly left the house leaving only Dukabal, his bride frog, his brother and his mother and his aunt.

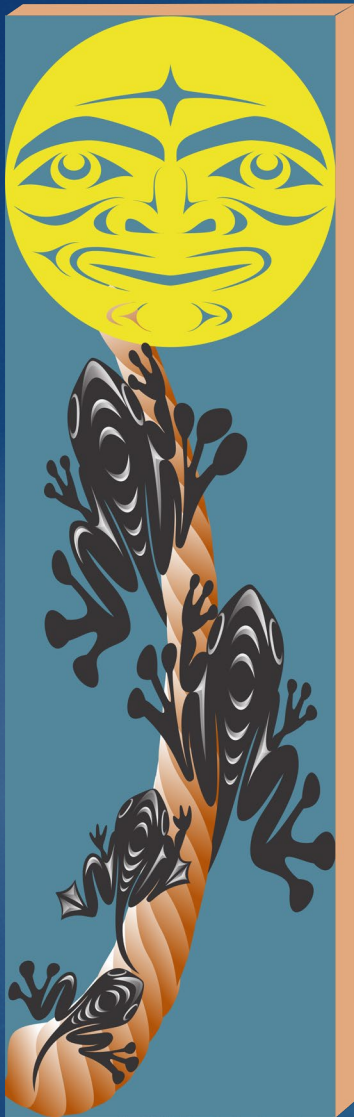


Dukabal's mother was so happy to see both of her sons so happy and healthy and then she realized that he has come and done what he was here to do. Dukabal had cleaned the house and found his bride and now he was going to return to the Skyworld where he had grown up. Knowing that he was going to be returning she began to cry she told him "my son, my oldest son, I've been looking years for you and I always knew you were ok and that I'd see you again.... but never did I think I would have to lose you again... how will I talk to you, how will I know that you are ok, my boy". As he looked at his mother's sad face, he said mom, I was only taken to the Skyworld because "You cooked me just right and gave me the strong roots". The day they took me I became known to all as Dukabal and I'm always around you I am the moon in the Sky I control the tide; I will always take care of you my mother.... I will bring you high water to help the fish get to you and I will give you low water to fill my peoples belly with the shellfish, that will show themselves to you during those low tides. You will always be able to look in the sky and I will be right there whether you see me or not, I will be dangling my feet from the nearest cloud on the days you can't see me in moon form, you need to know that I will always watch over you. Mother you need to know I've never left your side... But I came to find my bride, I needed to find my life partner to help with my loneliness, I felt I needed someone to talk to and to become my best friend, I want to spend nights talking and build a safe home together. Now she will return to the Skyworld with me and together we will fill our hearts with love.

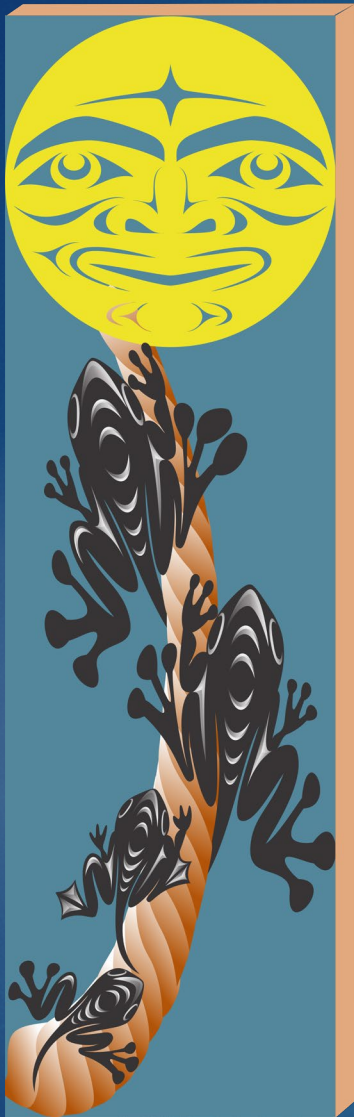


Dukabal's Mother said but son I always thought you would make me a grandmother and I than I would have time to enjoy my babies, just as your blind grandmother did with you. Dukabal smiled and leaned towards his mom with a sparkle in his eye and said ohhh mom that is part of why I'm here to find my wife, my partner, my best friend and he quietly said mom when I return to the Skyworld We will produce lots of children, your grandchildren and they will cover the sky and they will look like the phosphorus that you see in the water and we will call them our little stars. They will be right there for you to watch daily. Then next morning Dukabal and frog went to the sky world and started their family, one by one Dukabal's mother watched her grandchildren appear night after night her little stars.

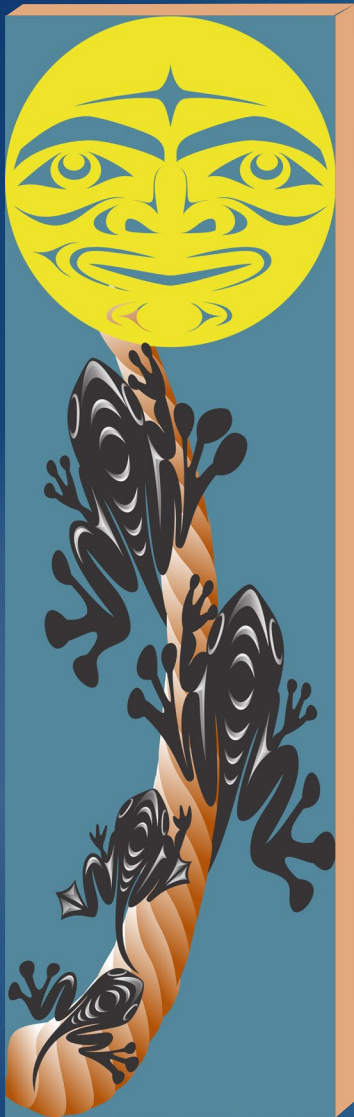
Frog is a great gatherer, and she would gather the camas roots and wood everyday just as she did in her birth world. But now she would teach her many children to do the same. There were three sisters that she so enjoyed watching for an unknown reason they never would never leave each other's side, they were best friends and they stayed together always every moment laughing, talking and singing never to be separated (the three sisters). Mother frog enjoyed watching her children grow and her and Dukabal loved the family they had created but as frog got older, she began to realize how much she missed her grandmother Toad.



Frog was getting older it was her time to relax, she needed to feed her soul, so she took the roots she had been gathering and decided she needed to start weaving and started playing a rope made of the roots she had been gathering. So, day after day she turned those roots into a beautiful long rope. One day while gathering more roots, she ran across a whole in the ground and after taking a closer look she realized she could see her old home which only made her miss her grandmother even more. She told Dukabal I need to go see my family and explained that she had found that hole and had made a rope long enough to climb home so they went home to visit and then she climbed back to sky world again. She stayed up all not night telling her husband how wonderful it was to see her grandmother and family and how wonderful their family has become.



A few years later frog went to see her grandmother again but this time she asked Dukabal to go join her, but when it was time to leave frog told Dukabal who she deeply loved that she would not be returning to the home they made but at she needed to stay here with her grandmother she continued to explained "I'm going to be having our youngest children now, and I want to have them here so your mother and my grandmother can enjoy them and I'm ready now to add to my title. I am not only your wife, and our children's mother, but I'm soon to become a Grandmother Frog! Dukabal felt the feeling his mother had felt so many years earlier and said but wife how will I talk to you, how will I know you and my children here will be ok!" Frog smiled with a look of kindness and love and said "My silly husband I will be right here, I will talk to you every night, I will have our youngest children in the pond that appears when the tide comes high. Together we will nurture, reaffirm and renew the love that we have created and will continue to create until the end of time. Remember we will always be resilient and we will come together always as needed, a life were we once stood alone has now become a life that will always keep us together, we may need to change in time, but not only will we stand together, but we will stand even stronger, we together have joined 3 worlds The Skyworld, Land World, and Underwater World and we have reaffirmed to the next generation all things are possible together and together we are Dukabal and Grandmother Frog.... The great Creators..."

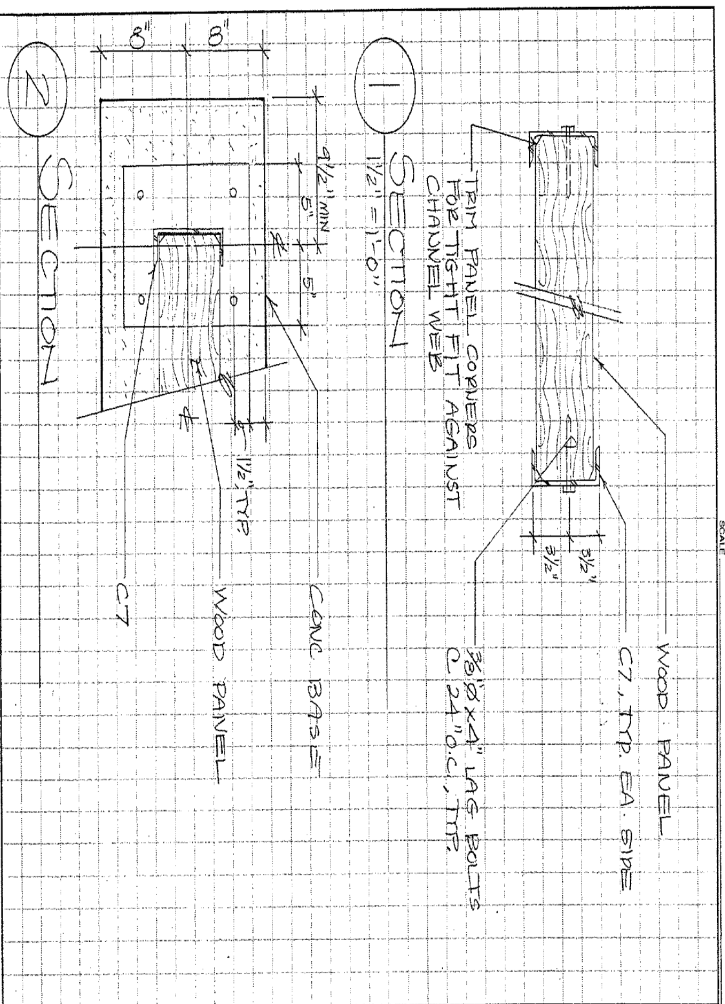


So, every night as you hear the frogs talking it is just grandmother reassuring Dukabal that her and the children and the grand children are doing great and will continue to be resilient and together as a family in a safe home.

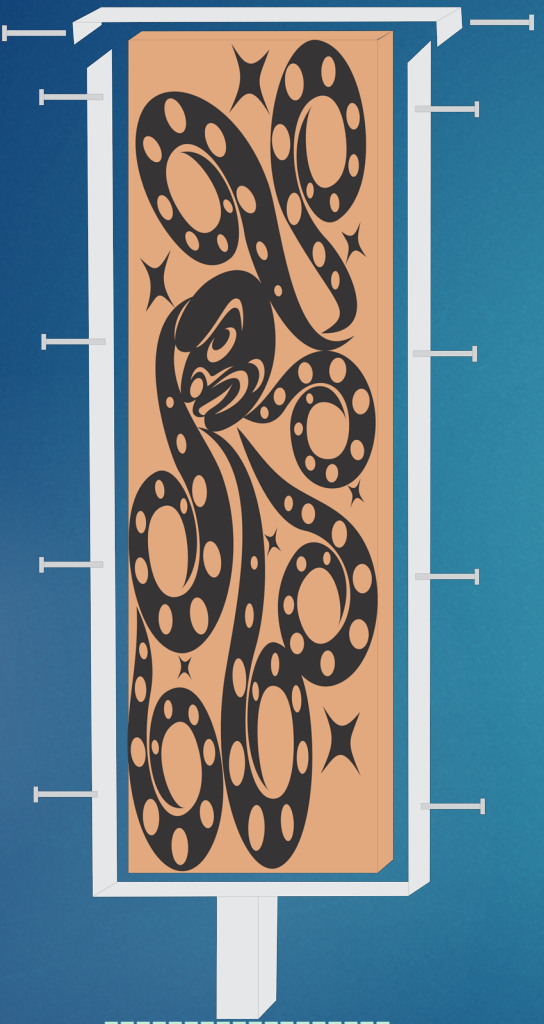
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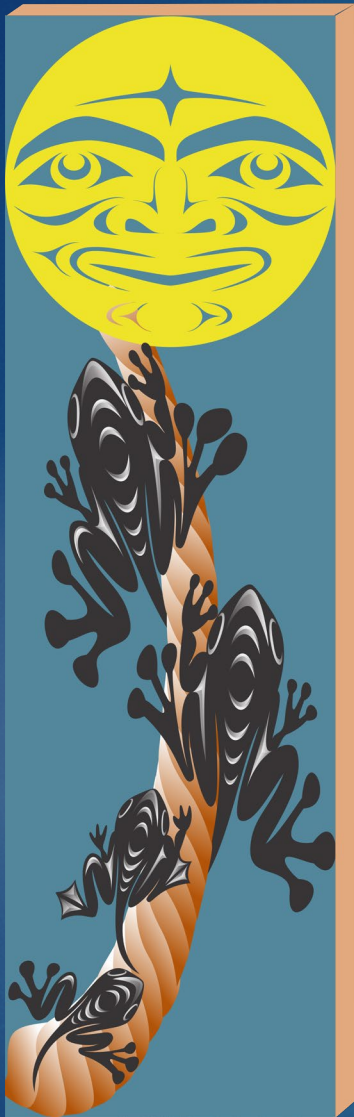
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These panels will all be caved and painted with an exterior paint they will be adzed on back which is accomplished by using a tool that can't be bought in store they are hand made to fit the artist this tool has always been used to naturally seal the fibers in the wood and protect it from the weather on top of the natural protection will seal the piece with x-100 sealant that is used for log cabins and is recommended in the handbook





When creating all these pieces it started with a story, I worked with the youth of my tribe some being my grandchildren and we read and listened to these stories and ultimately choose these because we wanted to bring attention to some of the smallest of our family to some of our largest creatures

From our creation story, to our stories that keep us magical we have the responsibility to teach our children to dream larger than we do and together all dreams and wishes come true if you remember to be kind, respectful hard-working humans

