

and forms, but has always striven to abstract their formal conventions and set them in motion to reinvigorate an Indigenous canon; to adopt the formal aesthetics of her ancestors to new conditions, concerns, and issues relevant to the contemporary world. In her catalogue to the 1986 exhibition, Karen Duffek characterizes the principal elements in Point's work as "crescents, wedges, V-cuts." In her works on paper, Point adapted spindle whorl designs to the medium of print, creating one of her recurring stylistic motifs—the circular foregrounds, which she has identified with the circle of life, the moon, salmon eggs, and the ripples that spread out in pools of water. In more recent work she has embedded the circle in intricate geometrical grids, quadrupling it to represent what the Musqueam and other First Nations Peoples believe to be an essential quality of worldly existence: the four peoples; the four elements; the four winds; the four moons; the four directions; the four seasons; the four cycles of salmon. In works like *Salish Footprint*, animals have become more abstract. A growing number of her most stunning works, many made of wood or polymer, are carved in low relief, recalling the abstract fish design on the mortuary box surmounting a human figure displayed at the Museum of Anthropology. Her concern with the interconnectedness of life and respect for the environment, waterways, and the creatures around us are recurring themes.

It is not only her style, but her use and mastery of different mediums that distinguish her work. Printmaker, drawer, painter, mosaic maker, carver,

mason, smith, and glassmaker, she seemingly effortlessly makes works in different mediums, depending on the intended theme, aesthetic effect, and purpose. "My art is my voice," she insists, a voice alive with the teachings of her ancestors and the innovations in subject and materials that intone such vigour in her massive carvings and murals.

Susan Point's public works provide an alternative translation and understanding of the urban ecology of British Columbia and Washington. These lands, colonized for little over a century and a half, remain part of a millennia-old Indigenous civilization that has never accepted the unjust disposition and calculated destruction of its lands and culture. Susan Point's public works, each one site-specific and nurtured from the history of a place, reassert an Indigenous voice and significance to the land that surrounds us. They re-inscribe a different history and significance and, for those with open minds, generously open a portal to alternative views of the world—to the marvellous real of an animate and active nature that cradles Indigenous and settler societies and demands the respect of both. This re-inscription of our ecology—whether it's conducted by Susan Point and other contemporary First Nations artists such as Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, and Edgar Heap of Birds, whose works directly intervene in our everyday life and vision, or by the canvases of Alex Janvier and Norval Morrisseau, protected away in galleries—provides a glimpse into a world that beckons a coming transformation, one that will affect us all.