



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Brandon Gabriel's 'Where the Golden Eagles Are' Back Alley Mural Unveiled

Maple Ridge, BC: On Friday, August 24 the Downtown Maple Ridge Business Improvement Association (DMRBIA) hosted the unveiling ceremony for the latest in their 'Back Alley Mural Program' projects. The newest mural titled 'Where the Golden Eagles Are' was painted by renowned Kwantlen First Nation artist Brandon Gabriel. The mural is located on 224 Street on the north wall of the Subway location between McIntosh Avenue and Dewdney Trunk Road.

The unveiling ceremony featured prayers and blessing from the elders of the Kwantlen and Katzie First Nations including a moving speech by Brandon's aunt, Marilyn Gabriel, Chief of the Kwantlen First Nation praising her nephew's talents and how he has given a piece of himself in the creation of the mural.

Brandon, spoke about the process of receiving this commission and thanked the three funding partners, the DMRBIA, the City of Maple Ridge through the Public Art Steering Committee's Community Public Art and the ACT Arts Centre. He also praised the organizations for trusting his vision for the mural and giving him a blank canvas to create this public art.

Brandon also spoke about the acts of kindness and encouragement he received from the community. He thanked the owner and staff at Subway for their offers of food and ensuring that he had 'free refills' for his water bottle as he painted during the hot summer days. He also spoke of how residents of the nearby apartments came to watch him work and pledged to look after his work when it was completed. He expressed his delight at the extent to which people were proud of the community and curious about his work.

Brandon explained that the Halkomelem word for the area between the Fraser River and Golden Ears Mountain was 'q'wa?acstan' which translates to 'the place where the golden eagles are' in English. He noted that in pre-colonial time there were more eagles in this area than we see in modern times in Brackendale, near Squamish. On each side of the mural are details of golden eagles and in the centre the Coast Salish 'Spirit of the Eagle' design is superimposed over the Golden Ears Mountains.

Photos of the unveiling have been posted on the City of Maple Ridge Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/pg/yourmapleridge/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1846773522055557.

For more information about the City of Maple Ridge Public Arts Program please contact Yvonne Chui, Recreation Manager Arts & Community Connections, by phone at 604-467-7415 or by email at ychui@mapleridge.ca. Applications for community public art projects are being accepted for 2019. See details at <http://mapleridge.ca/1518>.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Brandon Gabriel is a contemporary mixed media artist who specializes in painting, drawing, illustration, graphic design, architectural design concepts, public art installations and photography. His work has been exhibited across Canada, in the United Kingdom, United States and Hong Kong and is a cherished part of many private collections.

Brandon was born and raised on the Kwantlen First Nation near Fort Langley. His academic studies include cultural anthropology, visual art and marketing at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. He is continuing his education in Indigenous Governance at the Justice Institute of BC. Brandon has a Bachelor's Degree in Visual Art from Emily Carr University of Art & Design.

Brandon lives among his family and neighbours in the Kwantlen First Nation with his wife Melinda and their two year old daughter and continues a busy career in art, education and social justice.