



Under The Double Eagle and Elder Moon

Leslie Wells and Leonard Wells

July 2009

**Traffic roundabout South Surrey Recreation Centre
20 Avenue & 144 Street**

Under the Double Eagle and Elder Moon link Semiahmoo Coast Salish culture with other First Nations and Surrey communities. The sculptures, which are two large, upright cedar disks mounted back to back, were carved by Semiahmoo artists and brothers Leslie Wells and Leonard Wells. Their overall circular designs allude to traditional Coast Salish spindle whorls and speak to a history of art-making distinctive to the region. Rich with symbolic meaning, the disks are installed on the traffic roundabout at the South Surrey Recreation Centre, near the Semiahmoo First Nation community.

Under the Double Eagle represents two eagles with wings touching and symbolizes the friendship between the Semiahmoo First Nation and the City of Surrey. It also evokes the Surrey Eagles Hockey Club, which plays in the nearby arena. Elder Moon alludes to the Coast Salish "13 Moons" yearly cycle, which provides guiding principles for social and ceremonial life. Each of the moons symbolically represented in the outer rings is associated with a story and a time of year. Together, the stories teach respect for the natural cycles, dictating when and how resources should be harvested, rituals performed and social activities undertaken. Through the references and symbols depicted on both disks, the work honours longstanding Coast Salish traditions and values, and forges strong connections with the South Surrey community.





The structure framing these artworks was inspired by the traditional long house design of Coast Salish People. You will notice that one end of the structure is higher than the other. The higher end traditionally faces the ocean (Semiahmoo Bay) and welcomes visitors.

Under the Double Eagle and Elder Moon combine to form one of six site-specific public art projects produced under Surrey's 2008 Cultural Capital of Canada initiative and supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage and the City of Surrey. The works explore Surrey's natural and built heritage, First Nations history, cultural diversity and community activity. They provide a lasting legacy for each of Surrey's six town centres.

About the Artists

Leslie and Leonard Wells are artists, brothers and collaborators in creating the monumental carved cedar disks, Under the Double Eagle and Elder Moon. Both are members of the Semiahmoo First Nation, a Coast Salish community located along Semiahmoo Bay and bordering the City of Surrey and the City of White Rock. In their art, both reflect the traditional lands, culture and spiritual life of their people.

Leslie Wells has mastered a range of media, including silkscreen printing, wood carving and, more recently, jewellery making. He apprenticed with acclaimed Haida artist Robert Davidson and has also worked with Musqueam artist Susan Point in the production of a Coast Salish house post of her design. In February 2008, Leslie Wells graduated from the Northwest Coast Jewellery Arts Program at the Native Education College in Vancouver.

Leonard Wells works primarily in wood, from masks, rattles and bowls to monumental carvings. He has also apprenticed with Robert Davidson and was part of a team of artists, including Susan Point, who created The Gift to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. This project entailed the carving of a Haida pole and a Salish pole, which were then raised on the White Rock waterfront.

While Leslie's art is characterized as having a "quiet spirituality", Leonard is interested in adding an "element of fun". Both are dedicated to creating an outstanding work of public art that is easily identifiable as Coast Salish.

