



NEWS RELEASE
September 23rd, 2020
www.yukonmint.com

Yukon Mint Announces 2020 Coin Design; Celebrating the Legacy of the 2020 Arctic Winter Games

Whitehorse, Yukon September 23rd, 2020: the Yukon Mint Corporation (Yukon Mint™) is very pleased to announce the 2020 gold and silver coin designs, unveiled today, incorporating the art of Yukon artist Brian Walker, with his original art work proudly serving as the cauldron for the 2020 Arctic Winter Games which were to be held in Whitehorse, Yukon in March 2020 and cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The coins also celebrate the Arctic Winter Games through the release of the first silver coin produced by the Yukon Mint, which will also proudly bear the logo of the Arctic Winter Games.

A photo of the original artwork can be seen at: <http://www.yukonmint.com/resources/cauldron-medium.jpg> (photo credit: Archbould Photography)

“It was with great sadness that we all learned the 2020 Arctic Winter Games was cancelled due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. While we all came to terms with the gravity of managing the pandemic, it was still heart breaking to the participants, volunteers and communities across the North,” said Yukon Mint President Janet Lee-Sheriff. “It is important to honour the legacy of the Arctic Winter Games and the 2020 gold and silver coins are our way of keeping the spirit of the Games alive in our hearts and memories forever. We have greatly enjoyed working with Brian Walker and the Arctic Winter Games International Committee to collectively honour the 2020 Games with the release of the silver and gold coins which leave a positive legacy of both the importance of sports and art to the youth across the North.”

“I submitted my cauldron concept, to host the flame of the Arctic Winter Games, and it was a blessing to have my artwork selected. While the Games had to be cancelled, the Yukon Mint coin will allow people to keep the flame and the legacy alive,” added artist Brian Walker. “I was very fortunate to have my son, Justin, help me complete the piece after I took a bad fall last year again highlighting the meaning of the cauldron, to celebrate that our children are our wealth.”

‘The Wealth That is Our Children’ is an original metalwork art piece commissioned by the 2020 Arctic Winter Games Host Society to serve as the flame and the centerpiece of the opening ceremony and Arctic Winter Games. The design features four tináa, the Tlingit word for copper shield, and a representation of wealth, to protect the flame. The inspiration for the tináa came from children, the wealth is not about money or power, it is the wealth of our children and their development. The cauldron is multi-dimension allowing you to see the inside and is a whole representation of the human child because it has an outer

and an inner light. The four directions of the shield represent all the directions of the territories represented at the Arctic Winter Games.

The **Arctic Winter Games** is an international biennial celebration of sports and culture for the circumpolar north. Founded in 1969 under the leadership of Governor Walter J. Hickel of Alaska, Stuart M. Hodgson, Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, and Yukon Commissioner James Smith the Games provide a forum where athletes from the *circumpolar North* meet and compete and where cultural delegations share their talent in the North. Participants come together from Alaska, Greenland, Yukon Nunavut, Nunavik, Northern Alberta, Northwest Territories, Sami people (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia) and Yamal, Russia. The Arctic Winter Games promote an atmosphere of social interaction that strengthens cultural awareness and understanding, increases community pride, enhances self-esteem and promotes volunteerism.

The 2020 limited edition gold and silver coins will be available in one ounce coins and a 1/10 ounce gold coin. The Yukon Mint™ is now accepting pre-orders which can be placed at www.yukonmint.com. Images of the coin design will be available on the Yukon Mint website. A portion of the coin sales will be paid to the Arctic Winter Games International Committee for use in continuing their work with the Arctic Winter Games and their efforts to support the youth of the circumpolar north in their endeavors, both sport and cultural. For information on the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, please go to www.arcticwintergames.org.

The Yukon Mint also wishes to thank Moira Lassen, General Manager of the Whitehorse Host Society. Her assistance and guidance made the 2020 Yukon Mint coin project a reality and we greatly appreciate and admire her commitment to sports and cultural development in the Yukon.

About the Yukon Mint™ - The story of Yukon gold coins starts with the Yukon Mint™.

The Yukon Mint™ is focused on creating coins that represent the Yukon in almost every aspect, from raw material to design works to ensure local communities benefit from Northern mining and exploration projects.

For additional information:

Janet Lee- Sheriff

President

(778)847-3351

info@yukonmint.com

www.yukonmint.com

Brian Walker – Artist Biography

Brian's artistic interest sparked in 1958 when he visited Bill Reid, the acclaimed Haida artist, when he began his first large commission for the University of British Columbia, Over the course of two years and one full summer he was given basic instruction in carving and learning the traditions and meaning behind historic and contemporary work. Since that time, but more so beginning in 1989 he continued taking instruction from well known artists including Dempsey Bob, Keith Wolfe Smarch and Philip Janze.

In 1992 he participated in the opening exhibit at the Yukon Arts Centre with "Copper Stories" which was a bronze and cedar piece. The piece is now in the front lobby of the YAC. He also created a large carved canoe bowl, now on display in Bella Bella, British Columbia. At that time, he became interested in copper as an artistic material because of its ancient connection with Yukon history.

In 1998 he was commissioned to create "Where Legends meet" which was a large 8'x13' bronze, copper and steel sculpture which is now displayed at the Beringia Centre. This piece was in collaboration with Mark Porter and it brought together two First Nation mythical themes.

Brian continues to create regalia pieces for First Nations ceremonial and performance uses. In 2010 the Yukon Permanent Art Collection acquired my copper bowl, "Directions". In 2013 and 2014 he conducted a series of intensive workshops in copper work for the Northern Cultural Expressions Society's carving students.

In 2014 he participated in the "Journey's" project at the Adaka Cultural Festival and the ongoing exhibitions at Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre.

In May 2016 his work was shown at the Inuit Art Gallery in Vancouver in an exhibition titled "Brian Walker: Copper Stories". From this exhibition, a number of pieces were acquired by collections through Canada and USA. Most noteworthy, was the purchase by the Government of Canada of "Children of the Sun" for the Canadian Embassy in Brussels, Belgium.

Throughout the summer of 2019 Brian and his wife Ann Smith presented a well received exhibition of weavings and copper work entitled "Echo of the Spirit Voice" at the Yukon Arts Centre Gallery. Between July and August 2019 he was invited to participate in "Continuum", a 40-year retrospective and current work of many respected Indigenous artists who have shown work at the Inuit Gallery.

In the fall of 2019 and into 2020 he worked with his son Justin Smith on the cauldron for the Arctic Winter Games. Brian continues to exhibit at the Inuit Gallery and his work can be seen at <http://www.inuit.com>

For more information on Brian Walker please view: <https://journeystoadaka.com/index.php/stories/detail/copper-artist-brian-walker?fbclid=IwAR3w7ADXYT6GCFLH5RbUp-VxtqfHwYmjfs7GNeUFvdYRnZPVQl15LLx2Eg>

Justin Smith – Artist Biography

Justin was inspired by his parents Brian Walker and Ann Smith; both of whom are greatly recognized within the Yukon community. Justin embraced First Nation Art, which eventually led him to study at the Institute of American Indian Art in New Mexico.

In 2004 Justin joined Northern Culture Expressions Society's carving program giving him the opportunity to work in a team based environment where he continued to learn and advance his skills. It allowed him to update his portfolio that consists of staffs, panels, masks, walking staffs, bentwood boxes, original designs, drawing and much more.

Justin's notable accomplishments include: the completion of Healing Totem Pole guided by Carver Wayne Price, Chief Shakes Clan House in Wrangell Alaska and the Dugout Canoe Project that was gifted to the Kwanlin Dun First Nation. As a citizen of Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Justin Smith is proud to continue his family tradition as an accomplished First Nation artist.

"I want to reconnect with nature and find a way to live in harmony, to help others and myself." - Justin Smith

The Wealth That Is Our Children

Artist Brian Walker



Photo by Archbould Photography