

# *James Madison*

## *Thunderbirds*

### *Artist's Statement*

Thunderbird is the ancestor of many prominent human lineages and a proud, powerful and noble being in myths throughout the Northwest Coast. Thunderbird is a giant, supernatural bird, named for his habit of causing thunder and lightening. Beneath his wings he carries Lightning Snakes, which are his weapons. Thunder rolls from the flap of his wings, and lightening flashes when he blinks his great eyes or throws the Lightning Snakes. He is large and strong enough to hunt Killer Whale, which he strikes dead with the wolf-headed, serpent-tongued Lightning Snakes. Thunderbird carries his prey high into the mountains to feed. From his home in these great heights, Thunderbird rules majestically, keeping a close watch over his domain.

Thunderbird is intelligent and proud, and humans who attempt to outwit him are certain to have their intentions backfire. Thunderbird is very important to the Kwakwaka'wakw, who in legendary times made a deal with the powerful bird: in exchange for Thunderbird's aid during a crisis, the Kwakwaka'wakw agreed to honor him for all time by making his image prominent in their art. Thus, a number of their totem poles feature Thunderbird perched at the top with his great wings outstretched.

### *Certificate of Authenticity*

This print is a limited edition original serigraph. Working from James' drawings and a large aluminum sculpture with a similar design, I cut rubylith stencils for the colors. The colors are then hand-printed onto archival paper. This print is one of an edition of 100 hand printed on Arches Cover White. In addition, 3 printers proofs and 10 artists proofs were printed on Arches Cover White, for a total of 13 proofs. The paper size is 17.5 inches wide and 18 inches tall.

This edition was printed by Paul Nicholson of Bellevue, WA in 2003 with the assistance of the artist, James Madison.

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