

David Robert Boxley

Alaskan Tsimshian Artist

Nuket Shishmaask

Artist's Statement

My father's name in our language is Nuket Shishmaask. It translates to "He who works with the cedar bark." When my father David A. Boxley turned 50 years old, I held a feast in honor of him. A feast is a smaller version of a Potlatch. At his feast we fed over two hundred people and I gave away six thousand dollars worth of blankets, bentwood boxes, and other items to the pay the guests for witnessing this event. I am one of the youngest people to host my own event. I created this print to commemorate this day in my father's life. My father is a Lax Skeek (member of the eagle clan). This eagle design represents my father, his accomplishments, and the people that he holds nearest to his heart.

My Father has held many Potlatches, written over 30 songs in our language, and carved hundreds of masks and other items that are used for ceremonial purposes by traditional dancers in Alaska and Canada. As a result, he has played a huge role in the rebirth of Tsimshian culture. My father is both an accomplished carver and a culture bearer. This is symbolized in this design by showing the eagle holding a woodworking adze in one hand and a dance rattle in the other.

My brother and I are Lax Gibou (members of the wolf clan). We are shown as the head feathers of the eagle. The little human face in the wing of the eagle is my father's mother and the three faces in the tail feathers are my father's uncles.

The people that are the dearest to my father are shown as the human face in the eagle beak representing our Gi-Gi, (my father's grandmother) and on the hand that is holding the adze is our Ya-Ya (my dad's grandfather). These are the two most influential people in my father's life. They raised him and taught him how to be a strong proud Tsimshian and Christian.

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