

Shuswap School of Carving and Arts – September 18-23, 2016

Held at Sorrento Retreat and Conference Centre, 1159 Passchendaele Road, Sorrento, BC V0E 2W0 www.sorrento-centre.bc.ca/
Registration Forms are available at www.bccarvingschool.com or can be obtained by emailing Kathy.Les@telus.net or phone at 250-573-2277

NORTHWEST COAST NATIVE-STYLE WAKES OR DANCING FROG MASK with Rupert Scow

**\$390 for five 7.5-hour
days of instruction**



In this class Rupert will lead you through the carving and painting of a Wakes (wah-kess') or Dancing Frog Mask. Wakes is considered a supernatural being in the Kwakwaka'wakw (kwakwala speaking people) culture; it is as equally at home on land as in the water. It is also the messenger between Komogwe (Chief of the Sea) and Gigame (Chief of the Land). When a Gigame needs a copper (like a shield with the owner's crest etched into it), he must ask Komogwe, also called Tlakwagila (Copper Maker) for one. Since the Gigame cannot go under the ocean to ask Komogwe he must ask Wakes to do this for him. There is much more to the story, said Rupert – he jokingly told me he'd tell it to me if I had a couple of hours. I didn't have the time then, but I did search on YouTube for "Kwakwaka'wakw" and found a wealth of information about Rupert's culture, how cedar trees and its bark are harvested, the importance of carving in their life in general and the significance of masks such as these in their ceremonial dances. This mask, 8" high x 7" wide x 4" deep, will be carved out of red cedar and, when finished, will hang on a wall or stand on its feet on a shelf. The eyes will articulate and the tongue will be able to dart out and in. Rupert will bring the wood blanks partially shaped on a band saw with the holes for the eyes and mouth pre-drilled. You will learn how to make the

rigging for the moving parts, how to tie on the hands and feet, painting techniques to create the precise designs, how to add optional abalone inlay to the eyebrows and bottom eyes, and how to dress the mask with cedar bark tufts. You may wish to bring a notebook and/or camera to record each step of the process. **If you have any questions about the class or tools, Rupert can be contacted at rupertscow@gmail.com or 778-223-4248.** **Skill Level:** This class is not recommended for beginners. The rigging for the eyes and tongue is pretty complicated so students will need some experience, and definitely will need to know how to use the First Nations style of carving knives.

Tools & Materials: For a fee of \$75 paid to the instructor in the classroom, Rupert will supply the cedar blank, pieces for the hands and feet, dowels, cedar bark for the dressing, and wooden orbs for the eyes; if you'd like to add abalone to your carving, it can be purchased at craft stores like Michael's. **Bring whatever tools you have but, at minimum,** you will need a straight knife, a planer knife, a curve knife with a full hook, and at least one small gouge. If you don't have some of the tools, Formline Design class instructor Robert Barratt makes them and, time permitting, he may be willing to make one/some for you – to pre-order a specific tool, he can be contacted at rcbarratt@gmail.com, otherwise he will have a small selection available for sale in his classroom. **Other things to bring are** acrylic paints (black, white, red, orange, light green, and dark green) – Rupert uses Kroma Paints that he mixes with water and adds diatomaceous earth to the paint to get the totally matte finish, an assortment of water colour paint brushes and other painting-related items such as a water dish, paint rag, etcetera, tracing paper, scissors, template cardboard, pencils from 4b to 6b – these are soft lead pencils that are useful for drawing on wet red cedar, C-thru ruler, calipers or dividers as they are sometimes called compass, large and small circle templates, sharpening equipment, notebook, camera (optional). You may be carving over a cement floor – Rupert recommends you bring a 1/4" particle board base to protect your tools from damage if they are dropped. We also recommend you bring a flex arm lamp, extension cord and power bar, and a comfortable height adjustable chair if you have room.

About the Instructor: A Kwakwaka'wakw artist, Rupert is rapidly gaining international recognition for his vibrant renderings of ceremonial and cultural objects of his nation. He was born in 1957 in Alert Bay, BC, a small community near the northern tip of Vancouver Island, an area known for its long-standing tradition of nurturing powerful carvers. His great grandfather was Chief John Scow and, as a result, Rupert grew up with a strong sense of his cultural heritage. His great grandfather on his mother's side was acclaimed artist Mungo Martin. Rupert began his artistic career in 1991, inspired by Kwakwaka'wakw artists Wayne Alfred, Vince Shaughnessy and Shaun Karpes. Rupert's finely-detailed wood carvings include masks, rattles, canoes, feast dishes and totem poles. Recently, Rupert has broadened his repertoire to include prints of his designs and, in 2008, he studied jewellery making with Dan Wallace at the Native Education College in Vancouver, BC. Rupert makes his home in Langley, BC where he continues to dedicate his life to his art. His pieces are sold in art galleries and collected worldwide – google his name and you'll find many examples of his work on the internet.