***Harmonious* Artist Statement:**

The artwork *Harmonious* was inspired by the traditional territories that Sooke School District resides. They are the T'Sou-ke Nation (Sooke), the Scia'new Nation (Beecher Bay), and the Pacheedaht Nation (Port Renfrew). It is meant to celebrate the holistic, respectful, and balanced relationship that the School District strives towards with the Nations.

Harmonious honours the name sake for each Nation both in text and visually: Pacheedaht translates to English as "Children of the Sea Foam"; T'Sou-ke is the name of the Stickleback fish; and Sc'ianew translates into English meaning "big fish". This recognition reflects the thankfulness of the Sooke school district for the advise, guidance, and generosity that each of the Nations bring to the programming in each of the schools.

The Nations' have a deep connection to the land. The Nations territory is diverse with impressive geography. It is a place of giant trees in an oceanfront rainforest, grand mountain peaks, deeply indented with inlets and fairly extensive coastal plains. The art ties this visually to the philosophy of "we are all one" through the movement of the split-u to the spiralling swoops that connect the Thunderbird, Killer whale and the sun.

The copper speaks to the richness of the Nations' culture, knowledge and communities. The accent colours tie this historically abundant ways of knowing to today. The Nations' ingenious ways provide a strong foundation for the Sooke School District.

Connie Watts Biography:

Connie Watts is the Associate Director, Aboriginal Programs at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. She is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, curator, educator and designer of Nuu-chah-nulth, Gitxsan and Kwakwaka'wakw ancestry. Born and raised in Campbell River, Connie has a Bachelor of Interior Design from the University of Manitoba, and a BFA from Emily Carr.

Her award-winning work is often rooted in forms and knowledge drawn from First Nations cultures, while her sculptural objects incorporate modern fabrication and design techniques. She has shown nationally and internationally, and her work is included in numerous corporate and civic collections. Some highlights include her graduation project, Vereinigung, exhibited for two years at the Museum of Anthropology (and now hangs permanently at the Harborview Medical Centre in Seattle, Wash.); her subsequent thunderbird installation, Hetux, was purchased for permanent display at the Vancouver International Airport; and Strength from Within, a more recent installation Connie calls one of her "most meaningful," was created to commemorate the children of the Alberni Indian Residential School for the Tseshaht Nation.

In more recent years, Connie completed the interior design for the Songhees Wellness Centre — a 48,000 square foot contemporary commercial building that fuses art, architecture, and design with the Songhees culture — and was the project manager for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Committee's Aboriginal Art Program. As curator on that project, she was responsible for the procurement, commissioning, execution and installation of over 50 artworks in the 16 official Olympic venues — an accomplishment marked by the publication of "O Siyam," a book celebrating the Aboriginal Olympic artworks.

Connie previously sat on the Emily Carr Board of Governors for six years. She has also been affiliated with the British Columbia Arts Council, the First Peoples Cultural Council, the Vancouver Foundation and the Contemporary Art Gallery, among other institutions.