



Press Release

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UNDER STRICT EMBARGO until 1030 BST Friday 28 February 2020

PHOTO CALL

10.30AM FRIDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2020
TALBOT RICE GALLERY, UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
SOUTH BRIDGE EH8 9YL

Masks, myths and magic cast their spell in gallery show

Astonishing ceremonial masks, echoing the ancient traditions of an irrepressible First Nations people from Canada, will be previewed at a University of Edinburgh exhibition on Friday (28 February).

The 15 masks, created by an artist from the Kwakwaka'wakw community of Canada's Pacific coast, are among the highlights of the *Pine's Eye* exhibition, which will take place at the University's Talbot Rice Gallery. They will be displayed alongside the work of 11 other contemporary artists.

The creations, by Hereditary Chief Alan Hunt, represent characters from a ceremony called the *Atlakim* – or 'Dance of the Forest Spirits' – the tale of a boy who gets lost in the woods and is visited by guiding spirits who teach him virtues.

The current population of the Kwakwaka'wakw is around 3,500. Most live in their traditional territory in northern Vancouver Island, as well as nearby smaller islands and adjacent British Columbia.

Pine's Eye takes its name from the much-loved tale Pinocchio – the Italian for 'pine eye' or 'kernel'. It explores what it means to be human in times of ecological change.

Featuring work inspired by indigenous peoples around the world, *Pine's Eye* offers perspectives on how we understand ourselves in the face of environmental crisis. It also creates a story about the resistance of people to modernisation.

Included in the exhibition is a huge mural by New York artist Johanna Unzueta, inspired by Mayan women weavers in Mexico, and complex pagan-like sculptures by South Korean artist Haegue Yang,

The show also features work by Firelei Báez, Beau Dick, Laurent Grasso, Torsten Lauschmann, Ana Mendieta, Kevin Mooney, Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, Taryn Simon and Lois Weinberger.

Members of the Kwakwaka'wakw took part in a performance of the *Atlakim* ceremony at the University's St Cecilia's Hall on Tuesday (25 February). It was the first performance of its kind to take place outside of Canada. Masks worn in the performance will be on display in *Pine's Eye*.

The exhibition is supported by Creative Scotland, Edinburgh College of Art, Henry Moore Foundation, Canada Council for the Arts and High Commission of Canada to the United Kingdom.

Pine's Eye runs from 29 February – 9 May at Talbot Rice Gallery, Tuesday-Saturday 10am-5pm.

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