

# THE FRONT

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DEREK EDENSHAW (KHILS GUULA GAAYAS)  
AND DEDOS (NELSON GARCIA)

*The Future Has Arrived – Aatl'aan K'atgwaa thuu. k\_ aatlaagang* (2018), digital artwork, which was commissioned by the City of Vancouver's Indigenous Artist mural project, 2018. The mural, based on the digital artwork, is located at Hastings Community Centre and Fitness Centre, 3096 East Hastings Street, Vancouver.

## ARTISTS' STATEMENT

*The Future Has Arrived – Aatl'aan K'atgwaa thuu. k\_ aatlaagang* is a celebration of the very essence of Indigenous identity; the protection of the land, water, and all living things which makes life on Mother Earth possible. With the decolonization of our lives we are returning to traditional ways, re-establishing the matriarchy, strengthening our communities, and participating in the realization of ancient prophecies that unite the north and south. We used the symbology to illustrate these concepts in our design, taking inspiration from late Haida Master Bill Reid's famed *Spirit of Haida Gwaii: The Jade Canoe*. 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of Bill Reid's birth.

Dedos (Nelson Garcia) is a multimedia artist with deep roots in hip-hop culture. During the early '90s, he was a core member of an infamous graffiti muralist crew, the AA Crew as well as a powerful B-boy crew, Contents Under Pressure, and a founding member of the hip-hop group the Rascalz that shook up the Canadian music industry. Dedos is not only recognized as one of the graffiti/B-boy pioneers in Canada but he is also a Juno-award winner for his album artwork for artist and alternative rapper k-os. Early on Dedos came to the realization that his creative energy could not be contained in just one outlet or genre so in addition to showing in galleries, he is a seasoned muralist, graphic artist, illus-

trator, animator, conceptual artist, and more. His clientele include k-os, K'naan, Avril Lavigne, MTV, cartoon network, Nintendo, and others. More recently, his creative projects and artistic collaborations have been nurtured through his company nomadicalalternatives productions that he runs with his wife Xochitl.

Derek Edenshaw (Khils Guula Gaayas) is a multimedia artist of Haida and Cree ancestry. He has been immersed in Haida culture all his life as well as deeply engaged in Indigenous hip-hop culture. He sees these two dimensions of cultural practice as being intimately connected, with Haida art, song, drum, dance, and storytelling resonating in hip-hop forms: graffiti murals, breakdancing, rap, rhythmic beats, and spoken word, all of which he performs. A passionate spokesperson and advocate for Indigenous youth and activism, Edenshaw burst onto the hip-hop scene in the 1990s and organized the first Annual Native Hip-Hop Festival in Vancouver in 2013. As a graffiti writer, he goes by the name MANIK 1DERFUL which captures his playful creativity and desire to intervene and make us reflect on different ways of seeing, knowing, and being. In this vein, he actively embraces muralwork as a powerful medium of expression – his murals can be found in Vancouver and elsewhere in BC – to communicate the strength and resilience of Indigenous culture and its profound connection to place.