

MACAULAY & CO. FINE ART

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CHIEF HENRY SPECK : *U'dzistalis The Greatest*

Opening reception Thursday December 5th, 6-8pm
December 5th 2013– January 16th 2014

Macaulay & Co. Fine Art is honored to present a solo exhibition of watercolour paintings by Chief U'dzistalis (Henry Speck) from the late 1950's and early 1960's. His unconventional use of colour, and naturalistic rendering of texture and volume depict masked dancers, supernatural beings, and traditional Kwakwa ka 'wakw motifs. Speck grew up in a time when many aspects of Kwakwa ka 'wakw traditions were still active, and he acquired a deep knowledge of the culture reflected in the dynamic presence of these works.

Chief U'dzistalis was born at Turnour Island August 12, 1908. He only went to school for 2 years, at the Alert Bay residential school. At the age of 14, he was initiated as a Hamat sa dancer the highest of Kwakwa ka 'wakw secret societies. His initiation took place at a Potlatch given by his mother's uncle, Chief Bob Harris. Since that event, Speck became an acknowledged ceremonial song keeper and composer of Kwakwa ka 'wakw dances. Later in his life he moved to Alert Bay and taught dancing every Monday night to the community in their efforts to revive their previously banned culture **. In 1925, Henry's father gave a Potlatch to assume the position of Chief of the Lawit sis, and Henry performed as a Hamat sa. When his father died, Henry was made Chief and named U'dzistalis (The Greatest) at the Potlatch he gave in memory of his father. He passed away in 1971.

Chief U'dzistalis's work has most recently been exhibited the Morris & Helen Belkin Art Gallery (UBC) WITNESS: ART AND CANADA'S INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS September 6-December 1, 2013; Sattelite Gallery (MOA) Projections: The Paintings of Henry Speck, Udzi'stalis 2012.

**There was a legislated ban on Potlatching in Canada between 1884 -1951.