



Peter Gong Bio

Peter Gong is a member of the Squamish Nation. He was born in Mission, B.C. and raised in the Whonnock Reserve #1 in Maple Ridge, B.C. He was first introduced to west coast native art as a teen in the early 1970's by his maternal uncle, who taught Peter to carve ivory and wood. As an adult Peter did not continue to pursue his interest in art. He married, raised a family and paid off his mortgage and vehicles, working most of his life in the local forest industry.

Peter worked at a mill for 30 years until it closed in 2009, leaving him at age 54 unemployed and looking for something to do. His nephew, a Squamish Nation artist, asked Peter to volunteer on a Coast Salish house pole he was carving with George Pennier, a Coast Salish artist who was the lead on the project.

The project renewed Peter's interest in west coast native art. Pennier became his first mentor, teaching Peter how to draw, paint and carve. He then hooked up with Tom Patterson, a Nuchalnath artist who trained with First Nations artist Tony Hunt, Sr., noted for his KwaGulth style paintings and totem poles carved from single cedar logs.

Peter credits Patterson with pushing him to continue using his carving and designing skills and to keep a sense of quality in all his works. Peter took two years off from an art mentorship for seniors with Mike Dangeli (Nishga). In 2011, Peter opened his own art studio in Mission and has been doing art full time since.

