LEARNING TO CARVE ARGILLITE

SARA FLORENCE DAVIDSON ROBERT DAVIDSON ILLUSTRATED BY JANINE GIBBONS



For Our Teachers - SFD & RD

I dedicate this book to my children, Reid and Lili... always be ancient knowledge seekers for you will always find hidden gems!

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LEARNING TOCARVE ARGILLITE

SARA FLORENCE DAVIDSON | ROBERT DAVIDSON | JANINE GIBBONS



My dad always reminds me to work hard and help our family. Whether it is chopping firewood to sell, hauling water for our home, or fishing for the family, I must always work hard and help our family. But on days like today, when I am not in school and all of the chores are done, I have time to carve argillite, a rock that is used for Haida art, just like my dad does.



I do not have a workbench. Instead, I take the small argillite pole that I have been working on and go outside to sit on the steps at the front of my house. The sun shines down, warming my hair, and I can smell the salt in the wind as it comes up off the water from the inlet. Today, I am working on the eagle at the top of my pole.



All the old argillite poles in the village are gone, so my ideas come from old books filled with photographs of poles made by masters who are no longer with us. I have my favourites to copy, but they are harder to see now that those pages are covered with grey dust from the slate.

HAIDA METHS



I learn from my dad and my tsinii, but sometimes I get to visit other argillite carvers from the village to watch them work.

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After scratching a line down the middle of the piece of argillite, it does not take long to rough out the design, carefully scratching ovals and U-shapes from the pole in the photograph onto the surface of the argillite. I do my best to copy what I see, but sometimes the shapes are difficult to capture in the stone.



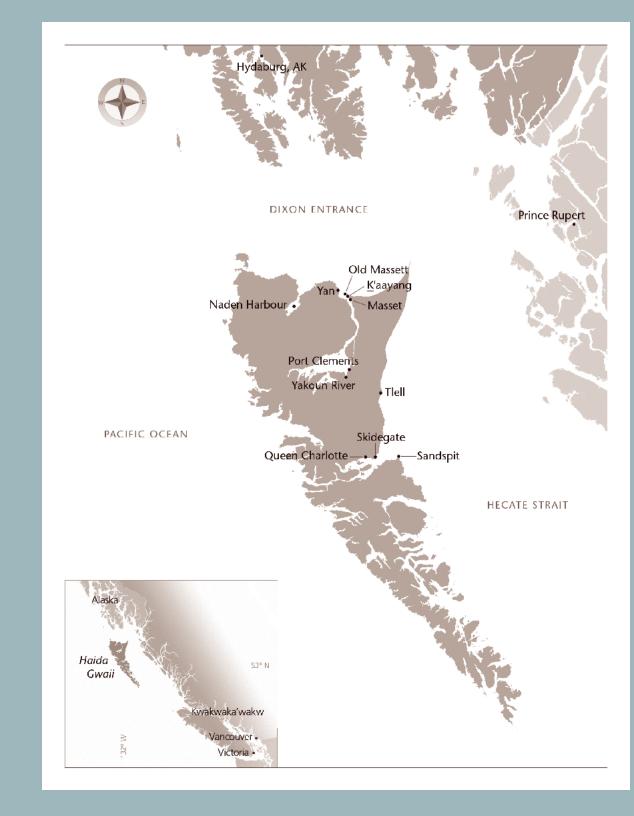
ABOUT THIS STORY

This story is based on real people and events. Sara and Robert talked about Robert's childhood memories of his father. Sara used the information to create an imagined day of her father learning to carve argillite with his father and tsinii.

ROBERT DAVIDSON guud sans glans

guud sans gian 1946-

The boy in this story is Robert Davidson. He is a master artist of the Ts'aahl (Eagle) Clan in Old Massett, who is committed to revitalizing Haida art, songs, and dances. At the age of 13, he began to learn to carve from his father and grandfather. In 1969, he raised the first totem pole in nearly 100 years in Old Massett on Haida Gwaii. In 1980, he co-founded the Rainbow Creek Dancers with his brother, artist Reg Davidson. He has received many awards for his artistic accomplishments, including a National Aboriginal Achievement Award (now The Indspire Award), the Order of Canada, the Order of British Columbia, the Governor General's Award in Visual Arts, and six honorary degrees from universities in Canada and the United States. Between 1978 and 2018, he hosted and co-hosted 16 potlatches and feasts. Robert is married to Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson. He has two children, Sara and Ben, and five grandchildren, Gavin, Dustin, Jayde, Juno, and Jasper.







A quiet, beautiful meditation on how traditions are kept alive by passing them down from one generation to the next, by remembering the ways things were so we can more clearly see the way things can be. Shaped by youth, under the watchful guidance of Elders, like etchings in argillite. —DAVID A. ROBERTSON, Governor General's Award–winning author





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