

Juliet Shen

Artist Bio

Juliet Shen was born in New York where her father was a translator for the United Nations and her mother was an artistic homemaker and expert seamstress. Juliet studied oil painting as a child. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1972 and Cooper Union School of Art in 1973. In 2005, she earned a Masters degree in Typeface Design from the University of Reading, UK.

Juliet has resided in Seattle since 1983. Her husband taught math at Garfield HS and her sons attended Seattle public schools. After working in local design firms for eight years, she opened Shen Design, eventually concentrating on font design. Projects of note included a font for the Lushootseed language based on traditional Salish aesthetic sensibilities; a font for Oxford University Press' early childhood education department; and a collaboration with Mamoun Sakkal, a Syrian typeface designer, to produce multi-lingual typefaces harmonizing the Arabic and Latin alphabets. Juliet taught typography at Cornish College and the School of Visual Concepts.

Joining the Duwamish River Artists Residency in 2012 prompted her return to painting full time. She closed her design firm and retired from teaching typography. Juliet founded CoDraw Seattle, a group of artists experimenting with collective drawing. In 2018, CoDraw Seattle invited youth studying creative writing at Coyote Central to use its show at Columbia City Gallery as inspiration for flash fiction, culminating in a public reading at the gallery. Currently Juliet has paintings on display at Bainbridge Island Museum of Art and SOIL gallery, and will be part of an exhibit of women artists at the Museum of Northwest Art in 2024 titled, "Silva Cascadia: The Forest is Female". Her work has been collected by Seattle Public Utilities, King County, Portland OR, and Tacoma Art Museum among others.

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Juliet Shen Concept Proposal for Chinese Community Pillar

I propose to design a metal tree stump that has living saplings sprouting up from it. This is how forest communities regenerate. It is intended as a metaphor for how human communities survive and grow again after disruption. Continuing the metaphor, I want to show an extensive network of roots around the stump to emphasize their importance in supporting regrowth, as strong cultural roots and supportive networks do in minority communities. The spreading tree roots would be embedded in the ground floor area around the pedestal, similar to how dancing steps are embedded in the sidewalk on Broadway (art by Jack Mackie and Charles Greening). For the stump pedestal I envision concentric layers of cut-out or cast dark metal in a variety of shapes and textures surrounding and hiding the standardized base.

1. Rough concept sketch
2. Example of trees sprouting from a mother stump.
3. Stump with extensive root system (roots would be embedded like the dance steps in the sidewalk).
4. Stumps showing textures and patterns that could be metal cut-outs or cast panels around the hidden base.
5. Finding inspiration from the forest.

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