

2022 Pounamu Taonga Award Recipient



Y AHLN AAW (She/They)

Jah! X̱aaydaga 'las! "Hello! Wonderful People!"

YahlNaaw han.nuu dii kiiḡa ga. Hḻaagilda X̱aayda Gwaii sda.uu hll iigiing. Ḻax Ḵxeen sda.uu hll na.uu dii gan. Lheidli T'enneh sda.uu hll na.uu dii gan. ḺƏ́Ḵ'ƏŃƏN sda.uu hll naa.uu dii gan. Way.yad.uu 'Treaty 1' – Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene, ad Métis guu.uu hll naa.uu dii ga.

My name is YahlNaaw and I am from Skidegate, Haida Gwaii. I was born and raised on Ḻax Ḵxeen, colonially known as Prince Rupert, on Ts'msyen territory. Following that, I spent 8 years on Lheidli T'enneh territory, colonially known as Prince George, attending UNBC. I then spent 1.5 years the territories of the ḺƏ́Ḵ'ƏŃƏN peoples, colonially known as Victoria, and now I am currently situated on Treaty 1 territory – the lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene, and the birthplace of the Métis Nation. I am forever grateful for the knowledges gathered, cherished, and shared in the beautiful places I have the privilege of experiencing.

I am the 2022 Recipient of the Pounamu Taonga Award. I earned three degrees at UNBC – my B.A in Indigenous studies, minor in Psychology in 2018 and my M.A in Indigenous Studies in 2022. The title of my thesis is, *Diigii Hla K'aaygang – "Tell Me a Story": Skidegate Haida Language Revitalization Through Traditional Storytelling*.

I am a Skidegate Haida, queer, transgender person navigating what feels like limbs stretched into many intersecting worlds. I hold my identities and lived experiences closely because I believe we are the work that we do and our work would not exist without us. I uphold my family, communities, lands, and my Nanaay (Grandmother) who passed in 2021 as central in propelling my work forward. I am currently the Co-Founder and Lead Consultant at Taajuu Consulting – an Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, and anti-oppression consulting company alongside holding the position of Indigenous Rights and Anti-Racism officer for the Equity and Human Rights office at the University of Victoria.

Haawa – Thank you.