

A closer look at native artwork

Deana Lancaster

dlancaster@nsnews.com

LITTLE says more about our history than First Nations culture and art.

Which is why the latest collection of eyewear from Claudia Alan Custom Accessories — called AYA — is such a perfect representation of place. And they look great to boot.

“I had the idea seven years ago,” says Carla D’Angelo, founder and president of Claudia Alan. “It wasn’t the right time for me personally, I was starting a family. But the idea sat with me for such a long time I knew it was a good one. It wasn’t just something I got excited about and then later thought was silly.” The idea was to incorporate native art into eyewear: high quality, ready-to-wear reading glasses and sunglasses, with prescription frames to follow.

“I have always loved native art,” says D’Angelo. “It’s so graphically beautiful. And I feel like appreciation and acceptance of native art is really growing. Not just here, but in other countries too.”



NEWS photo Terry Peters

As well as it not being the right time for her personally in 2002, it was also not the right time from a fashion perspective, says D’Angelo. “The fashion styling at the time was more sporty.” These days, there’s a greater emphasis on detail.

When D’Angelo first encountered artist Corrine Hunt, it was when she was designing the logo for the 2006 World Peace Forum in Vancouver. Born in Alert Bay, Hunt has been creating contemporary art that reflects the themes and traditions of her First Nations Kwakiutl and Tlingit heritage for more than 22 years. She works in gold and silver to create elegant jewelry and wood and glass for

eco furniture. This is her first time making eyeglasses.

Among the nature-inspired designs created by Hunt are the eagle with wing, sun, hummingbird and raven; and on the men’s sunglasses, the wolf.

Partial proceeds from the sale of every AYA accessory will be donated to ONEXONE, which supports local charity initiatives including the First Nations Breakfast Program.

D’Angelo has partnered with Panabo Sales, as well as Suntech Optics to produce AYA Accessories. They are available at various gift shops around the Lower Mainland and online at www.claudiaalan.com.