

## Jay's Paddle : the artwork explained from the top of the handle down to the tip of the blade :

The paddle represents planet Earth on its journey of existence. Stained art tells the story of our planet where as unstained areas on the paddle represent time. The stain is water based so it sinks into the wood to colour it but is transparent enough to permit the wood grain to be seen.

The birds eye maple with its numerous knots of attempted budding represents the constant struggle of change and evolution on this fragile planet.



The upper end of the handle is bare of stain representing endless time and Earth's connection to the infinity of the universe.



The base of the handle and beginning of the shaft is ringed in hot colours denoting Earth was born in fiery collisions and the beginning of our geologic age ( the Precambrian era).

As the Earth cooled water vapor and other gases from the molten rocks of the Earth were released to the atmosphere and rain began to fall—and continued to fall for centuries.

Liquid water, which is necessary for life flooded the surface of Earth forming oceans, rivers and lakes. Sections of bare wood here represent the sequence and division of time as measured by geological eras in the history of Earth's formation

Biotic life evolves with organisms adapting, mutating and diversifying to become specialized species. The coiled rings represent the transition from RNA to DNA resulting in genetic replication.



Fire represents the turbulent tectonic geologic history that accompanied continental drift after the break up of Pangaea; and the blue water represents the fracturing of the Panthalassic Ocean into distinct seas and oceans that filled with sediments and trapped plant life creating our fossil fuels.



The vertical black life stripe down the lower part of the paddle shaft represents the evolution of life forms on Earth. The criss-crossing of diamonds represent the Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras. The red blotch of a meteorite impact represents the massive extinction marking the transition of the Triassic into the Jurassic period. This is followed by the green Cenozoic era divided by a black cross.



The black life cross line represents the current rhythms at play on Earth's life stage: the moon's gravity effect on tides, seasonal weather, day and night, continents drift and volcanoes erupt. The five white dots contained within the rhythms represent the five significant ice ages that have occurred throughout Earth's recent history.

The black life line makes a dramatic turn to the right away from the diversity of animal life (orange-brown) on the left to encapsulate the human species *Homo neanderthalensis* (gray) and *Homo sapiens* (pink). The red 'ignition sparks' represent man's unique abilities to create, communicate, co-operate, manipulate and exploit.

A distinct and separate black line of life at the base of the animal kingdom marks the transition into the Anthropocene epoch where significant human impact is affecting Earth's geology, climate and ecosystems. Here economic, and political decisions made by man are determining the state and fate of life support systems on planet Earth. Extinctions are reducing our biodiversity.

**The entire paddle blade represents the Anthropocene epoch.**

The orange transition depicts the period of innovation, new technologies, and enhanced communications built on man's creative ideas (aqua microwaves, yellow bolt for ingenuity )

But the demand for raw materials impacts our forests, lakes and ecosystems (green and blue swaths)



Red swirling warnings of a global warming, climate change, melting glaciers, expanding deserts and the pollution of our air and water is causing eutrophication; signs of an aging dying planet. (green algae lakes) Red also represents the environmental impact of man's wars and power struggles for dominance and greed for finite resources.

The (dark blue mid-left paddle blade) is indicative of oceans rising and increasing in salinity as the polar ice caps and glaciers melt (glaciers represented by a thin band of white).

The bare strip of wood within is allegorical for 'Time is now a finite resource that is running out for man to remedy these problems'.





There are two black intrusions on the lower part of the paddle blade. The interior left dark black crescent represents the role of world debt as poverty enables the degradation of the environment. The mottled black encroachment on the paddle's right edge represents the growing number of refugees (both human and animal) seeking security from the destruction of war, environmental degradation, and poverty/unemployment compounded by the pressures of unchecked human population growth.

Threatening the blue Jay is a toxic mix of swirling colours representing the Earth's state of jeopardy if action is not taken. Life as we know it on Earth will change forever and the planet may become uninhabitable in the very near future. (the toxic coloured patterns represent the ozone hole, nuclear fallout, pollution but most importantly the increase in greenhouse gases in our atmosphere). The more frequent occurrence of extreme weather patterns is depicted by storms (yellow cloud). The red danger on the lower right represents the impending massive human, animal and biological extinction event that will unfold within the next 50 years.

The unstained area at the base of the paddle is the final chance of a time line where mankind has the ability to work co-operatively for the benefit of the Earth. It's also a reminder that it is time mankind takes the Gaia hypothesis seriously and recognizes Earth as a living organism.

The blue jay (a bird noted for its noisy, garrulous nature) is a tribute to those who are activists, risk takers and whistle blowers like Greta Thunberg.

The snow is an allegory for those who try to minimize or obscure the problem our planet is facing with denial, fake news, ignorance and religiosity.

The blue water at the paddle's tip represents the depth of understanding we must reach to guide us on a course for Earth's sustainability as the turbulent currents of the Anthropocene threaten Earth's existence as a living planet.

*by Brian Simpson December 2019*