

The voice of the BC Museums Association

Roundup

Issue 274 // Winter 2019

Reconciliation & Repatriation Current Projects and Future Visions



BC MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

The BC Museums Association (BCMA) provides networking, advocacy, innovation, and education opportunities for British Columbia's museum and gallery sector. Membership is available to museums, galleries, heritage sites, and individuals in the province affiliated with or interested in B.C.'s museums, galleries and heritage sites. For more info visit: museumsassn.bc.ca

Why: We believe in the transformative power of museums.

Vision: The museum community is valued for providing leadership, dialogue, influence and knowledge to British Columbians.

Mission: We lead by supporting, empowering and advocating for the BC museum community.

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Reconciliation and Repatriation

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Cover: Indigenous educator Carleen Thomas teaching students how to show thanks in Skwxwú7mesh sníchim at Burnaby Village Museum.
Photo credit: Leanne Scherp, courtesy of Burnaby Village Museum

The BC Museums Association Secretariat is located on the traditional lands of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations. We are grateful for the opportunity to live and learn here in mutual respect and appreciation.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia and the generous support of the Royal BC Museum in providing a home for the BCMA secretariat.



Notes from the Editor



Dezirae DaCosta

This issue is a call to action for our sector. As highlighted by our contributors, our industry and our institutions are uniquely situated within the context of reconciliation. We have a complex history, from our problematic pasts at times engaging in appropriation and exclusion, to our current positionality central in cultural dialogue, education, and innovation. What we do with that history and that legacy going

forward will not only define us as an industry, but as a nation. Our institutions are keepers of the past, of knowledge, history, and culture, but that does not mean that we should not look to the present and future. Through uplifting marginalized voices, meaningfully including indigenous projects, giving space to indigenous-led initiatives, and rebuilding relationships with indigenous groups, we can seek to heal and create a powerful legacy of justice and inclusion going forward. Highlighted in

this issue are several initiatives which at their heart engage in reconciliation, repatriation, and calls to action. I hope that you approach these projects with an open heart and take inspiration from the work that has been done to motivate the work going forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dezirae DaCosta'.

Dezirae DaCosta,
Managing Editor, Roundup
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We Recommend...

This is a new feature where the Roundup creative team shares content that inspires us.

FROM DEZIRAE

First Voices Indigenous Language Revitalization.

First Voices is a website that supports indigenous language learning, preservation, revitalization, and education through online interactive language learning resources. It also provides access to fonts that accurately represent indigenous languages. In particular, I would like to share the page for the Wet'suwet'en language, the language of the peoples upon whose territory I was raised.

www.firstvoices.com/explore/FV/sections/Data/

FROM ROSEMARIE

Sq'ewlets: A Stó:lo-Coast Salish community in the Fraser River Valley.

Sq'ewlets is a virtual exhibit based on several decades of community-based archaeology, oral history, ethnohistorical work, and the recent production of short video documentaries. The website presents a long-term perspective of what it means to be a Sq'ewlets person and community member today.

www.digitalsqewlets.ca/index-eng.php



President's Report

Tania Muir

In October, 2018 we met on the traditional lands of the Syilx/Okanagan Nation for our 2018 BC Museums Association conference. In addition to a wide range of workshops, learning, and engagement activities, conference this year was augmented by a pre-conference workshop focused on Indigenous Engagement. This event showcased some of BC's most creative and respectful collaborations, including representatives from Reconciliation Canada, the First Peoples Cultural Council, Indigenous Tourism BC, the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, among others. The interest and commitment of cultural sector professionals from across the province was evident both in the attendance at this event, and the deep engagement of participants at these sessions.

Since the release of the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, museums and cultural centres across the country have been grappling with how best to address and respond to calls both towards our sector and more broadly to supporting Indigenous rights in language and culture. Within this issue of Roundup, I invite you to read about the work done by Dr. Andrea Walsh and the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research Collective who have engaged in a transformative act of reconciliation through the repatriation of Indigenous residential school survivors' childhood artworks. The Burnaby Village Museum has also contributed learnings to this issue as they begin the process of Indigenization at their institution. This has included the integration of First Peoples' Principles into their interpretive framework, disrupting colonial narratives, and creating space for Indigenous interpretations and teachings on-site.

UNESCO has named 2019 as the Year of Indigenous Languages to bring awareness of the immense cultural value to Indigenous languages, the alarming rate in which these languages are disappearing, and the tremendous impact of language loss on Indigenous communities. British Columbia is unique within Canada when it comes to Indigenous language diversity. With 7 distinct language families and 34 First National languages, BC's languages make up more than 50% of the Indigenous Languages in this country and are a significant cultural resource in our province. I invite BCMA members in 2019 to identify ways that you can contribute to the revitalization of Indigenous languages in your community. This can include actions such as: partnering with local language champions, opening up your cultural institutions language learning groups, creating signage in the local language, educating oneself and others on the status of Indigenous languages, or advocating for language legislation to ensure we protect this rich cultural resource for decades to come.

I also want to share with you that as esteemed council member Dan Smith has stepped down from the BCMA board due to his responsibilities to the Wuikinuxv Nation, this year we have welcomed Jordan Coble to our BCMA Council. Jordan Coble is a proud Westbank First Nation and Syilx Nation member and serves as the Cultural and Operations Administrator of the Snc wips Heritage Museum. Dan Smith has been a tremendous support to our organization and will continue to serve on the Indigenous Advisory Committee.

Please keep a lookout for the calls for proposals for our 2019 conference in Prince George that will be coming out this month!

*Tania Muir,
President, BCMA*

RECONCILIATION AND OUR INSTITUTIONS

Opportunities for Learning and Justice

**Tracy
Calogheros**

CEO, The
Exploration
Place
Museum +
Science Centre

As I approach twenty-five years with my museum, I have been reflecting upon the work that we do and the privileged role that we hold in our communities. While we are accustomed to sometimes feeling like an “also ran” when it comes to funding and philanthropic support, we have the opportunity every day to craft our communities, inform discussion and to shape our future together; that is a privilege to recognize, to celebrate and to take seriously.

We talk a lot in Canada about reconciliation, truth and trust; in today's world the fact that we are having this national discussion is not something to be taken for granted. So much anger, so little compassion and too much rhetoric is scarring civil society and public discourse, getting in the way of understanding each other and embracing this rapidly changing world we all share. The work is nowhere near done, but we are on a path, one that will get us to where we want to be, out the other side of these uncharted times we find ourselves in today.

Museum professionals occupy a unique vantage in this unsettling time of public discord by enjoying the confidence of our communities, deep intergenerational involvement, partnering in educational

research, and sitting at decision-making tables at all levels. Our expertise has far-reaching and long-lasting impacts through shaping knowledge, preserving history, and creating understanding. We have the rare opportunity to take a leadership role in the social environment, to help shape the discussions which will be judged by future curators as they try to tell the story of our era. Holding the public trust comes with a great responsibility, as our GLAM institutions hold important cultural significance - forums for civil debate, hubs for the exchange of ideas, and centres for the vital development of historical perspective. Our institutions can be a space for people to feel welcome and inspired. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that as we offer up our perspectives that we are entirely aware of our own biases and unintended knowledge gaps, that we make certain there is room for all people within our framework. This is where reconciliation takes on a far more complex and vital role than we generally consider, for it is not simply about acknowledging wrongdoing and developing equality, but also it is about learning from each other and applying that knowledge to these conversations in real time. It is about playing to each other's strengths and compensating for each other's shortcomings.



Through opportunities both planned and by chance, I was afforded the opportunity to learn over two decades from the Elders of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation while simultaneously learning from experienced professionals in the museum and science centre world at a moment when Canadian Society was having an extended epiphany. Neither I, nor my institution came to the table with a preconceived notion of what our "job" was in the community. The Exploration Place had suffered a total loss in a devastating fire some twenty years earlier, and had been struggling to find relevance and trust in the community since. Because of this, the museum was open to unusual approaches, a little risk-taking and broad input. I was a transplant from Ontario, holding a fine art background with no

We have the rare opportunity to take a leadership role in the social environment, to help shape the discussions which will be judged by future curators as they try to tell the story of our era.

formal museum training or personal investment in the accepted history of the area, leaving me receptive to new ways to tell a story, to engage a public and to exploring the truths behind the settlement of our Region and its impacts on the Lheidli T'enneh Nation. It was a perfect opportunity

Opening of the permanent gallery Hodul'eh-a: A Place of Learning on June 21st 2017. From left to right, CEO Tracy Calogheros, Chief Dominic Frederick, and board member David Bird.
Photo credit:
The Exploration Place

Elder Mary Gouchie
of the Lheidli T'enneh
First Nation in
Hodul'eh-a: A
Place of Learning.
*Photo credit:
Rob van Adrichem,
courtesy of The
Exploration Place.*



Reconciliation is not about any single act or acknowledgement, it is not only about engaging with troubling and uncomfortable history in an effort to heal. It is about making our society whole again.

to follow a path that no one was sure of, exploring what could work for everyone involved. There is nothing like a joint adventure with no clear destination to forge deep and lasting relationships.

From the Elders, I have learned that I move too quickly sometimes, that my ideas of science and history are incomplete, that interrupting someone as they search for the right words will limit what I learn, that no matter what I thought of who I was at 24, I am better today for the journey I am on. From all of you I have learned that business principles matter, that bills must be paid in order for the art to continue, that our galleries and collections hold the heart of our communities and that they are constantly evolving, that our museums afford society the chance to pause and consider, to reflect and reassess. I have learned that without this opportunity to learn and reflect, we are all at risk. From my team at The Exploration Place I have learned compassion, to move quickly but to be willing to course correct or shift gears, to ask questions and really listen to the answers, that my decisions have profound effects on peoples' lives and work and that everyone is looking for meaning in their work and ways to contribute to their communities. I am circling back to the idea that the museum's perspective is both privileged and essential to the work that needs to be done in Canadian society.

Reconciliation is not about any single act or acknowledgement, it is not only about engaging with troubling and uncomfortable history in an effort to heal. It is about making our society whole again. It is about creating trust and friendship so as to craft our collective future and to sustain us through the stumbles and gaffes that are yet to come. It is about realizing that we all have important knowledge to contribute, that without our collaborative best efforts we are not going to tackle climate change, stop racism, end poverty, or prevent violence. Reconciliation is what will move us forward

The museum's perspective is both privileged and essential to the work that needs to be done in Canadian society.

as an industry and as a society, and it is not a fast or straightforward process because it has never been done before. There is no better place to work through such a process than in our museums and galleries, home to our collective stories and traditions, troves of material culture, past mistakes, successes, tragedies and triumphs.

In working towards an understanding of the role a museum can and should have in its community I have shaped my career and my institution, celebrating the friendships I have been honoured with along the way and culminating in the signing of the MOU between the Lheidli T'enneh Nation and the Fraser Fort George Museum Society and the opening of Hodul'eh-a : A Place of Learning. In the eighteen months since that signing I have come to realize that rather than crossing a finish line, we have just left the starting gates. Every single thing I learned, studied, saw and heard in the 20 years prior was training. Shaking hands, cutting that ribbon, that right there was the true start of Reconciliation, of building that future together. I am coming to believe that the trick is to not to let go after the hand shake. The truth about reconciliation is that it is more like a marriage than a friendship. Both parties must be willing to be vulnerable, to open themselves up to possible pain, to find compassion when you do not understand each other, to be inspired by each other's strengths and to howl with laughter at our foibles, all while engaging in building a life together, inextricably intertwined, from which comes our legacy for future generations.



I have argued in many venues over the years that our voices are strongest when lifted in concert. Together we can overcome that which we could not tackle alone. Advocacy today, in all places, on all forums, at every table, is so much more important than I can express here. We have a responsibility as keepers of the past, explorers of the present and inventors of the future to step up collectively and bring people together. We are always learning, society is ever evolving and the only consistent thing since time immemorial is human triumph through change and personal growth. We are the story tellers, the knowledge keepers. In the Lheidli T'enneh tradition, you become an Elder in Training at 50, the BCMA turned 50 a decade ago and we have been on a steep learning curve since then. We don't have all the answers either individually or collectively, but we are engaged in the process, committed to the truth, and we have something important to bring to this national discussion on Reconciliation; even if it's only the offer of a hand to hold along the journey.

Two Elders visit the Cultural Expressions of the Lheidli T'enneh exhibit done in partnership with the Lheidli T'enneh for the 2013 Elders Gathering. Photo credit: David Milne, courtesy of The Exploration Place



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FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES

Truth Telling at Living History Sites

Meagan Innes & Sanya Pleshakov

Burnaby is the shared territory of numerous First Nations. However, our colonial past was all too effective in driving out many of the Indigenous people who called these lands home and in maintaining that status quo. Settler narratives have suppressed these historical realities, both in Burnaby schools and the Burnaby Village Museum. Working respectively as a K-12 teacher and as a museum educator, we have spent time considering how children learn about colonialism and Indigenous ways of knowing. When we reflect on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, we believe we are still very much in the early days of truth telling.

Burnaby Village Museum is a living history site in Metro Vancouver that represents a small settler community in the 1920s. Costumed interpreters engage close to 150,000 visitors a year in the homes and shops of a ten-acre historical village. Recognizing that the museum's settler narrative has fundamentally contributed to the erasure of Indigenous history in Burnaby, staff saw educational initiatives as a way to start righting this wrong. In 2017, the museum launched new Indigenous programming for schools based on the First Peoples Principles of Learning. This set of nine pedagogical values

reflect a respectful and holistic approach to teaching and learning. They were developed by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC). Today, these principles are used with all learners in the school system; they are foundational to the revised BC curriculum.

The process of creating new Indigenous programming at Burnaby Village Museum has taken years of consultation and there are many collaborators at the table today. Museum staff have partnered with several local First Nations, including Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Squamish, and Kwantlen, as well as with Burnaby School District's Indigenous education team. These partnerships are not just institutional, but highly personal. They are based on museum staff being vulnerable, honest, and genuinely caring when spending time with First Nations staff, artists, and community members, sharing reflections about history, colonialism, and reconciliation, and slowly building trust. For museum staff, nurturing these relationships in a good way is their single most important goal. It trumps project deadlines, exhibit timelines, and forms the basis of all decisions made around programming.

Indigenous educator Carleen Thomas teaching students a traditional dance.
Photo credit: Leanne Scherp, courtesy of Burnaby Village Museum (BVM)

Reconciliation and Education

“Education has gotten us into this mess, and education will get us out.” Senator Murray Sinclair

Murray Sinclair, as the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, has been vocal that education is the key to walking on this journey of reconciliation. He reminds us that teachers have a sacred responsibility to ensure that all children, regardless of heritage, should explore four key questions throughout their education: Where do I come from? Where here am I going? Why am I here? Who am I? Education systems should be designed to help children answer these very basic, yet profound, questions. Reconciliation is a loaded term that comes with pain, suffering and a deep sorrow that does not ease with time. In reconciling, we learn the multilayered, complexity of trauma and survival. We now understand that residential school survivors have not just survived; they are still surviving. This paradigm shift allows us to reframe the notion of reconciliation with the deep knowledge that each individual surviving carries their own personal experiences that in turn redefine the term for us.

As educators, we can no longer shy away from the truth. Our students need to know about the cultural genocide—the physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuses inflicted on Indigenous peoples in Canada—that continues to affect generations. These truths have been missing from our historical narratives, our textbooks and our education system for too long. We must create age-appropriate resources that are creatively differentiated to address these truths. Canadians need to work together in the process of reconciliation, with the goal of creating a renewed relationship based on mutual understanding and respect.

“Education has gotten us into this mess, and education will get us out.”

— Senator Murray Sinclair





Indigenous educator Meagan Innes teaching students to count in Skwxwú7mesh sníchim.

Photo credit: Leanne Scherp, courtesy of BVM

First Peoples Principles of Learning

Indigenous educator T'uy't'ananat-Cease Wyss.

Photo credit: Leanne Scherp, courtesy of BVM

FNESC is comprised of many Indigenous educators, scholars, knowledge keepers, and strong leaders all dedicated to creating, providing and reviewing appropriate resources, which authentically reflect Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in many areas of education. One of those resources, the First Peoples Principles of Learning, reflect the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the call to “integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms” and “build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.”

Through the guidance of the First Peoples Principles of Learning, students have begun to see parallels between themselves, their families and Indigenous peoples and communities. Learners see how traditional techniques and knowledge are very much alive in society today and that Indigenous peoples continue to build on these traditional teachings. For educators, following the First Peoples Principles of Learning is one place to start integrating Indigenous pedagogies into classroom and museum environments that have traditionally left them out. As educators, we are working together to find ways our learning can fit into Indigenous ways of knowing.

Creating Indigenous Space in the Village

The Indigenous space at Burnaby Village Museum is meant to be a place of welcome. It is contemporary with painted black silhouettes representing animals considered important to local First Nations. Animal names appear on the walls in both hənqəmínəh and Skwxwú7mesh sníchim. An intentional effort was made to keep the look modern instead of trying to recreate an exhibit “authentic” to the era, one which might stereotype Indigenous people as people of the past. There is very little interpretation or explanation in the space—no curatorial voice that might overpower others. Rather, it is a place for Indigenous staff and community members to engage with students on their own terms.

Indigenous programming in a 1920s settler village may seem incongruous. Certainly, doing so without the benefit of purpose-built exhibits comes with its challenges. But it is precisely because the space does not fit perfectly with everyone's idea of a 1920s settler village that it can challenge assumptions about easy settler narratives conveniently absent of Indigenous people. It forces visitors to stop and think about why it might seem awkward to encounter Indigenous space on the main street of the village. Its central location makes the point that despite governments efforts to keep Indigenous and non-Indigenous

There is very little interpretation or explanation in the space—no curatorial voice that might overpower others. Rather, it is a place for Indigenous staff and community members to engage with students on their own terms.

Students explore a map of what the lands now called Burnaby may have looked like in the past.

Photo credit: Leanne Scherp, courtesy of BVM



people separate with the colonial tools of the (not so distant) past—reserves, residential schools, incarceration—Indigenous people never “vanished” from the land we now call Burnaby. Indigenous people found ways to occupy urban space in the past, and they are still deeply connected to these lands today.

Framing Indigenous Learning

In developing new Indigenous programming, museum staff worked closely with a group of Burnaby teachers and members of the district’s Indigenous education team. This process has been one of collaboration, deep inquiry and hard questions to ponder. The museum has implemented all requests made from the Teachers Focus Group in making space for dialogue around our shared history, the hard truths of colonization, and settler roles in colonialization. It was these teachers who introduced museum staff to the First Peoples Principles of Learning, which became a way of framing the new space and program delivery.

“Learning is focused on connectedness and a sense of place.” It is important for the new programming to concentrate on Indigenous history specific to Burnaby. Instead of using the wide lens of Coast Salish peoples, the programming focuses on the history of the *hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm* and *Skwxwú7mesh* people of these lands. The museum’s First Nations partners felt strongly about making this point and helped provide language that was specific, yet inclusive. Now when museum interpreters start every school program by acknowledging the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the *hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm* and *Skwxwú7mesh* people, it firmly roots visitors in a sense of this place.

“Learning recognizes the importance of Indigenous knowledge.” It has been essential to engage local Indigenous people in designing the space, developing programming, and delivering it. With this in mind, Burnaby Village

Museum hired a team of Indigenous cultural workers and knowledge keepers. Museum staff were honoured to have Carleen Thomas, T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss, and Senaqwila Wyss as the museum's first Indigenous educators. They helped define the space and the programming there today. For example, the Indigenous educators taught museum staff that the cedar boughs they wanted to adorn the entrances of the space have important spiritual value. When new cedar was brought in, they took the old cedar to put back into the earth and waters in keeping with traditional protocol. It was also important that the Indigenous educators appear as the contemporary knowledge keepers they are. They dress in comfortable clothes they choose in contrast with the museum's interpreters who wear period costumes. We know how important and sacred regalia is, and that where and when it is worn is deeply personal. In terms of program development, there is neither script nor detailed program guidelines. Each Indigenous educator comes to the space with their own gifts and their own comfort level in sharing different kinds of knowledge.

"Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and is only shared with permission and/or in certain situations." While the museum's Indigenous educators share their own personal knowledge with students, museum interpreters do not yet have permission to discuss in-depth knowledge of Burnaby's Indigenous history with visitors. Including the truth about the land we explore in and around the museum is not easy. Because very little was known about this history at the time, museum staff asked several local First Nations for permission to carry out a research project on the topic. Dr. Sharon Fortney was instrumental in conducting this research on behalf of the museum. Two years later, the research has been reviewed several times by the museum's First Nations partners as well as the district's Indigenous education team, and a resource guide is now close to publication. "Learning involves patience and time."

Who Is Holding You Accountable?

When we started this project, we may have thought of this work as reconciliation, but we now realize we are only in the beginning stages of a nation-wide process that will take generations. Reconciliation means different things to different people, and as we gain new knowledge, our own understanding of the term changes. We see the process beginning with truth telling, and moving to a new space that is inclusive, based on mutual respect, and meaningful relationships.

When we do our work in museums and education, it is important to reflect on who is holding us accountable. The relationships and trust that we have built in our respective worlds is key. We think of those Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, leaders, and community members who expect us to do this work in a good way; we do not want to disappoint them. We recognize that the knowledge they share is a gift, one that we hold as sacred, and that we owe much in return. When you do your work, think about: What is your next step? What is holding you back? Who is holding you accountable?

Indigenous educator Senaqwila Wyss leading a medicine plant walk around the village.
Photo credit: Photo by Jennifer Gauthier, courtesy of BurnabyNow





Canadians need to work together in the process of reconciliation, with the goal of creating a renewed relationship based on mutual understanding and respect.



MEAGAN INNES

Meagan is currently on educational leave from her position as the Indigenous Enhancement Teacher for Burnaby SD41 K-12. This leave is a gift that is providing her time and a space to be a student again so she can learn her traditional language Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim through SFU's First Nations Language Proficiency Certificate. Meagan is also completing her Master's degree in Education, which explores the possibility of reshaping classroom instruction to include a more holistic embodiment of what education can look like in relation to traditional ways of learning, more specifically traditional Squamish Nation ways of learning.

Indigenous educator T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss leading a medicine plant walk around the village.
Photo credit: Leanne Scherp, courtesy of BVM



SANYA PLESHAKOV

Sanya is head of programming and education at Burnaby Village Museum. She has worked with Indigenous communities on museum programs and exhibits in New Zealand, Malawi, Washington State, and British Columbia. As the daughter of newcomers, she is committed to fostering understanding and respect through education about our shared past. For her Master's research, she worked in collaboration with the Musqueam First Nation on the history of settler colonialism and public memory in Vancouver.

SOMETHING FROM MY PAST THAT I SAW AND RECOGNIZED

Renewed Efforts in Repatriating and
Exhibiting Art from Residential and Day Schools





Left: There is Truth Here exhibit at Legacy Art Galleries, 2017. Photo credit: Holly Cecil

Opposite Page: Painting by Charles August

Bradley A. Clements & Andrea N. Walsh

Small moments with small groups in small museums can make big differences.

Viewing the collection of the late artist Robert Aller that had been offered for donation, Caroline Riedel of the University of Victoria Legacy Art Galleries (Legacy) noticed bags full of children's paintings on newsprint paper. The artworks had been created in Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and on reserves where Aller had facilitated non-curricular art-making sessions from the 1950s to the 1970s. When Martin Sager, then the director of the Legacy, recognized the potential significance of the paintings, this became the first of many interventions that led the Legacy, Coast Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth Elders, Survivors, and community members, and University of Victoria (UVic) faculty, staff, and students to collaboratively repatriate them to their creators.

This group, now called the Residential and Indian Day School Art Research Collective (RIDSAR), received a BCMA Award of Merit in 2016 for collaboratively repatriating and exhibiting the Alberni paintings. Our work, however, continues. From close-to-home exhibits (Legacy 2013, 2017; Alberni Valley Museum 2014-2015; Museum of Vancouver 2019) and projects, to contributing to the Canadian History Hall (Canadian Museum of History 2017), to initiating repatriation to Survivors of the MacKay IRS in Manitoba, RIDSAR's story remains one of small groups making big differences in and beyond BC. As RIDSAR expands and renews, we reflect on the group's ongoing work towards repatriation and reconciliation, to date and to come.

Widening a Crack in the Darkness

Those who attended Robert Aller's art-making sessions in the Alberni IRS remember them as moments of expression that was otherwise

stifled by the institution's violent oppression. As a child, Gina Laing (Uchucklesaht) observed several art sessions from a distance before determining that they were safe to attend. Like other Survivors, Laing remembers the sessions that she did attend as rare embers of happiness in her dark years at the school. Aller became outspokenly critical of the system that the children who he volunteered with were forced to live within. He traced "the sadness of the Indian children [...] to the fact that they are away from their homes and parents, boarding in schools 10 months of the year." Aller tried to create a very different environment in his sessions. "All I do is create an atmosphere then go sit in a corner," he explained in one interview, "I never use the words 'do,' 'don't,' 'correct' or 'not-QUITE-right.'"

Children's belongings were confiscated in IRS. By keeping paintings that were made in his sessions, Aller preserved belongings that might otherwise have been destroyed. When his collection was donated to UVic,

the importance of returning the paintings to their creators was recognized. Thankfully, the paintings had the artists' names and ages penciled on them so – with the help of Survivors, Elders, community leaders and members; UVic faculty, staff and students; Aller's documentation, and some serendipity – artists were identified and invited to a Truth and Reconciliation Commission-funded feast in Port Alberni. There, in March 2013, legal ownership of the paintings was returned to Survivors or their families in a public repatriation ceremony. At the opening of *We Are All One* (Alberni Valley Museum 2014-2015), Jeffrey Cook (Huu-ay-aht) expressed the importance of reclaiming his childhood painting: "when we left [IRS], we just left with what we had. We never took any of our personal belongings home because they generally threw them away. [...] That's why I become pretty emotional when I see and talk about it, because that is something from my past that I saw and recognized." Considering the incredible importance of these paintings to those who had made them, Walsh was amazed when many who had reclaimed their paintings requested a partnership

**"I want to tell my story.
I want people to hear
right from the victim and
find out what happened.
To understand what
I went through, and feel
it too."**

— Gina Laing, IRS Survivor

to have them cared for at UVic and exhibited publicly. "I want to tell my story," Laing explained, "I want people to hear right from the victim and find out what happened. To understand what I went through, and feel it too."

With Survivor participation, several exhibits have resulted – *To Reunite, To Honour, To Witness* (Legacy 2013), *We Are All One* (Alberni Valley Museum 2014-2015), and *There Is Truth Here* (Legacy 2017) – along with presentations in classrooms, gatherings, and community venues throughout BC, at national and international conferences, and research projects. The moment of light that Aller and a room of children sparked with paintbrushes and newsprint has been pried wider as those children, now adults and Elders, have re-claimed and re-presented their paintings and stories.

Forward Momentum

Since RIDSAR's research, repatriation, and curatorial work was recognized with a BCMA Award of Merit in 2016, this work has continued and expanded.

Although their work is rooted in local communities and their museums, Alberni Survivors also accepted an opportunity to share their testimony at a national level. When curators at the Canadian Museum of History began to consider how to represent the genocidal history and unfolding aftermath of Canada's IRS system in the Canadian History Hall, the federal museum's largest signature exhibit, they turned



to the paintings and stories of Alberni Survivors. While visiting the national capital for the closing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, eight Survivors and intergenerational Survivors who had reclaimed paintings recorded interviews at the museum. They spoke about their difficult childhood memories of IRS, their struggles since then, their reclamation of their paintings, and the healing that they have begun. Since the Hall opened in 2017, these



interviews have been displayed between one of Christi Belcourt's stained glass windows representing IRS history and the headdress that Phil Fontaine (then-national chief of the Assembly of First Nations) wore during the Prime Minister's 2008 apology for the IRS system. Curators and Survivors are now collaborating to turn their interviews into educational materials that may be used across the country.

Survivors' stories and paintings are also being shared in BC museums. When BCMA delegates gathered in Victoria for their 2017 conference, many visited *There Is Truth Here* at the Legacy, an exhibit of children's artworks from the St. Michael's, Alberni, and MacKay IRS and the Inkameep Day School. Conversations between Walsh, the curator, and museum professionals who had been moved by the exhibit matched with Survivors' interests to continue to create collaborative

Alberni IRS Survivors with their paintings at the repatriation feast.

Photo credit: Andrea Walsh

1. Gina Laing taking her painting from Mary Jo Hughes, director of the Legacy Gallery

Photo credit: Andrea Walsh

2. Sockeye Salmon, Mark Atleo, Ahousaht First Nation, n.d., Tempera on paper, from private collection of Mark Atleo

3. Untitled, Amelia Wavey Saunders, York Factory First Nation, Cree, n.d., Tempera on paper, from the Robert Aller Collection

4. Tommy Cheekie, Sayisi Dene First Nation, Dene, n.d., Tempera on paper, from the Robert Aller Collection

5. Patricia, Age 5, n.d., Tempera on paper, from the Robert Aller Collection

6. James Wastasecoot, Peguis First Nation, Cree, n.d., Tempera on paper, from the Robert Aller Collection

7. Untitled, Phyllis Tate (1944-1975), Ditidaht First Nation, n.d., Tempera on paper, from private collection of Shelley Chester



exhibitions. These conversations culminated in three upcoming RIDSAR-directed exhibitions of residential and day school art: the Museum of Vancouver will host *There is Truth Here*, expanded with objects from their own collections (April-December 2019), and the Okanagan Heritage Museum and the Kelowna Art Gallery will feature a new, joint exhibition of Inkameep Day School artwork titled *Our Lives Through Our Eyes: Nk'Mip Children's Art* (January-April 2019).

In the summer of 2018, Alberni Survivors in partnership with the Alberni Valley Museum were awarded a provincial grant to write and publish a book of their

art and stories. The project aims to make the book available in schools throughout BC, as well as for sale through the Alberni Valley Museum to raise funds for future Survivor-led initiatives.

As Alberni Survivors continue to engage the public, another repatriation is just beginning. Aller also facilitated art-making sessions and kept paintings from the MacKay Indian Residential School, near his hometown of Dauphin, Manitoba. In an interview given to the *Ha-shilth-sa* newspaper, Walsh mentioned this other collection that needed to be repatriated.

Walter Wastesicoot (York Landing Cree), a MacKay Survivor,

discovered the interview online and phoned UVic. His subsequent conversations with Walsh sparked an initiative that now involves Survivors from the MacKay IRS and their family members. Lorilee Westasecoot (Peguis), who was then studying at UVic, and her aunt, Dr. Jennie Wastesicoot (Chemawawin/York Landing Cree) of the University College of the North in Thompson, Manitoba, are now collaborating with Cree and Dene Survivors in northern Manitoba to repatriate their fifty-nine paintings to them.

The link between the repatriation of the Alberni and the MacKay IRS paintings is a strong one. Mark Atleo, who reclaimed his childhood



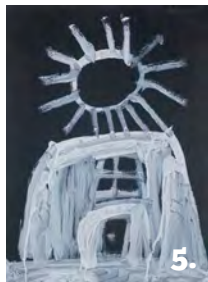
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The moment of light that Aller and a room of children sparked with paintbrushes and newsprint has been pried wider as those children, now adults and Elders, have re-claimed and re-presented their paintings and stories.

ANDREA N. WALSH, PHD

Andrea Walsh is a visual anthropologist at the University of Victoria. She has led Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded research and exhibition projects focused on Indian Residential and Day School art collections across Canada since 2000. Walsh was inducted as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission Honorary Witness in 2012.

BRADLEY A. CLEMENTS, MA

Bradley Clements is a Canadian of English and Scottish decent, and a Curatorial Intern at the Legacy Art Galleries on Lekwungen territory. As a RIDSAR research affiliate, Clements has studied curations of residential school history in partnership with Survivors at the Alberni Valley Museum and the Canadian Museum of History.

painting, and Wally Samuel Sr., who advised in the Alberni repatriation – both Ahousaht Survivors of the Alberni IRS – travelled to Thompson with Walsh and Wastasecoot in August of 2018 to share their experiences with MacKay Survivors considering how to re-claim and re-form relationships with their paintings. The Alberni Survivors are also collaborating through RIDSAR with Laurentian University to repatriate paintings – created by Ojibway and Algonquin children who worked with Aller in the late 1960s and early 1970s – to communities around Manitoulin Island and Golden Lake, Ontario.

In 2017 the Legacy closed for a day to host almost forty Survivors of multiple residential and day schools and their families for a gathering in the exhibit space of There Is Truth Here. Those gathered shared experiences with each other: of making, reclaiming, and exhibiting their art. Seventeen years of work through small museums and with Indigenous communities was sutured to personal stories of healing and resilience. At the end of the day it was clear that the success of RIDSAR's work with collections and small museums lay in the ways that we have worked to strengthen our relationships based on respectful care for each other.

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMPETENCIES

2018 Pre-Conference Workshop Summary

Carolyn Fung

As the BCMA Roundup Editorial Committee representative, I had the unique opportunity of attending the 2018 BCMA Conference pre-conference session on Indigenous Cultural Competency. Located in Kelowna, BC on the traditional territory of the Sylix/Okanagan territory, museum professionals, collaborators, and influencers came together to learn best practices from leading industry professionals on how to practice reconciliation and de-colonization within our communities.

The day opened with a powerful message from Chief Robert Joseph, Ambassador of Reconciliation Canada: “May the waters stay clear, and the trees stay here for generations to come.” His message anchored the session’s theme: our industry’s role in reconciliation through providing living, safe spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation. Angela Marstin from the First Peoples’ Cultural Council continued this

message through highlighting the importance of innovative, collaborative, and inclusive institutional practices developed with indigenous communities. She emphasized the importance of indigenous stakeholders’ involvement and direction when it comes to creating interpretive educational material about their own cultures. Our institutions can facilitate conversations about a difficult past while developing hope for the future through establishing trust, understanding, and open communication. To see this work in practice, look to the Exhibit Spotlight on the Body Languages exhibit at the Bill Reid Gallery featured later in this issue.

The day took form with sessions lead by representatives from multiple stakeholder groups. In direct response to a request from the community, Dr. Rob Hancock from the Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement from the University of Victoria lead a training session on Indigenous Cultural Competency. For the Cultural Acumen Training portion of

the day, Dr. Rob Hancock provided an abridged version of the Indigenous Cultural Acumen Training (ICAT) program at the University of Victoria. He spoke poignantly about relationships being at the heart of reconciliation, humanizing the work ahead through the development of skills and knowledge shared around Indigenous culture by deepening relationships based on common threads of family, trust, love and hope. His 90-minute session focused on delivering a foundational primer on the colonial context of Indigenous people in Canada, providing insights on how to engage with Indigenous topics by looking to the past, present, and future. For the past, he challenged us to consider the living communities tied to the land through stories, histories and traditions. For the present, to consider our responsibility to strive to learn more about being in the land of other people by thinking of our own histories. For the future, he urged us to consider the implications of the legacy will leave behind by engaging in reconciliation and truth-telling.

“If we are moving from what we’ve always done in the past, then we should move in a direction where we find that museums are the conduits of the message of reconciliation and change. That everything is living, culture, language, ideas. And the future is ours to hold.”

— Chief Robert Joseph

The afternoon sessions continued to address questions on how to speak the truth, repair broken trusts, and address decolonization efforts through innovative, collaborative cultural practices. Paula Amos from Indigenous Tourism BC spoke on authentic indigenous tourism, Ursula Pfahler, Senior Heritage Planner debriefed current Heritage Branch initiatives as a senior planner with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. A panel of industry leaders including Jordon Coble from the Sncewips Heritage Museum, Wendy Write from Smithers Public Library, Elizabeth Shaffer from the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre, Genevieve Weber from the Royal BC Museums Archives, and Raymond Frogner from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation presented on current work being done within their institutions. As a group of archivists, heritage planners and cultural leaders, the panel shared on the resounding theme of collaboration to share important messages on the histories, language, traditions, and governance of First Nation communities.

A clear takeaway from the day was that museums have a transformational opportunity to live the values of reconciliation by weaving them through the programs and initiatives created within their communities. The resounding themes of the session echoed throughout the next three days and continued to provide foundations for dialogue about innovation and technology's uses in addressing reconciliation as a value within institutional walls. As reconciliation continues to be a topic at the forefront of current political, cultural, and social platforms in Canada, museums are well-positioned to educate on shared histories through the interpretation of stories that will continue to form our understanding of people and place. To quote Chief Robert Joseph, who eloquently provided the words to carry our head and hearts forward: “If we are moving from what we’ve always done in the past, then we should move in a direction where we find that museums are the conduits of the message of reconciliation and change. That everything is living, culture, language, ideas. And the future is ours to hold.”

Additional Resources

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

Find the commission's calls to action and other resources at nctr.ca

THINK BEFORE YOU APPROPRIATE

This booklet from IPinCH provides advice to designers and marketers on why and how to avoid misappropriation. www.sfu.ca/ipinch/resources/teaching-resources/think-before-you-appropriate/

LOCAL CONTEXTS

Local Contexts is an initiative to support Native, First Nations, Aboriginal, and Indigenous communities in the management of their intellectual property and cultural heritage specifically within the digital environment localcontexts.org/

CONTINUED READING

Paulette Regan's *Unsettling the Settler Within*

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Janice Williamson's *Sounding Differences: Conversations With Seventeen Canadian Women Writers*



This column explores innovative informal education projects being undertaken within our local museum community. As active spaces for dialogue, connection and critical thinking, it seeks to highlight programming that makes our institutions more inclusive and that encourage more meaningful engagement with our visitors.

SPOTLIGHT ON MUSEUM ED

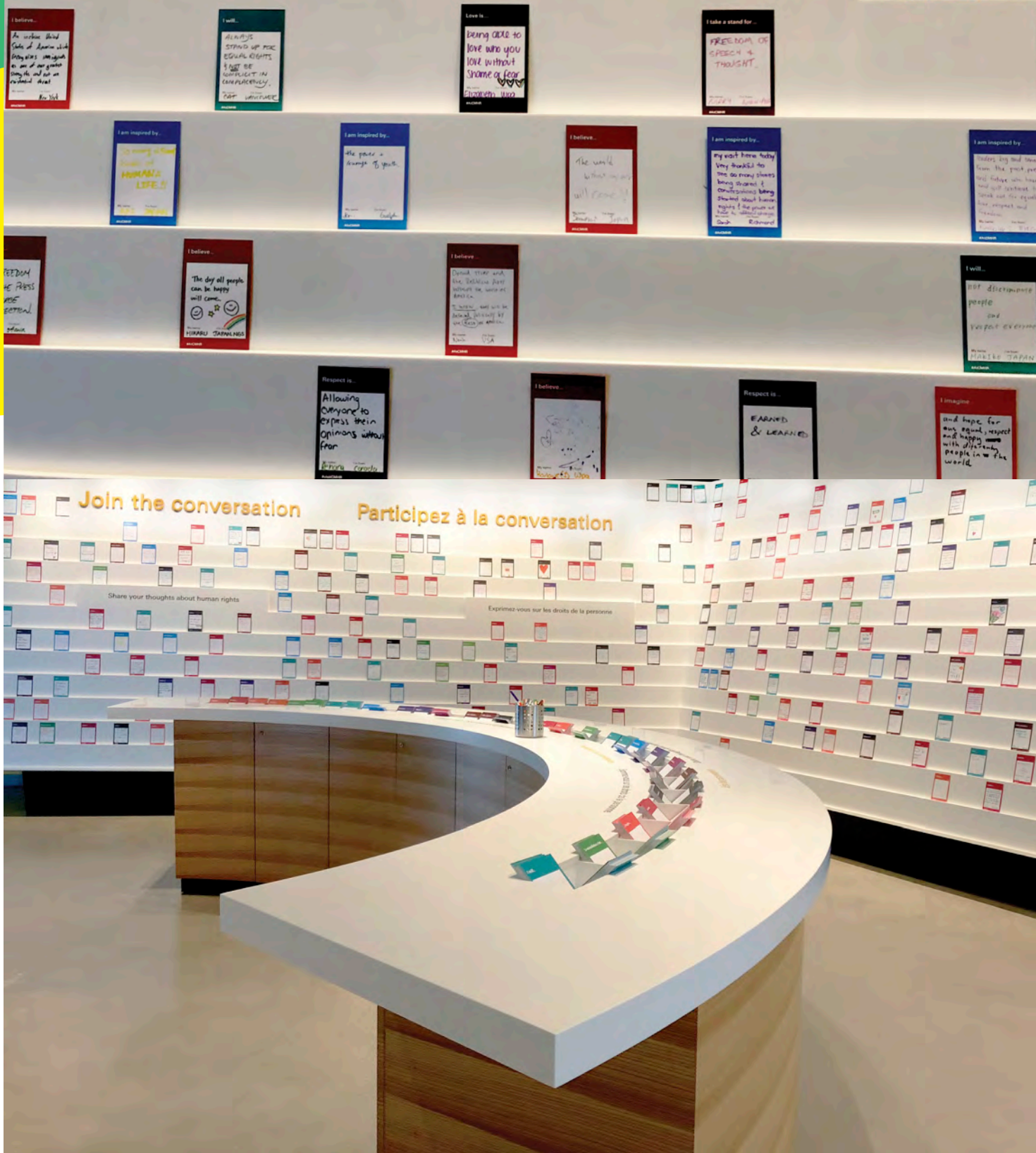
ENGAGING WITH COMPLEXITY Creating Space for Dialogue at the CMHR

**Sarah
Carlson**

Located on the crossroads of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers that has long served as a meeting place, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) seeks to uphold that ancestral role by fostering an appreciation for the importance of human rights and encouraging reflection and dialogue. While the creation of Canada's newest national museum was not without **controversy**, it is the approach the museum takes towards human rights education and advocacy that initially sparked my interest during grad school and became the subject of my masters thesis. Like most museums, the CMHR has developed a range of programs that cater to the interests and needs of its visitors, including tours, lectures, film screenings, drop-in family activities, and school programs (supported by fantastic online resources, such as the **Canadian Human Rights Toolkit**). As a museum educator, what I was most curious about was to see first-hand how their programming would engage with the complexity of the subject

matter, acknowledging the gravity and significance of human rights issues without overwhelming or intimidating visitors. When I visited Winnipeg in September, I took part in a 90 minute guided Explore the Galleries tour. The galleries are designed thematically so that various topics or 'threads' run throughout the museum, an approach that is well-suited to guided tours as it enables visitors to explore interconnections throughout their visit. While the tour was structured similarly to other tours with curators and artists I'd participated in before, one highlight for me was the space that our guide created to ask questions and begin conversations about the human rights issues raised in the exhibits. The use of multiple perspectives and contrasting opinions within the exhibits encouraged us to think critically about our own views and make personal connections, whether we chose to share them with the group or not.

Share your thoughts about human rights



Top: Example of cards shared by visitors in the Inspiring Change Gallery. Photo credit: Sarah Carlson.

Bottom: Inspiring Change Gallery. Credit: Photo credit: Sarah Carlson.

Museums can be powerful, active spaces that “bring people together, facilitate open dialogue, and elevate the voices and stories of marginalized groups to promote greater understanding.”

The museum also uses participatory digital tools to offer opportunities for personalized, hands-on learning. Within the museum space, interactives, such as the Debate Circle and Imagine Wall, encourage visitors to contribute and voice their opinion is through digital media. In addition to being a tool for wayfinding and platform for hosting the audio component of the self-guided tour, the CMHR app has a unique feature called the Mood Meter, which allows visitors to not only track their moods throughout their journey in the museum but also to plot their feelings alongside those of other visitors. Digital delivery allows for the CMHR to keep content relevant to current issues surrounding human rights beyond what can be addressed within temporary exhibits. This ongoing, evolving discussion is key to supporting the museum’s mandate as it provides opportunities for conversations surrounding human rights issues to take place and empowers visitors to take action.

In his article, *The Urgency of Empathy and Social Impact in Museums*, Mike Murawski from the Portland Art Museum urges us to remember that museums are made of people and to use that perspective to shift how we think about serving our communities. Museums can be powerful, active spaces that “bring people together, facilitate open dialogue, and elevate the voices and stories of marginalized groups to promote greater understanding.” My visit to the CMHR has inspired to think more deeply about how our local museum community can create space for dialogue around challenging, relevant

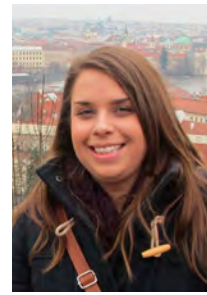


issues, or support organizations already having these conversations. If you are curious about the social impact of museums, I would encourage you to start with the Museums Association of the UK visioning document [Museums Change Lives](#). Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Reflect on your current impacts. Listen to users and non-users and research local needs, as well as what other museums are doing, to determine where your museum is likely to have the most useful impact.
- Encourage wider participation in all aspects of your work: bring more voices into interpretation and devolve power.
- Innovate and be willing to take risks.
- Reflect and celebrate your work. Learn from and with partners and participants.
- Strive for long-term sustained change based on building lasting relationships.

Canadian Journeys
Gallery.

Photo credit:
Sarah Carlson



SARAH CARLSON

Sarah Carlson is the acting Educational Program Coordinator for the Richmond Museum and has been a member of the LMME Conference Committee since its inception in 2016. She has a Masters of Museum Studies from the University College of London and has previously worked at the Museum of Anthropology and the Delta Museum and Archives.

Guide introducing different perspectives of human rights.

Photo credit:
Sarah Carlson

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of Victoria



The Body Language artists displaying the tattoos on their arms.

Photo credit: courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Art

BODY LANGUAGE:

REAWAKENING CULTURAL TATTOOING OF THE NORTHWEST

Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Art

Rosemarie Gresham

The ground-breaking *Body Language* exhibit marks the Bill Reid Gallery's tenth anniversary and its reopening after a 6-month long renovation. The exhibit explores the rich heritage of indigenous tattoo practices and how their revival is an act of healing, empowerment, and resistance for indigenous peoples.

The exhibit features 5 contemporary indigenous artists and cultural tattoo practitioners: Corey Bulpitt (Haida), Dean Hunt (Heiltsuk), Dion Kaszas (Nlaka'pamux), Nahaan (Tlingit), and Nakkita Trimble (Nisga'a). Each shares their journey to bring their cultural practices back to life, including their extensive research into the traditional designs and practices from their region. They have visited museums and archives, hiked territories in search of traditional pictographs, connected with other indigenous tattoo artists around the world, consulted with elders, and collaborated with their communities.

Each artists' voice is a distinct thread running through the exhibit. Kaszas, who is also the lead curator, emphasized the deliberate lack of hierarchy, saying that each artist brought their own unique knowledge of their individual culture and traditions. Kaszas insisted on a diverse Indigenous curatorial and steering committee who had the final say over exhibition content. "The exhibit is less my own vision than the vision of the community," he told the Georgia Straight. "There's a history of appropriation of Indigenous voice in terms of experts and I didn't want to continue that—even though I'm an Indigenous person."¹

At the Stitching Ourselves Back Together symposium held at the gallery in June, Kaszas said that while each artist is honoured and excited to revitalize traditions, it's important to recognize why Indigenous people are in the position to be reviving rather than just living their cultural practices. Traditional tattooing was outlawed by

Chilkat Allover, Burke Museum, Seattle, Washington, 2017. This picture depicts Nahaan's hand tattoo done by Corey Bulpitt in the likeness of a naaxein k'udas'l (Chilkat shirt).

Photo credit: Dion Kaszas

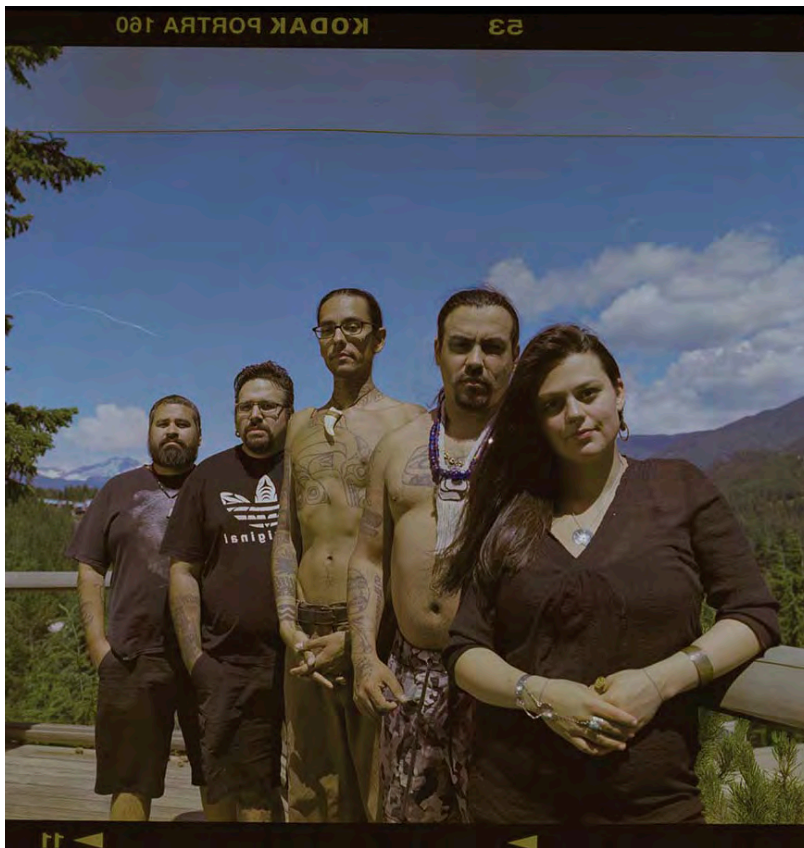
the 1885-1951 Potlach ban instituted by the Canadian government. At the symposium, the artists discussed how legislation, missionaries, residential schools, and epidemics deeply affected indigenous populations. Often, these influences were attempts to erase indigenous identity, sovereignty, and self-determination. "Here on these lands, there is a vested interest in the erasure of Indigenous identity because it's identified with land, place and resources," Kaszas said. "The erasure of our identity, including our tattoos, is part of that imperialist, colonialist project."²

The exhibit shows the revival of traditional tattooing as a movement of resistance, resilience, and a celebration of indigenous identity in the face of continued colonial violence. Nahaan's work includes documentation of the intersection of tattooing and activism at Standing Rock and in the fight to abolish Columbus Day in Seattle. Nakkita Trimble talks about how the research process for her large house crest tattoos can take up to a year. She works with her clients to trace their matrilineal lineage and determine what they have the right to wear. These crests proclaim hereditary rights to land and kinship ties. Corey Bulpitt tells of Elders who radiate joy seeing youth wearing their tattoos with pride again after years of being forced to live in shame. "Tattoos are permanent regalia," reads Nahaan's introductory quote in the exhibit. "Upon our bodies, we wear our history, the deeds to our lands, our access to the skies, and seas, our relatives. With our tattoos we indigenize every space we are in."



"Tattoos are permanent regalia. Upon our bodies, we wear our history, the deeds to our lands, our access to the skies, and seas, our relatives. With our tattoos we indigenize every space we are in."

— Nahaan



The Body Language artists during planning meetings at Whistler, 2017.
Photo credit:
Aaron Leon

Body adornment is tied to larger indigenous visual languages and cultural practices. Interspersed with the photos of tattoos and the displays of traditional tattooing tools are a variety of other cultural artifacts such as regalia, masks, carvings, and contemporary artworks by the featured artists, who all work in other mediums. The revival of traditional tattooing is framed as part of a wider effort to create a strong, proud living culture for future generations. "Right now we're all learning, healing and working on different parts of what it really means to get these tattoos," says Trimble. "But my dream is that our tattoos are so normalized for my daughter that she'll know who she is within that."³

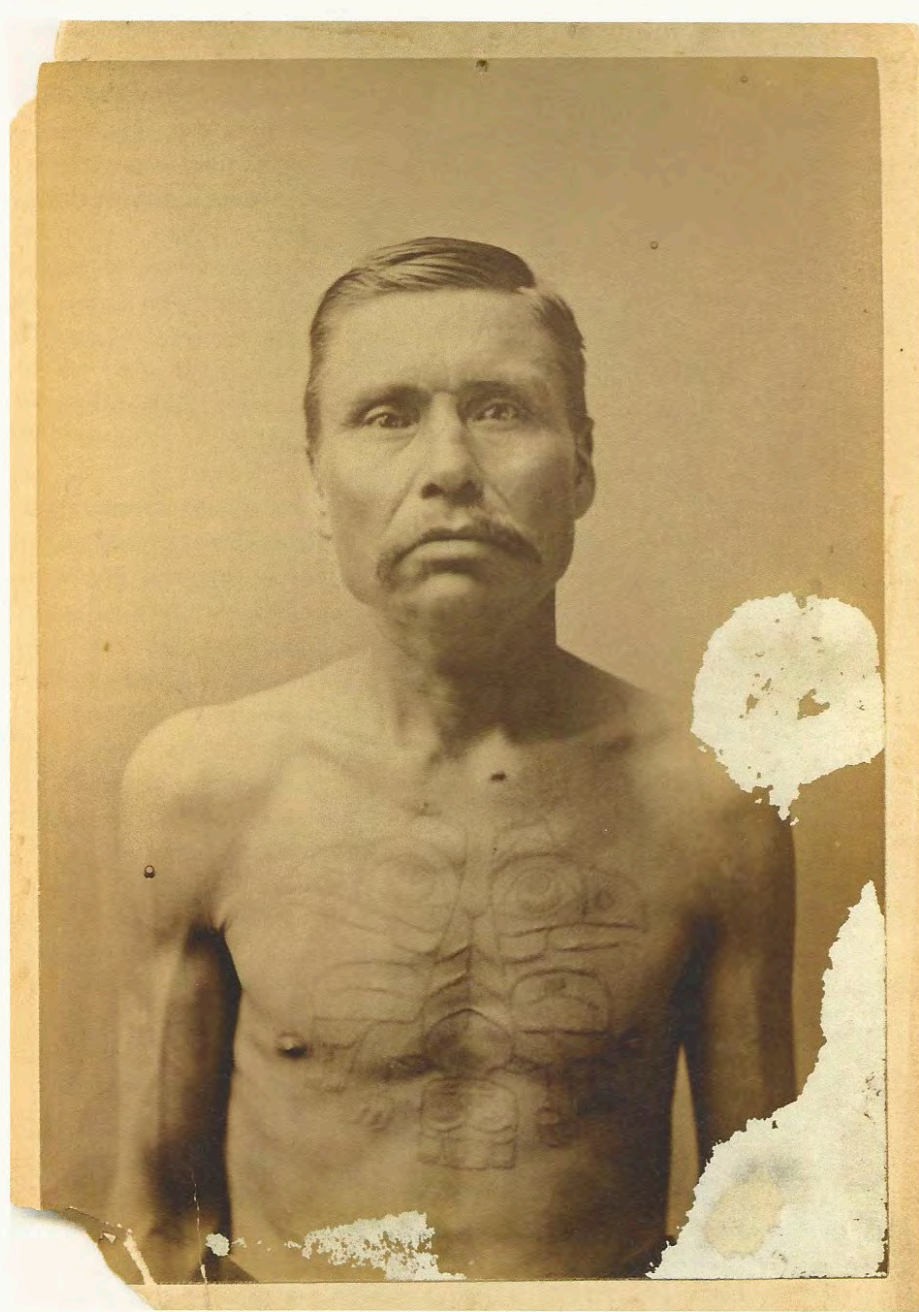
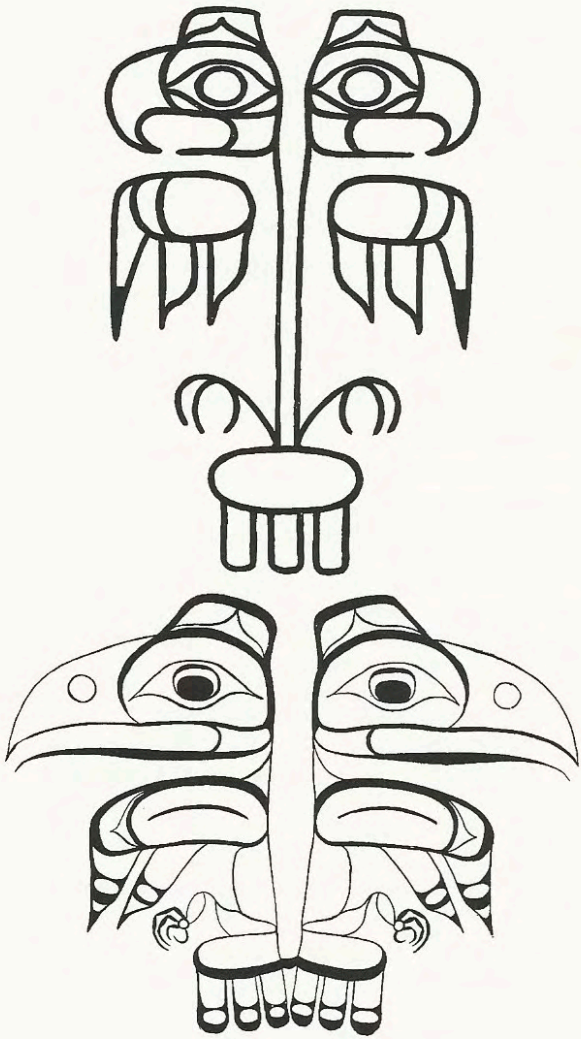
The artists also express their hope that this exhibit will provide education and counteract the appropriation of indigenous tattoos. Since these tattoos are so entwined with identity and spiritual practices, their appropriation is an extension of colonial violence. In the *Body Language* exhibit

The exhibit shows the revival of traditional tattooing as a movement of resistance, resilience, and a celebration of indigenous identity in the face of continued colonial violence.

guide Kaszas describes cultural appropriation as "everywhere being seen, but never being heard, of constantly being represented, but never listened to, of being treated like artifacts rather than as peoples. We as indigenous peoples, cultures, and nations work to uncover, wake up, and revive what has been bulldozed over by the processes of genocide, colonization, and imperialism. As such, we are the ones who have a right to do these things for ourselves and no one else has these rights, unless they are invited to participate by those who can offer such an invitation."

Body Language takes the history of indigenous tattooing on the Northwest Coast and situates it within the modern context of de-colonization and the re-awakening of indigenous rights and self-determination. This exhibit is a proud assertion of indigenous identity and belonging, shaped by the voices who are at the forefront of Northwest Coast indigenous tattoo revival. It is a reminder that in our industry we must ensure that we are not just inviting indigenous people to participate in discussions framed by colonial institutions, but that we are upholding their rights to protect, interpret, and maintain their own cultural heritage inside and outside of our spaces.

Body Language will be at the Bill Reid Gallery until March 17, 2018. It will travel to Haida Gwaii in April, after which it will be available for rental.



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¹ Smith, J. (2018, June 7). Body Language tracks reawakening of Indigenous tattoo culture at Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art. *The Georgia Straight*. Retrieved from <https://www.straight.com/arts/1086046/body-language-tracks-reawakening-indigenous-tattoo-culture-bill-reid-gallery-northwest>

² Griffin, k. (2018, June 26). Body Language reclaims Indigenous tattooing from colonial suppression. *The Vancouver Sun*. Retrieved from <https://vancouversun.com/entertainment/local-arts/>

³ Gilpin, E. (2018, August 23). Reawakening cultural tattooing of the Northwest. *The National Observer*. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2018/08/23/these-five-indigenous-tattoo-artists-are-reawakening-cultural-practices>

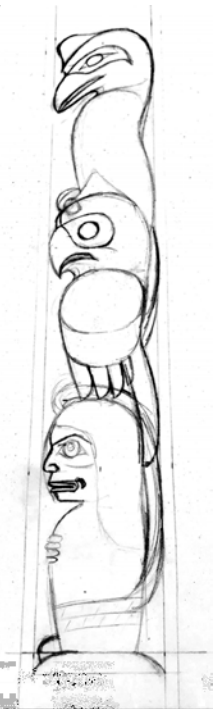
ROSEMARIE GRESHAM

Rosemarie is the designer for Roundup Magazine. She is based in Vancouver and lives on the traditional unceded territory of the Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen (sc̓əwaθen) First Nations.

Haida man with split raven chest tattoo, c.1890.
Photo credit:
from the Franz Boas Photo Collection (PPCB63, Fldr.1, image 29A)

CROSSING CULTURES AND HEALING

Adrian Paradis



Sketch of Crossing Cultures and Healing, the theme of the pole.
Photo credit: courtesy of the Royal BC Museum

In the summer of 2018, the Royal BC Museum, sitting on the traditional territory of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, hosted master carvers Tom and Perry LaFortune. The brothers were present on site from July to October while carving a totem pole for the BC Ministry of Health. Both carvers have been working on their craft since the 1970s, and have traveled around the world to show their art. The sibling duo, who are members of the Tsawout First Nation, worked in the open air on museum grounds while stopping occasionally among the clouds of sawdust and wood shavings to answer questions and talk to visitors.

The Ministry of Health worked with the LaFortune brothers to select the theme of the pole: crossing cultures and healing. The pole now sits outside the Ministry of Health's headquarters on Blanshard Street in Victoria as a reminder of their commitment to reconciliation. "I am so humbled and honoured that this totem pole stands before our ministries' building as a symbol of our government's commitment to reconciliation," says Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, in a November news release from the BC Government. "We are working closely with our Indigenous partners to ensure their priorities, wisdom and experience remain at the centre of decisions

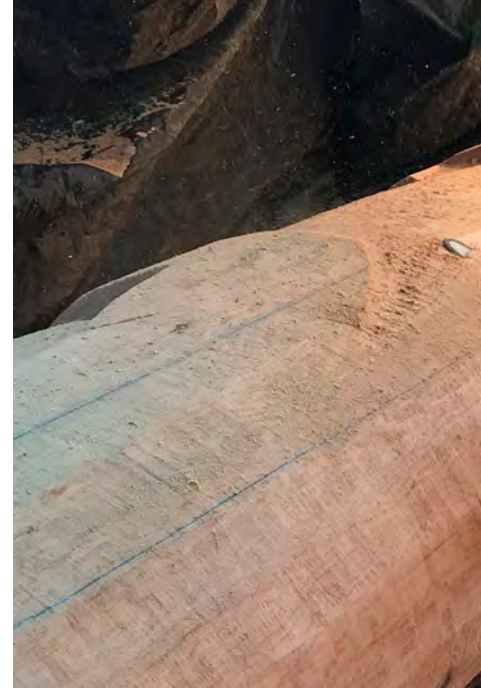
Left: Perry

LaFortune using a chainsaw for some initial cuts.

Right: Tom

LaFortune at work on the pole at the Royal BC Museum.

Photo credits: courtesy of the Royal BC Museum



around mental health and wellness. Genuine reconciliation demands nothing less." While the pole was important to the members of the ministry as a symbol of their progress and reconciliation, it had a different meaning entirely for the brothers.

The bottom motif of the pole depicts an elderly woman standing tall and holding the end of a rope across her chest. The woman is said to represent the Tsawout Nation's matriarchal society, but to the brothers this is the image of their mother. "One of the strongest people we know," says Perry in an August interview with the CBC where he describing their mother who passed away 10 years ago. "She was a product of the residential school system," he says. "She suffered through a lot." Despite how much their mother endured, Perry says she loved and raised 13 children and taught them how to provide and be good people.

Above the elderly woman is an owl, which in the Tsawout culture represents an all-seeing, omniscient being. Beside the owl sits a frog: a symbol of the conscience to the Tsawout Nation. Finally, at the highest motif on the pole sits a raven: the messenger of good news for the Tsawout and Saanich people. Woven among all the sections is the cord the woman is holding, representing the rope that



the Saanich people used to tie themselves to an arbutus tree a mountain during the traditional story of the Great Flood.

Perry says the seven-meter pole was important to him not only because it was the most public project he has undergone, but also because of how personal it was to him. For those politically involved, the pole was about reconciliation, but Perry says in the same CBC interview that he is uncomfortable with that word. To the brothers, the pole is about honouring survivors and healing from past traumas.



ADRIAN PARADIS

Adrian Paradis is a freelance writer and editor who is often writing about food, culture, and the arts. He has been working under contract for the BCMA since last year and lives on the traditional and unceded territory of the Lekwungen peoples (Victoria).

Finnishing touches.

Photo credit: courtesy of the Royal BC Museum



News

Cultural Labour Force Survey

The Cultural Human Resources Council (CHRC) and the Conference Board of Canada have announced the launch of a national survey of the Canadian cultural sector labour force — the first of its kind since 2010 and the only current national research on the sector's employers and workers. All cultural sector employers and individuals are invited to participate in the survey at www.conferenceboard.ca/

PARTICIPATORY DISCUSSION

It's Complicated: Museums and Classrooms are not Neutral

Feb 15, 7:00pm | Royal BC Museum

Come discuss what happens when we actively work to de-centre the established dominant narratives and complicate assumed consensus, in order to amplify multiple voices and marginalized histories.

royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/events/calendar/event/106562/its-complicated-museums-and-classrooms-are-not-neutral

SYMPOSIUM

Closer to Home: Locating and Retrieving Indigenous Heritage from Archives Outside Canada

March 6-9, 2019 | Winnipeg, MB

The Indigenous Heritage Circle (IHC) is hosting this symposium to offer Indigenous knowledge-keepers, historians, curators, archivists and others an opportunity to learn from and contribute to discussions about Indigenous archival records held in repositories outside Canada.

Indigenous Peoples are seeking to reclaim records of all types through multiple channels, from physical repatriation of materials to direct involvement in descriptive cataloguing projects. The Closer to Home Symposium is intended to enable shared learning, and to foster relationships and networks that will offer pathways towards reclaiming and protecting Indigenous heritage embedded in archival collections.

Registration is open until March 1, 2019.

More information at indigenousheritage.ca/events/#CloserEN



Jane Stelkia, *Three Horses*, date unknown, gouache on paper.
Collection of the Royal BC Museum, #15855.

NEW EXHIBIT

Nk'Mip Children's Art Exhibition On Now

Our Lives Through Our Eyes: Nk'Mip Children's Art is on until April 14, 2019 at the Kelowna Art Gallery and Okanagan Heritage Museum.

The joint exhibition presents over 75 works of art created by children and youth who attended the Inkameep Day School during the era of World War II. Under the tutelage of Mr. Anthony Walsh, the school, which was located on the Osoyoos Indian Band reserve, became nationally and internationally renowned for its students' production of art and drama based on their Okanagan identity and history.

A series of four workshops will be presented on select Saturdays during the months of February, March, and April. The workshops explore a variety of subjects and are titled:

- **Living the Seasons:** Syilx (Okanagan) Calendar
- **Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask**
- **Our Shared History:** Talking Circle
- **Fire and Water:** Syilx (Okanagan) Relationship with the Land.

The workshops are open to the public, but pre-registration is required.

kelownaartgallery.com/our-lives-through-our-eyes

WORKSHOPS

Archives Association of British Columbia Offering Free Workshops for Indigenous Communities

The Archives Association of British Columbia is working together with Indigenous organizations, communities and cultural-memory keepers to organize 6 regional training clinics held between February 2019 - March 2020 aimed at building archival management capacity in Indigenous communities in BC as they build self-governance, develop their community services and continue to preserve their heritage. The clinics include the 1-day workshop "Archives 101: Archival Practice for Indigenous Organizations" and site visits in each region.

Workshops are free for participants, but registration is required. Further information and a schedule of workshop dates and locations is available at aabc.ca/events/archives-101-archival-practice-for-indigenous-organizations/

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Apply Now for a Family Day Mini-Grant!

The Province of British Columbia, in partnership with the B.C. Museums Association, is providing small grants to support local museums, art galleries, cultural institutions and First Nations communities in coordinating, family-based, admission-free community-based Family Day events. Grants up to a maximum of \$1000 are available to eligible organizations to cover a portion of the facility costs, equipment rentals, basic refreshments, etc. of a free community Family Day event.

Please visit our website for complete guidelines, eligibility criteria and the online application form: museumsassn.bc.ca/awards/bc-family-day-grants/

Congratulations to our 2018 winners!

BCMA AWARDS OF OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

BCMA Award of Merit 2018

The BC Museums Association honoured a number of institutions and individuals with Awards of Outstanding Achievement during the association's 2018 Conference.

"This year's recipients really showcase the breadth of amazing things happening in BC's museum sector," says BCMA Executive Director Erica Mattson. "From community involvement to digital programming to volunteer engagement, BC continues to be at the forefront of museums in Canada."

Award of Merit: Excellence in Community Engagement

- Nikkei National Museum, for The 75th anniversary of Japanese Canadian Internment, and 30th anniversary of Japanese Canadian Redress project

Awards of Merit: Excellence in Exhibitions

- The Reach Gallery Museum, for Grand Theft Terra Firma

Awards of Merit: Excellence in Collections

- Mayne Island Museum operated by the Mayne Island Agricultural Society, for John Aitken glass plate negative digitization project

Distinguished Service Award

- Marl Brown, Curator, Fort Nelson Heritage Museum



(L-R) - Tammy Bradford (Creston Museum; Awards Committee Co-chair), Sherri Kajiwaru - Director/Curator, Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, Scott Marsden (Awards Committee co-chair and BCMA Council Member)
Photo credit: courtesy of the BCMA

Museum Service & Stewardship Award

- Sherri Robinson, Esquimalt Municipal Archives volunteer

Innovation Award, sponsored by



- Rachael Bell-Irving, Digital Outreach Coordinator, Ocean Wise online learning programs

Honourable Mention for Impact and Engagement

- Punjabi Canadian Legacy Project, A partnership between the Royal BC Museum, South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley, and the Punjabi Canadian Legacy Project Advisory Committee

Honourable Mention for Excellence

- Haida Now at the Museum of Vancouver, a collaborative exhibition with Guest Curator Kwiaahwah Jones, Haida Gwaii Museum and Museum of Vancouver

Honourable Mention for Sustainability

- Beaty Biodiversity Museum: Beaty Box Project

See the full list of winners and nominees at museumsassn.bc.ca/



Whoo's News



The BC Museums Association is excited and proud to announce that **Jordan Coble** of the Westbank First Nation, Cultural and Operations Administrator of the Sncəwips Heritage

Museum, has joined the BC Museums Association Council.

Jordan will also continue his role with the the BCMA Indigenous Advisory Committee which he has held since 2017.



Stephanie Halapija is the new Executive Director for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society. Originally from Ontario, she came to B.C. three years ago as Director of The Nis-ga'a Museum in Laxgalts'ap. She is passionate about museum leadership, curatorial work, and indigenous social issues.



Bob Sackett is the new Assistant Director for the HMCS Alberni Museum and Memorial (HAMM). He has been a dedicated volunteer for The Alberni Project over the past two years, researching lost medal recipients, exhibit data, and artefact preservation and presentation.



Allison Andrachuk is the new director and CEO of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art. Andrachuk comes from the eco-social charity Tides Canada. She will work to expand exhibitions, education and public programs, and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities.



Edwin Neel also joins the Bill Reid Gallery team as the new Indigenous Program Assistant. He will plan public programs and workshops, as well as help with curating upcoming exhibits.



Hilary Letwin is the new Assistant Curator at the West Vancouver Art Museum. Letwin has a PhD in art history from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, and was previously the collections assistant at Burnaby Art Gallery.

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture has announced several staff changes at the BC Arts Council. After working as the executive director since 2009, Gillian Wood has stepped out of her role in the public service. Kim Reid will step in as interim executive director.

Farewell to Beloved Museum and Heritage Champions

We are saddened by the loss of two valued members of the BCMA family. Bob Broadland and Greg Evans both made immense contributions to the sector and are remembered for their lasting impact within the organizations they served and to the museum and heritage community at large. Both of these gentlemen will be sorely missed.

VOLUNTEER

GREG SHAPIRO & MARGO MACDONALD

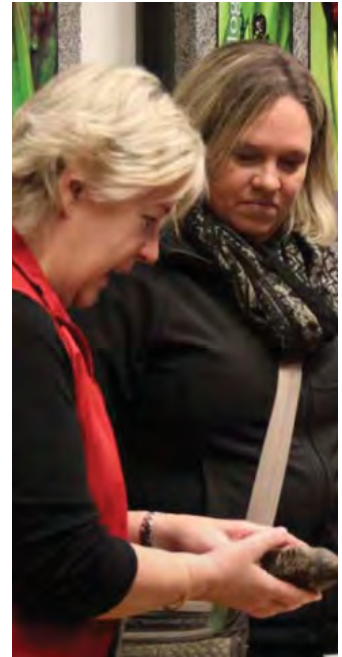
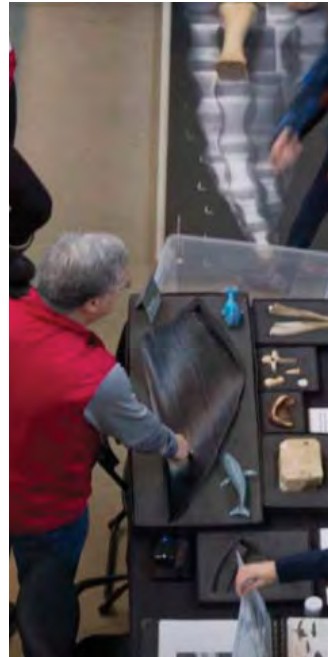
Beaty Biodiversity Museum

Nicole Balsdon

Bringing natural history collections to life requires the enthusiasm and care of talented volunteers, and at the Beaty Biodiversity Museum in Vancouver, we are fortunate to have Greg Shapiro and Margo MacDonald on our education team. With over 1500 and 1200 volunteer hours, respectively, they have contributed the most volunteer hours to the Beaty. Each shift, they engage visitors in one-on-one conversations on a wide range of biodiversity topics, while supporting up-close exploration of real museum specimens. Time and time again, our visitors mention these special conversations and explorations; volunteers like Greg and Margo truly make a visit memorable.

We've had the pleasure of watching them both grow over the years. Greg has been with the museum since 2010, coming in every Friday morning. He is always happy to chat with every group of visitors that approaches the whale station, eager to learn about them as he shares his experiences and travels. Margo started on Thursday mornings in 2012, using some of her time to learn more about birds, becoming well-versed in the birds of Vancouver and B.C. Both are passionate about educating museum visitors, regardless of the topic.

Margo and Greg are both incredible, welcoming role models for our new volunteers. They both have a passion for lifelong learning, and are eager to



share their knowledge with others every week. Our student volunteers can rely on them for support and encouragement, as well as comradery and friendship behind the scenes.

Their love of nature and science is contagious, and their dedication to educating visitors is admirable. We look forward to them coming in every week, and miss them when they take well-deserved time away.

It takes a team of diverse, intelligent, skilled, and positive people to share the excitement of biodiversity with visitors. Greg and Margo are our two most dedicated volunteers, and we truly would not be the same without them.

SPOTLIGHT

SUSAN DICKSON

Bill Reid Gallery

Sonja Hebert Visitor Service & Gallery Shop Manager

The Bill Reid Gallery is the only public gallery in Canada devoted to contemporary Indigenous Art of the Northwest Coast. It is home to the Simon Fraser University Bill Reid Collection and special exhibitions of contemporary Indigenous Art of the Northwest Coast of North America. The Gallery offers education programs and public tours to engage community among other activities. Volunteers at the Bill Reid Gallery are critical to helping us achieve our goals in providing a world class art and cultural facility.

Susan Dickson has been a volunteer at the Bill Reid Gallery since April 2015 and continues to be cherished by our team for her service greeting people who come to the gallery, orienting and informing visitors about the exhibits and programs and lending a hand with the daily operations of the shop.

I interviewed Susan to highlight her experience as a volunteer within the Bill Reid Gallery

Why did you choose to volunteer at the Bill Reid Gallery?

SD: For the love of art and especially to learn about indigenous artists and cultures because when I first started volunteering I didn't know much about the First Nations of the Westcoast.

What have you learned through volunteering at the Bill Reid Gallery?

SD: Through the vast different media of Bill Reid's work I've learned that art comes in different forms. Through the art of indigenous artists of the West Coast, I've learned how diverse First Nations are here and that some differences are sometimes very subtle.

What do you enjoy the most about volunteering here?

SD: The people – both visitors and the staff! When visitors come to the gallery, many are traveling and they come with an open mind and enjoy learning about new things. Often when people leave, they have expressed feeling enriched by their experience here. It feels really good being part of that enrichment.



The gallery has undergone a major renovation project this past year. You were a critical help in the operations of our visitor services before our temporary closure. Upon the re-opening of the gallery your organizing skills was such a great help for setting-up the stock room. What changes have been the most apparent to you overall since the renovation?

SD: I have seen much growth within the organization. The physical changes of the gallery space seem to be a reflection of a shift in consciousness.

For example, the Raven's Trove where Bill Reid's jewelry is displayed has gone through a big change in how the jewelry is displayed. The way it is now allows us to see a full 360 degrees around the pieces and the viewing space is very open allowing for various meeting points.

The openness of the space is metaphorically reflected in the gallery programs which have been wider reaching including partnerships with other organizations. This reaching out creates more meeting points with community.

Success by ASSOCIATION

Conference 2019

Save the date, the BC Museums Association's 2019 conference will be held in Prince George from September 30 - October 2, 2019. Watch for the Call for Proposals coming soon. Registration will open in the spring. museumsassn.bc.ca/conferences/current-conference/

We hope you're enjoying this issue of Roundup!

ROUNDUP IS AVAILABLE IN PRINT

Roundup is also available in print! Annual subscriptions (4 issues, mailed within Canada only), are available at www.museumsassn.bc.ca/members/round-up.

Our quarterly magazine is available to everyone interested in the museums and galleries sector.

Visit www.museumsassn.bc.ca/members/round-up to read current and archived issues.

Webinars

The B.C. Museums Association is pleased to present a monthly webinar series! On the third Tuesday of every month, join your museum colleagues from around the province for a lunchtime webinar. These engaging professional development opportunities will cover a different topic each month, including education, conservation, marketing, exhibit management, and everything in between. Webinars are free for members, and \$10 for non-members.

You can also access our growing archive of past webinars by visiting the BCMA website. For more information, visit museumsassn.bc.ca/archives/5112/introducing-BCMA-webinars/

2019 Webinar Sponsor



BCMA Podcast

The BCMA has launched a new podcast! You can listen to new episodes and find out how to download the series on the BCMA website. Visit bit.ly/BCMApodcast

BCMA Job Board

The BCMA is excited to launch a new job board for the B.C. museum community! Check it out at museumsassn.bc.ca/members/job-board/

Whoo Accepts the BCMA OWL Card?

Issued to all Individual and Institutional members, the OWL Card provides free admission to museums, galleries and heritage sites across B.C.

Visit some of the outstanding museums, galleries and historic sites in B.C.! Present your OWL card, with your picture ID, to our member institutions for complimentary admission during regular operating hours. A list of participating institutions is continually updated and available on our website.

If you are a student or volunteer member and would like to change your membership category to access OWL card benefits, email members@museumsassn.bc.ca.



Back Cover: Rosa Watson – Nisga’a Nation, Wilps Bayt Neekhl – Beaver House
This Ts’iksnaaks is now attached to a name that is attached to this particular House Crest. Rosa received a name in her family feast and wanted to honour that responsibility with the design tattooed into her skin. This design represents her mother, mother’s mother, and all the women in her family generations back. This Ts’iksnaaks will be passed onto the younger generations for generations to come. *Photo credit: Nakkita Trimble*

We’re Growing!

Welcome to new members:

Individual Members

- Cynthia Bronaugh
- Leslie Ellis
- Julie Grundvig
- Selina Rainville
- Kathleen Ladislaus
- Pam Moughton
- Anna van Dijk

Institutional Members

- BC Society for the Museum of Original Costume
- Courtenay and District Museum
- Friends of Fintry Provincial Park Society
- Nechako Valley Historical Society

Affiliate Individuals

- Alexander Abalakov
- Cara Brendzy
- Rory Gylander
- Judy Hayes
- Julie Leclair
- David Stinson
- Leslie Thompson

