

The voice of the BC Museums Association

Roundup

Issue 277 // Winter 2019

**2019 BCMA
Conference Highlights:
Spoken Words, Shared Stories**

Language is culture is art
Surrey Art Gallery's education & engagement

Inclusive museums
free admission as the first step

Nawhulna: the time is right
The Exploration Place, Lheidli T'enneh
and the rethinking of a local museum

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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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.



Cover: Roxanne Charles leading a walk through neighboring Bear Creek Park with Art Together participants in 2018.
Photo credit: Surrey Art Gallery staff

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Notes from the Editor



Adrian Paradis

The 2019 BCMA annual Conference was held this year on the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, whose name in the Dakelh language means “people of the confluence of two rivers.” This year’s theme celebrated the role museums play in connecting people through language and story; Spoken Words, Shared Stories. The theme acknowledged the importance of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, explored how museums can become involved in language revitalization, and allowed for discussion on how our organizations use stories to communicate, educate, and encourage social interactions.

For this issue of Roundup Magazine, we reached out to presenters at our conference to solicit articles on the same theme – because of this, the issue had some recurring ideas to that of our issue number 274 (Reconciliation and Repatriation). Presented here for our members is a recap of a few of the conference ideas and presentations. Whether you attended the conference, or are looking for a refresher, we hope you find this issue of Roundup as inspiring and moving as we do.





President's Report

Jodi Simkin

In my role as the Director of Cultural Affairs and Heritage with the Klahoose First Nation, I spend a great deal of time and devote significant effort to supporting the return of the Nation's ancestors. It is estimated that between three hundred and four hundred sets of remains were removed without consent during the early exploration phase of European inquiry and settlement into the territories.

Witnessing the repatriation of these grandmothers to their lands is an incredibly impactful and meaningful experience to the community. Each ancestor is afforded a full burial – no different in composition to a contemporary funeral. The return home from wherever the repatriation has

taken place to Cortes Island, is marked by several stops along the way where we pause to acknowledge and pay respect to the Nation whose territory we are passing through and thank them for allowing the ancestor to return home safely.

Cedar boxes are prepared by the community so each ancestor can rest easily. All material, photographs and deaccession paperwork is placed inside the cedar box, along with cedar boughs and tobacco and whatever container and wrappings the institution housed them in. Once everything is good, the box is sealed and the journey home can begin.

For the Klahoose, we often travel with elders and elected officials. There is drumming and singing and where appropriate, we invite

members of the institution to play witness. This is a teachable moment and our Elders remind us of all that can be achieved when we are kind and good to one another.

I share this experience with you in hopes of placing it in context of the BCMA Call to Action which will be launched early in the New Year. I encourage you to read it, share it with your colleagues, your friends and family, and anyone who will listen. Repatriation of ancestral remains is not abstract – it is incredibly meaningful to the communities who remain committed to the search. It is an ongoing sacred obligation that will continue until all is made right so if as a sector we are truly interested in meaningful and lasting reconciliation, we must work together to achieve this. The BCMA Call to Action is a momentous step in realizing this vision.

Prince George folk artist, Kym Gouchie performing at the 2019 BCMA Annual Conference Gala and Awards Dinner.



LANGUAGE IS CULTURE IS ART

Surrey Art Gallery's
education & engagement





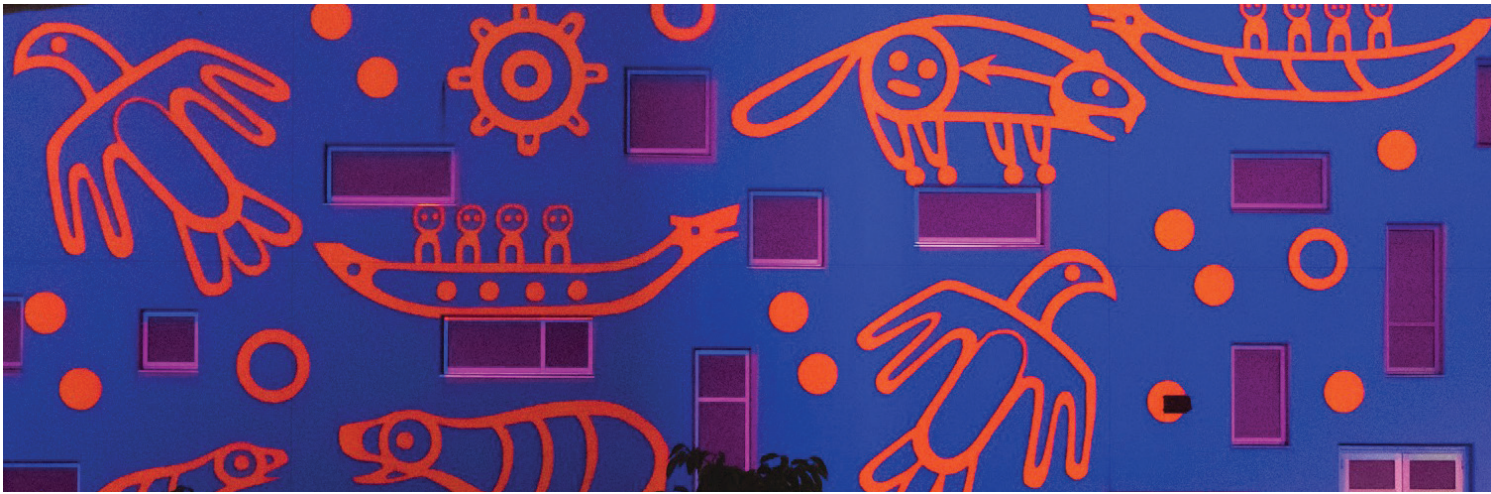
Top: Cathy Busby and Charlene Vickers with Art Together participants using their voice and soundmakers in relation to *Ground Signals* exhibition in 2017.
Photo credit: Gallery staff

Bottom: Atheana Picha, member of the Indigenous Contemporary Art Intensive, in front of her artwork for UrbanScreen.
Photo credit: Pardeep Singh

Opposite page: Viewing Marianne Nicolson's UrbanScreen artwork *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us* (2017).
Photo credit: Brian Giebelhaus



Previous page: The author Alanna Edwards in front of her UrbanScreen artwork *piptugwagit* (2018).
Photo credit: Pardeep Singh



Alanna Irene Edwards

Engagement Facilitator and Gallery Education team: Surrey Art Gallery

Language is more than the spoken word. Shapeshifting and transforming from one person, one family, and from one community to the next, language encompasses many forms. It can be the hug from an Elder after divulging a secret, the silent shared looks between friends, to pursed lips pointing the way, and the hunched, tired, but grateful way your dad walks home from a hard day's physical labour. Language is imprinted on the body; felt, understood, and ingrained in ourselves. We have and always will find ways to communicate, understand interpret, and resist, especially when languages, and all that they embody, are the defining elements of who we are. Considering the immense rate in which many Indigenous languages, and their culturally codified means of communication, have been lost or taken away, there is an increased desire and need to preserve, protect, and revitalize them for future generations. Visual art is one way to help support these initiatives.

Listening to communities & moving forward together

Language, art, and culture are so deeply intertwined and interwoven that one cannot exist without the other. The variety and complexity of art by Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island demonstrates art as complex cultural forms of written language. Local Indigenous languages have a strong connection to the land they occupy, where

language and storytelling allow opportunities to learn about the environment and land in different ways. Surrey Art Gallery's education and engagement programming strives toward deepening understanding and learning related to the use of language, storytelling, and voice by local and national Indigenous artists, prioritizing working with artists from land-based nations ɔ̣ʷɑ:ḥ̣əḥ̣ (Kwantlen), Semiahma (Semiahmoo), and ɔ̣icəỵ (Katzie). Serving the growing population of Surrey – currently the largest urban Indigenous population in BC – and supporting the needs of teachers in the province's largest school district, the gallery continues a history of listening, valuing, and supporting the voices of the communities it serves.

Using our collective voices: family & youth programming

From a collaborative weaving performance with artist and art-educator Roxanne Charles of the Semiahmoo First Nation during Art Together, to the representation and reference of pictographs in Marianne Nicolson's UrbanScreen artwork *The Way In Which It Was Given to Us* (2017), voice and culture are reclaimed and celebrated through visual and performance art. Family and youth programming, and learning related to sharing the permanent collection, are informed and strengthened through working collaboratively with artists and the public.



During Family Art Party in summer 2019, children work collaboratively on an artwork referencing the use of visual language and storytelling in Drew Atkins' *Retro-Perspective* (2018).
Photo credit: Gallery staff

During the summer of 2018, a pilot initiative called the Indigenous Contemporary Art Intensive (ICAI) paired emerging artists with mentoring artists, culminating in UrbanScreen artworks and a series of recommendations for the Gallery to continue working on Indigenous contemporary art initiatives. Initiated by Roxanne Charles and then Curator of Education and Engagement Alison Rajah, Junior Cultural Leaders included Avishka Lakwijaya, Naomi Kennedy, Atheana Picha, and Kelsey Sparrow, with myself as Engagement Facilitator. Through mentorship, offsite visits, and workshops with artists like Drew Atkins, Debra Sparrow, Peter Morin, and Roxanne Charles, we grew our voices as artists and as cultural workers, gaining valuable skills in museum art education and expanding our own art practices.

Family Art Party in the summer of 2019 saw children and youth create a collaborative artwork while thinking through language, Coast Salish design elements, and the use of voice in Drew Atkin's *Retro-Perspective* (2018). Flowing throughout the Gallery's windows are stained-glass-like vinyl images depicting Coast Salish design elements like trigons, circles, and crescents alongside figures with

raised hands in a gesture of welcome. Canoes, paddles, and silhouettes of a 300-year-old feast bowl and a 3,500-year-old stone wolf carving complete the public artwork. Asking participants "What's Your Story?" while children, youth, and their families reflected on the ways in which body language, like the figure with raised hands, and Coast Salish visual language and design elements communicate without words.

Bringing together mentoring artists with the public, Art Together workshops encourage participants to use their voice. Cathy Busby and Charlene Vickers jointly led a workshop in relation to the exhibition *Ground Signals* (2017), where participants created sound makers reflecting on the relationship between nature and humankind, ways in which to listen to the land, and the connections to territory and place. The collaboratively-made, long rolled cones carried messages on their sides, including the word protect, that was used by the artists themselves as they performed at the opening night of *Ground Signals*.

Deepening understanding: learning related to sharing the permanent collection

One of the recommendations from the ICAI led to the conceptualization of the forthcoming educational resource *Visiting with*, detailing 27 artworks in the Gallery's permanent collection created by artists who are Indigenous. Mostly in words of the artists themselves with quotes and stories, the resource deepens understanding about land, community, language, and other relevant themes. The phrase, "visiting with" indicates our relationship not only to each other but to the art that we create. Like languages, objects and art are not static; they have a life of their own and exist in a dialogue and continuum with that which has come before.

Other educational resources for teachers, educators, and the public like online artist videos prioritize the voices, perspectives, and worldviews of the artists themselves. Brandon Gabriel from ǫʷɑ:ńłəń shares where he comes from, his practice, and details his public artwork created with his partner Melinda Bige titled *Four Seasons* (2016) at Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre. Gabriel describes himself as a storyteller, and that telling stories are the core of his work. Complementing the resource are two upcoming videos with Roxanne Charles, where she shares her perspective and connection to land, language, and community.



ALANNA IRENE EDWARDS

Alanna Edwards is an artist, curator, and educator of Mi'gmaq and settler descent. She is passionate about languages and language use, especially that of Mi'gmaq, and gratefully has been enrolled in nēhiyawēwin and hənq̓əmiñəm courses. She has a BA in Political Science and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from Simon Fraser University, a Diploma in Fine Arts from Langara College, and a BFA from Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Currently, she is an Engagement Facilitator at Surrey Art Gallery, focusing on museum art education involving Indigenous contemporary art initiatives.

Also supporting the needs of teachers are the Indigenous Contemporary Art Workshops offered by the gallery throughout the Surrey School District. Since 1999, the Gallery has worked with Indigenous art-educators to visit schools and share the permanent and public art collections, supporting teaching and learning through hands-on art activities growing out of their own art practices. Students from K-12 learn about Northwest Coast and Coast Salish cultures and contemporary artmaking practices through an exploration of diverse artworks by Indigenous artists. BC's new curriculum, the TRC's Calls to Action, and the First Peoples Learning Principles continue to help inform the work the gallery does.

Continuing sharing stories, ideas, perspectives

As the gallery continues to support the voices of Indigenous artists and the communities it serves, the gallery looks forward to supporting more opportunities and initiatives involving Indigenous languages, including hənq̓əmiñəm and other local languages, and learning related to the land and territory on which the Gallery sits. Acknowledging the power institutions have in creating change, the Gallery shares collective responsibility for supporting Indigenous contemporary art initiatives and learning through visual literacy and the arts.



Susan Point's *Voices* (1992) is one of the artworks in Surrey Art Gallery's permanent collection to be included in the teacher's resource *visiting with*.



Also to be included in *visiting with*, David Neel's print *Just Say No* (1991) records the unforgettable moment when MLA Elijah Harper raised an eagle feather in Manitoba legislature, effectively stopping the Meech Lake Accord.



Indigenous educator Lacey Baker with students at the Matriarch's Garden
Photo credit: Janet Hoffar courtesy of Burnaby Village Museum (BVM)

INCLUSIVE MUSEUMS

free admission
as the first step

Sanya Pleshakov Head of Programming & Education: Burnaby Village Museum

Deborah Tuytens Cultural Heritage Manager: Burnaby Village Museum

To be free or not to be free? Most heritage organizations don't have the luxury of pondering this question, but many museum professionals seem to be asking it and there are a variety of opinions out there. At a time when most museums are financially stretched and core funding is down across Canada, contemplating free admission to our sites depends on each organization's unique contexts. When Linda Digby of the Kelowna Museums Society posted this query to the BCMA listserv in 2018, it prompted an interesting and lively discussion.

“Museums cannot argue that they hold the patrimony of all if only some can afford to see it... There is a fundamental disconnect between the mission statements we write and the act of imposing an entry fee.”

— Elaine Heumann Gurian

Museum interpreter Brian Ross with visitors at the general store
 Photo credit: Leanne Scherp courtesy of BVM



Many museum professionals refer to audience engagement consultant Colleen Dilenschneider's argument that introducing free admission neither significantly affects long-term attendance figures, nor does it cultivate increased visitation from new and/or diverse audiences. According to museums expert, Elaine Heumann Gurian, admission fees influence much more than visitor numbers and balancing the organization's budget; this approach changes the very function and orientation of a museum. Gurian holds that, "Museums cannot argue that they hold the patrimony of all if only some can afford to see it... There is a fundamental disconnect between the mission statements we write and the act of imposing an entry fee."

In 2011, Burnaby Village Museum (BVM) waived admission fees (which were at the time, \$12 per adult) and has never looked back. Nine years later, we would like to reflect on our experience and share with colleagues what going free has meant for at least one midsized museum in British Columbia.

Setting the context

BVM is a ten-acre, living history site comprised of both heritage and recreated buildings — homes, businesses, a schoolhouse, a farmhouse, and a blacksmith shop. Animated by costumed interpreters, the museum operates seasonally, sharing the story of Burnaby as it existed in the 1920s. The site is open to the general public six months of the year, and runs fee-based programs, including school programs, ticketed special events, courses, and workshops, in the shoulder seasons.

BVM is owned and operated by the City of Burnaby, a diverse and urbanized suburb of Metro Vancouver. Museum staff report to senior managers and city council; the City's Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission acts as an advisory body for the museum. The City funds between 75-85% of the museum's annual operating budget, most of which



is devoted to staffing. The balance of the budget is sourced from earned revenue and grants. BVM has a large, unionized staff team of around 100, including 20 full-time positions.

Although BVM's stated mission from 2003 is to "foster a shared sense of community and identity for the citizens of Burnaby and visitors," the museum has for many years told the stories of only a select few. Founded in 1971 as a tribute to Burnaby's "founding pioneers," the museum has in the past focused its narrative on Anglo-Canadian settler history to the exclusion of many other communities.

The how, then the why

"Dated, dry, static, not worth the time, and of limited appeal to many residents." This was how one marketing study described BVM in 2007 before going free. The report identified low levels of public awareness in Burnaby and other Metro Vancouver communities, low rates of repeat visitors,

and a decline in attendance since 2002. Programs and exhibits were unchanging and disconnected from the local population that was becoming increasingly diverse. At the time, it was difficult to obtain additional funding to support any kind of growth or renewal. Doing away with gate admission, the museum's main source of revenue at the time, was not on the agenda.

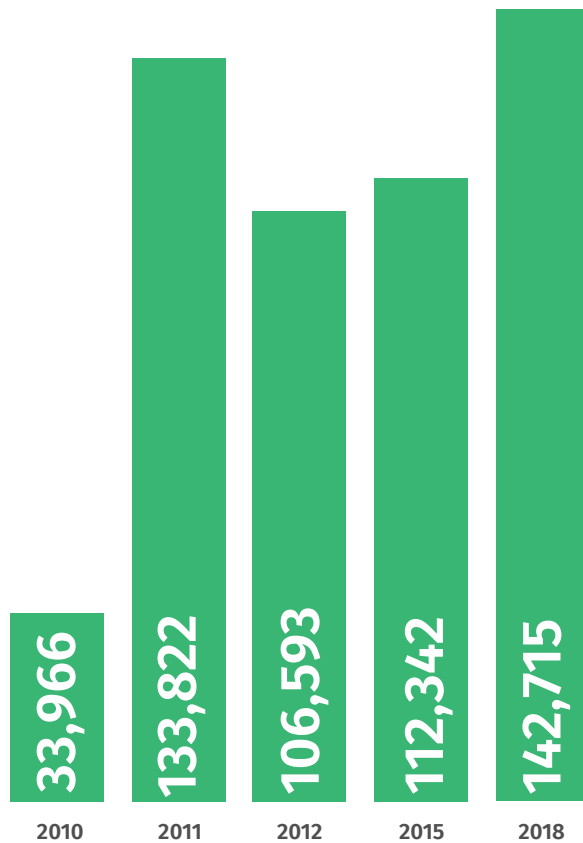
When it came to going free, it was the how that came first, then the why. The decision came suddenly, and it came from the top; a few city councillors wanted the museum to become more accessible to all. Museum staff and volunteers were nervous. Some feared free admission would cause visitors to devalue the museum experience, and that revenues would plunge. Staff worried that if there were an attendance spike it wouldn't last and that the museum would be treated like a public park — no rules, no museum etiquette, no museum decorum.

Indigenous educators Lacey Baker and Meagan Innes with students outside the Learning House with Ocean Hyland's artwork in the foreground
Photo credit: Janet Hoffer courtesy of BVM

The facts

In 2011, when BVM first went free, general attendance numbers shot up by 100,000. The operating season included the period from May-August, and a six-week Christmas opening from November-January. When fee-based special events, public programs, school programs, and rentals are included, attendance approximated 180,000 visits.

**The facts:
General Attendance
Since Going free**



Single-day visitation during the summer season increased dramatically that first year. On summer Sundays in 2011, for example, average numbers increased tenfold. During the Christmas opening, which used to attract around 8,000 visits over six weeks, the museum would see up to 5,000 visitors in a single day. BVM was no longer a quiet place for leisure, but a busy, bustling village full of activity.

Almost ten years of visitor data demonstrates that the BVM has well survived the novelty spike of free admission experienced in 2011. After an initial drop in 2012, museum visits have steadily climbed. Today, summer and Christmas attendance remains four times the rate it was when the museum charged admission and 2019 is shaping up to be a record year. During our two-week spring break this past year, visitation numbers doubled from 8,000 visits in 2018 to 15,000, and currently, general attendance is tracking above our initial free year in 2011.

The general attendance numbers presented here represent visits, not visitors. It is not currently possible to determine exactly how many unique visitors the museum welcomes over the course of a year; however, visitor survey sampling continues to demonstrate that, on average, one-third (50,000) of the annual visits to BVM represent first-time visitors. Clearly, this is not a question of simply accelerating re-visitation for audiences who are already visiting.

Unfortunately, we do not know how free admission has impacted the diversity of our visitors. Variables such as income, age, and maternal language have not been tracked regularly. Although many staff report witnessing a significant change in visitor diversity since waiving fees, it is also true that the demographics of the local population have changed considerably in the last ten years. Still, one can imagine that free admission attracts groups to whom cost matters — settlement agencies, neighbourhood houses, senior homes, non-profit day camps — all groups that we see more and more at the museum.

Since 2011, operational expenses for BVM have continued to climb as visitor numbers have increased. In addition to the loss of gate revenue, which represented about 12% of combined funded and earned revenues before free admission, costs are up across the board. More visitors mean more toilet



Visitors enjoying the museum's Bright in Burnaby event during Heritage Christmas. Photo credit: courtesy of BVM

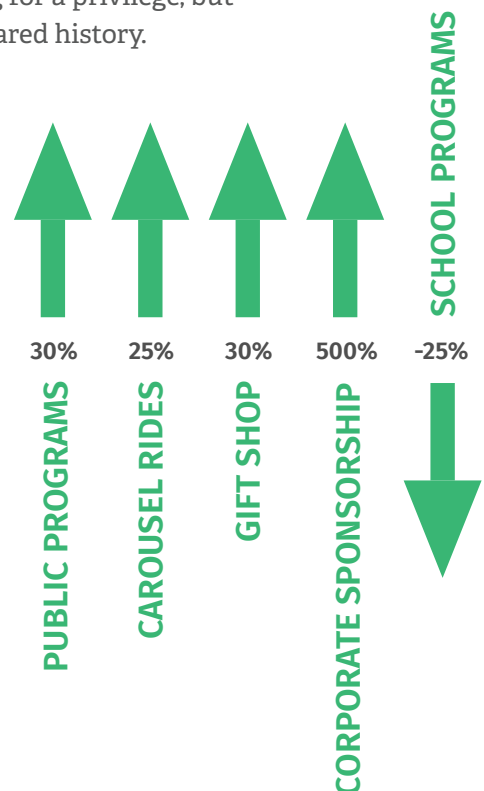
paper, more stanchions for longer lineups, more exhibits repairs, and more staff to handle the crowds. Fortunately, municipal funding for operations and capital projects has also risen and continues to cover the museum's cost increases. Although total museum expenditures have increased, it costs considerably less for the city to fund each visit because annual visitation has increased so dramatically. Since introducing free admission, the cost per visit is down by over 60%, which makes a good business case for our core funders.

Many people wonder how free admission affects revenue. For BVM, public programs, gift shop sales, food services, and carousel rides are all up by 30%. Corporate sponsorship is up by 500%. Other revenue streams including membership and rentals have not changed, and school programs are down by 30%. The donation box, which was introduced after waiving gate admission fees, receives a negligible amount each year — about \$2,000. Still, considering the significant loss of gate admission since going free, the museum is making up approximately 80% of the overall revenue losses.

The impact

Before free admission, BVM was torn between being a local museum and a museum with tourist appeal. No longer having to chase tourist dollars means that the museum can focus on serving the real needs of the local community. Now, when visitors walk through the entrance without having to take out their wallets many report a feeling of civic ownership and pride. Visitors are no longer guests paying for a privilege, but participants in their shared history.

Revenue streams since free admission



Key to the re-orientation of the museum's mandate has been a new interpretive plan that focuses research, exhibits, and programming around the stories of those communities long excluded from interpretation. Claiming to be a true community museum, while still pushing the dominant Anglo-Canadian settler narrative, would have been disingenuous. The work of unsettling settler spaces at BVM started with slowly building relationships with local First Nations, and community groups in Burnaby. Today, the museum features an Indigenous Learning House and Matriarch's Garden, a team of Indigenous educators, and year-round Indigenous programming for the general public and school groups. The museum has also embarked on a multiyear research project on Chinese Canadian history involving many community members.

These efforts have produced new research, interpretive materials, and the integration of Chinese Canadian stories throughout the site. Becoming free allowed BVM to become more accountable and more welcoming to the whole community.

Museum interpreter Annalee Wong with students outside the Way Sang Yeun Wat Kee Chinese herbalist shop.
Photo Credit: Janet Hoffar courtesy of BVM



Burnaby's Mayor and Council are proud of being able to offer such a wonderful experience for their citizens, and they make this point often. The museum's new interpretive vision aligns well with the City's new corporate strategic plan, especially around shared goals of inclusion, diversity and belonging. As a museum driven by community, these values and the visitor numbers that support them, are attractive to corporate sponsors. Free admission to the BVM has resulted in more government support and more corporate funding.

Conclusion

Free admission still means there's a need to provide a high-quality visitor experience. It's not simply a question of putting up a free admission sign on your door. Many museums across Canada are experimenting with free in some shape or form. The Cowichan Valley Museum, for example, waived admission fees in 2012 and saw their visitation increase dramatically from 2,000 to 10,000 today. But the museum did not simply offer free admission; it also worked with its local communities to focus its efforts to overhaul exhibits and programs and make them more relevant to all. While free admission may not be a realistic goal for most museums at this time, don't let it be a barrier to improving inclusivity. Start now in small ways. What can we all do to provide more welcoming, more inclusive spaces for our communities?



SANYA PLESHAKOV



DEBORAH TUYTENS



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Alyssa Leier
Curator: The
Exploration
Place

NAWHULNA: THE TIME IS RIGHT

The Exploration Place, Lheidli T'enneh
and the rethinking of a local museum



In 2017, The Exploration Place Museum and Science Centre, in Prince George, and the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, received a Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming for their new permanent gallery, *Hodul'eh-a: A Place of Learning*, which, in the words of the award citation, "serves as a model for how Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities can work together to reclaim traditional spaces, protect cultural assets and promote a greater understanding and respect for Indigenous history and experiences." The award celebrated a new gallery in The Exploration Place, but it also recognized a shift in the way a regional museum thinks, works with and represents the First Nation in whose territory it is located.

When it first re-opened in 2001, The Exploration Place's *Ted Williams History Hall* exhibited photographs and artifacts depicting life during the earliest pioneer days in Prince George, the impact that Euro-Canadian settlers had on the landscape and how the landscape shaped the community socially, culturally, and environmentally. The History Hall conveyed a sense of the resiliency and determination that early Euro-Canadian settlers showed in creating the community of Prince George; however, what it failed to convey was how Euro-Canadian settler society affected the Lheidli T'enneh people whose traditional territory includes

Controversies and difficult conversations have emerged from the presentation of this information, which was new to some members of the public and challenged some non-Indigenous views of our regional history.

the Prince George town-site. While there was a separate gallery, *All the Time We Have Lived on the Land*, exploring the seasonal round and displaying some Dakelh material culture, the exhibits did not represent Lheidli T'enneh culture or portray their resiliency and determined efforts to keep their culture alive in the face of colonial oppression and loss of lands and resources. The museum was missing valuable insight and a large piece of our region's history. Realizing that it needed to change, in 2006 the museum embarked on research that ultimately resulted in two temporary exhibits, each one diving deeper into controversial and unexplored topics, namely residential schools and the first public discussion of the 1913 expulsion of the Lheidli T'enneh from their village site. The success of this work expanded the basis of trust between the museum and the Lheidli T'enneh and culminated in 2013 with an award-winning, third temporary exhibit, *Cultural Expressions*, to coincide with the Lheidli T'enneh's hosting of the Provincial Elders Gathering.

The museum, in partnership with the Lheidli T'enneh, has continued to work towards the common goal of telling a more complete story of Prince George's history by correcting the lacunae in our galleries while developing programs and deepening relationships with the local Indigenous community.



We are working together to raise the level of literacy on the sometimes-dark history of post-contact relationships between Euro-Canadian settlers and the First Nations of the area. Controversies and difficult conversations have emerged from the presentation of this information, which was new to some members of the public and challenged some non-Indigenous views of our regional history. Since a large portion of Prince George's non-Indigenous population did not have any insight into this history, these exhibits reset the museum's relationship with its non-Indigenous audience as well.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the role high staff retention played in the building and support of this relationship. The Exploration Place has focused on this relationship and made sure that individuals in permanent, core positions are the ones working with the Lheidli T'enneh on new projects and initiatives. This has allowed for a deepening of trust between core staff involved at The Exploration Place and the Elders at Lheidli T'enneh as they have continued to work together.

Opening of Hodul'eh-a: A Place of Learning on June 21, 2017

Photo credit:
James Doyle

Opposite page: The gallery entrance to Hodul'eh: A Place of Learning is built to look like a contemporary take on a Lheidli T'enneh traditional pit-house. Photo credit: Exploration Place Museum and Science Centre



Opening of
Hubodul'eh: Mary
Gouchie and Our
Living Languages on
September 14th, 2019
Photo credit:
James Doyle

Beginning in 2016, the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and The Exploration Place embarked on the creation of a new permanent gallery that would explore the Lheidli T'enneh material and oral culture. The Lheidli T'enneh Nation Chief and Council as well as the Lheidli Elders Group engaged in multiple consultations and made vastly significant contributions to the conception, content, language, and style of the gallery. We drove out to the community several times and held meetings at The Exploration Place only when more convenient for the Elders. Through community consultation we made sure that we were following protocol and asking for assistance in a respectful and meaningful manner. This included paying honorariums when appropriate.

Consultation is not something that happens overnight, and it isn't something that should be done if constructive criticism isn't going to be accepted. The timeline has always been important and neither organization wanted to rush important decisions. We made sure to take any criticism with humility. When appropriate, we laughed at ourselves; sometimes with a group of Elders laughing

Consultation is not something that happens overnight, and it isn't something that should be done if constructive criticism isn't going to be accepted.

with us. We made mistakes along the way but the journey to completion was an important one. We discovered firsthand the importance of friendship, inclusiveness, and the strength of co-operation.

On June 21st of 2017, the gallery titled, *Hodul'eh-a; A Place of Learning*, was opened. This gallery is a partnership: The Exploration Place and Lheidli T'enneh opened it in celebration together. In addition to the opening of this gallery, The Exploration Place and the Lheidli T'enneh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU has formalized our hand-shake agreements and has protected both the Lheidli T'enneh and The Exploration Place from potential staff turnover and policy changes. The goal of the MOU is to protect and preserve the cultural assets of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation while sharing their traditions, from their perspective. It clarifies the role The Exploration Place will play as the designated repository for Lheidli T'enneh cultural materials and establishes a protocol for access, research, display, preservation, and collection of these objects and stories.

The mutual goal of the organizations is to gradually bring Lheidli T'enneh materials into one secure space, currently The Exploration Place, under a single database and under the legal ownership of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. As expertise, time and funds permit, the Lheidli T'enneh may determine to move their collection into their own Cultural Centre in the future.

With the signing of the MOU on June 21, 2017, we began long-term repatriation work with the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. The MOU transferred the legal ownership of all Lheidli T'enneh materials in The Exploration Place to the Lheidli T'enneh Nation. It also allowed The Exploration Place to assist in the repatriation of Lheidli collections from other organizations.

Both partners recognize that repatriation can be a long and complex process. Because the basis of our relationship is friendship, we are confident we can work together to develop ceremony and protocols for the repatriations that will respect traditions and celebrate our collective futures.

While the work is by no means complete, the relationship with the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation has been strengthened. The trust enjoyed between the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and The Exploration Place has grown over two decades of mutual effort. The history of Canada is being rewritten as we strive to correct past misconceptions and wrongs.

There are several new and exciting partnership projects in the works with the Lheidli T'enneh and we are enthused to be a part of them. We currently have two members of the Lheidli T'enneh that sit on our Board of Trustees. One is an elected representative, and the other saw the value in having their voice heard at the table. As one Elder told The Exploration Place Chief Executive Officer, Tracy Calogheros and I, now is the time for these sorts of projects and now is the time for meaningful engagement. The time is right; Nawhulna!

The trust enjoyed between the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and The Exploration Place has grown over two decades of mutual effort. The history of Canada is being rewritten as we strive to correct past misconceptions and wrongs.



ALYSSA LEIER

This image features two Elders as they visit the *Cultural Expressions* Exhibit in 2013 during the BC Elders Gathering. Photo credit: Dave Milne



Nataley Nagy
Executive
Director:
Kelowna
Art Gallery

Laura Wyllie
Curator of
Learning &
Engagement:
Kelowna Art
Gallery

Jennifer Garner
Education &
Programming
Coordinator:
Kelowna
Museums

TRANSFORMATIVE ENGAGEMENT & RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Our Lives Through Our Eyes: Nk'Mip Children's Art



When introducing this shared exhibition between the Kelowna Art Gallery and the Kelowna Museums Society at the BC Museums Association Conference in Prince George, we felt it was necessary to include the words of guest curator Andrea Walsh, Associate Professor of Anthropology from the University of Victoria. Walsh, who has worked with the elders and families connected to the Nk'Mip Day School for eighteen years, says:

“The story of Nk'Mip Day School between 1932-42 is unique considering the larger context of Indigenous childhood in Canada during the 20th century. The achievements and successes of the syilx children who attended the Nk'Mip school during that time are all the more outstanding considering the ways colonialism and systemic racism contextualized their lives. The syilx students worked together with their teacher, Mr. Anthony Walsh, to create drawings, paintings, stories, and plans that honoured syilx/Okanagan language and culture and documented their everyday lives. The students' production of art and drama based on their Okanagan identity and history became nationally and internationally renowned.



The achievements and successes of the syilx children who attended the Nk’Mip school during that time are all the more outstanding considering the ways colonialism and systemic racism contextualized their lives.

It is remarkable that the artwork that was displayed in this exhibition survived to tell this important story of Indigenous children’s culture, and talent. The story of the Nk’Mip Day School changed dramatically after Mr. Anthony Walsh resigned from his post as a teacher. His successor turned his attention to a curriculum based on religion and stripped the classroom of the children’s artworks and burned them in a fire, along with the paper mache masks they created for their acclaimed dramatic productions.

Today, the story of the Nk’Mip Day School, its students, their teacher, and the innovative art program, is one that the Osoyoos Indian Band tells proudly as a part of their artistic and cultural heritage. The Osoyoos Indian Band has highlighted the art and drama in educational and community youth-centred programs and the story is featured as part of the Nk’Mip Desert Heritage Centre exhibits and programming.

In the Okanagan today, there is a widespread need and desire to walk a path of reconciliation in a manner that is locally relevant and respectful. For that reason, we developed a working group that has been meeting since 2016 to respond to the Calls to Action identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. Early on, the group decided to bring the Witness Blanket to the Kelowna Art Gallery in 2019, as a centrepiece for the local reconciliation conversation. The Witness Blanket has



been described as Canada’s “national monument to recognize the atrocities of the Residential School Era, honour the children, and symbolize ongoing reconciliation.” Unfortunately, in 2018, due to wear and tear the Witness Blanket stopped touring.

Nevertheless, the group remained committed to working together to offer meaningful local engagement with the national topic of reconciliation. As a result, our working group shifted its focus to the student art of the Nk’Mip Day School and its theme of resilience. We were diligent to learn and follow protocols advised by our local elders. On behalf of our organizations, an elder requested permission from the Chief of the Osoyoos Indian Band and the Chief of the West Bank First Nations to display the children’s art from the Nk’Mip Day School. The Kelowna Art Gallery and Kelowna Museums Society agreed to create a shared exhibition and began collaboratively planning public and school programming, workshops, and celebrations. Multiple grants provided both focus and resources to mobilize new opportunities for local engagement with the national need for reconciliation.

Elder Caroline Baptiste at the opening reception looking closely at some of the pictures of her and her friends when they attended the day school

Opposite page top: Guest Curator Andrea Walsh (left), elder Jane Stelkia sharing at the opening reception some of her fond memories of the day school and their teacher.

Opposite page bottom: Workshop for the UBC Okanagan Education Faculty, 100 Teacher Candidates came in over 2 days to experience the full school tour experience we created.

This is what should have happened... imagine how different our country would look if all Indigenous children had been encouraged to celebrate their culture, their language, and their practices.

— *Chief Clarence Louie*

We decided to present this project at the BCMA Conference because it is an example of how strong relationships can impact and inform the work we do as museums and galleries, large and small. In collaboration with our partners and local Indigenous community, we were able to share this truly remarkable story of the Nk'Mip Day School and offer public programs that focused on the syilx/Okanagan people, their language, perspectives, and practices.

Once the exhibition was on display in January of 2019, the variety of programming we offered for this exhibition contributed to diversifying and engaging audiences in a period of significant social change. Our tour program engaged in many conversations with the public about Truth and Reconciliation. As partners, we also worked with local elders to train staff and develop and deliver programs that taught the public about traditional Indigenous perspectives and practices. These elders and their children were excellent at creating the necessary conditions to ensure all visitors felt safe and comfortable to engage in dialogue and ask questions. All programs offered the community a chance to learn more about the Okanagan nsyilxcən language. The elders also provided consultation on all activities developed for our school programs.

While facilitating various school and public programs, we created opportunities to share this story and knowledge with a

wide range of visitors. Engaging our visitors in dialogue around current conditions and conversations around the history of Indian Residential Schools in Canada demonstrated the transformative potential of arts and culture. During programs that engaged youth in the content of this exhibition, we discussed the value in learning this living history as a member of the Okanagan community and how we can continue to build strong relationships with the syilx/Okanagan community.

Both organizations also made a commitment to acknowledge the importance of contemporary Indigenous artists by commissioning artist Taylor Baptiste to create original works to be included in this exhibition. Taylor Baptiste is the granddaughter of Francis Baptiste, one of the students who attended the Nk'Mip Day School. A local educator herself, Taylor has taught us how she continues to share this story of Nk'Mip and her family's personal connection to it. Many teachers in the local school district were inspired by this project as an opportunity to Indigenize their curriculum, which is a significant part of the newly redesigned curriculum in BC. Our working group that came together originally to plan this project, have all agreed we will continue to regularly meet to develop future exhibition projects and programs that offer opportunities for our community to engage in transformative learning and connecting with Indigenous



School tour at the Kelowna Art Gallery



communities. In addition, the legacy of this project will strengthen working relations between current and new project partners. The success of this project will attract others to join the original working group and continue the local journey to reconciliation. As this group grows, this will strengthen our engagement and relationships with Indigenous communities.

Our goal was to demonstrate how exhibition programs can provide a transformative engagement, with a focus on strengthening connections with Indigenous communities. Our project presents an example of how these relationships can impact and inform the work we do as museums and galleries. In collaboration with our partners and local Indigenous community, we had over 10,000 visitors experience this exhibition.

In the spirit of the BCMA Conference theme *Spoken Words, Shared Stories*, we concluded our presentation with what Chief Clarence Louie from the Osoyoos Indian Band said at our opening ceremony. He said, "This is what should have happened." He asked us to imagine how different our country would look if all Indigenous children had been encouraged to celebrate their culture, their language, and their practices.



NATALEY NAGY



LAURA WYLLIE



JENNIFER GARNER

Being Small is not a Problem at All...



CAGING THE COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT BEAST

Tips from CCI's Care of Objects in Indigenous Cultural Centres Workshop

Lindsay Foreman

Manager and Curator,
Agassiz-Harrison Historical
Society and Museum

I'm sure that I'm not alone in admitting that, although collections management is one of my favourite tasks, it unfortunately ends up at the bottom of my to-do list. I would love to spend a portion (or all) of each working day immersed in the collection rooms of the Agassiz-Harrison Museum (AHM).

The collection, which includes a variety of archival items and material culture objects, all of which have been accumulated over the past four decades, continues to grow as community members downsize their residences and our organization embraces a "contemporary collecting" approach, documenting events as they happen within our community. Further, as both the composition of the community and the required services to meet its needs continues to change, it is time for the Agassiz-Harrison Historical Society (AHHS) to evaluate its mission and collection policies.

Where do I Begin?

As the only full-time employee, my time is devoted, by necessity, to the most "urgent" tasks. Working with the AHHS and within the Agassiz-Harrison Valley for over a year now, it is clear that these include: acquiring and managing money, engaging with visitors, community members and organizations, and promoting heritage tourism. I feel that I am finally able to "handle" these tasks, and any curveballs that may come with them and that I can now start to turn my attention to organizing and managing our collection. But where do I begin?

My investigations of, and experiences with the collection and its documentation over the past year have identified the following:

1. We do not have a master inventory of any kind (don't even ask about a functional and user-friendly database!);
2. Collection item information is spread amongst different resources: donor/ agreement card, photo card, photo binder, accession record, collection item;
3. Collection item information is only available in single hard copy form – nothing has been digitized or duplicated for safekeeping;

4. Until halfway through 2018, nothing was documented about the use or meaning of individual items to their donors and our community;
5. The location and condition of individual collection items is not recorded anywhere;
6. "Recent" items (i.e., representative of the post-1950 period) have not generally been accepted into the collection or have been actively sought out, and hence we have huge gaps in our community's story.

Does any of this sound familiar?

CCI to the Rescue!

Although collections management is one of my favourite tasks, it unfortunately ends up at the bottom of my to-do list.

Textile storage at the Agassiz-Harrison Museum.
Photo credit: Lindsay Foreman





While I have extensive experience working with and managing archaeological collections from across Canada, my knowledge of handling, storing, and exhibiting items dating to the past 200 years is limited. I have gained some experience and understanding through the *Caring for Museum Collections* course, part of my training towards the Cultural Resource Management Diploma at the University of Victoria. This knowledge has now been enhanced by my participation in the *Care of Objects in Indigenous Cultural Centres* workshop, delivered by Monique Benoit and Jill Plitnikas of the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI), and hosted by the BCMA and Cowichan Tribes in Duncan on October 16 and 17, 2019.

During this workshop, the concept of preventative conservation was emphasized, and participants were provided with the knowledge to identify and mitigate the ten agents of deterioration. We looked at real collection items, completing condition reports for each, and learning how to identify the effects of the different agents. Participants also learned about appropriate methods for handling, transporting, and storing different types of objects. We even had the opportunity to “guess” which materials were used for padding and protecting items in storage and on display in exhibits. Finally, we participated in an emergency preparedness module, with financial and human resource limitations, to determine how we would respond to different types of museum “disasters” and how best to prepare for them before they even happen.

Items that shouldn't be used for collections storage identified at the CCI workshop.

Photo credit: Lindsay Foreman

Archival storage at the Agassiz-Harrison Museum.

Photo credit: Lindsay Foreman



I feel confident diving into the AHM's collection rooms this winter. While I have already managed to do some preliminary sorting of like items, improved the security of collections storage, and dedicated specific areas for storage purposes, I have a long way to go. My volunteers and I will be working to inventory and record the condition of our different collection items and digitizing that information as a backup. We will also be updating our collections policy and identifying documentation areas in need of improvement to ensure that we can better care for and share the stories of each item with our community. And of course there is also the importance of rehousing the items in a safe and cost-effective manner.



LINDSAY FOREMAN

Are you looking for resources to help you tackle some of your collections management tasks?

CHECK OUT THE BCMA BRAIN

museumsassn.bc.ca/brain/tools-and-resources/collections-management-menu/

OR CCI'S WEBSITE

www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute.html

We are also encouraged to contact CCI's conservation experts with questions and concerns (<https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/conservation-experts.html>). They are a wealth of knowledge, so use them!

Bad





SPOTLIGHT ON MUSEUM ED

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.

Storyteller leads visitors during Forbidden Vancouver's Lost Souls of Gastown tour.
Photo credit: Sarah Carlson

UNTOLD HISTORIES

Exploring Community Stories Outside of the Museum

Sarah Carlson




Tomekichi Homma, one of the first Japanese immigrants to settle in Steveston, is highlighted on this Nikkei Stories information panel. Photo credit: Sarah Carlson

Whether it is exploring the seedier side of the city's history with the Vancouver Police Museum's **Sins of the City** tours or experiencing the sights and sounds of the Burrard Dry Docks in North Vancouver with the Shipyards Pals Sal and Sam, the ways in which local history and community stories are being shared is shifting, moving from the museum to the streets as a way of connecting with new audiences and removing barriers. The ways in which these place-based stories are explored can take many forms, including walking tours, interpretive panels in the neighbourhood and virtual storytelling through audio and video. These not only highlight untold histories in our community but also provide a platform for previously unheard voices to share their stories and transform our understanding of the current historical narrative.

Companies like **Forbidden Vancouver** have always operated without brick and mortar as the stories they tell are intricately connected to buildings and places within

NIKKEI STORIES


NIKKEI [NEE KAY] OF JAPANESE DESCENT




1 Tomekichi Homma

Man of the Times

Tomekichi Homma was one of the first Japanese immigrants to settle in Steveston in the early 1880s. The son of a former samurai warrior, Homma was taught to believe in justice, dignity, and equality for all. In Canada, he became a leader in the fight against racial discrimination in the fishing industry and for the right of Japanese Canadians to vote.

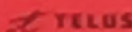


Watch a short video to hear the story by using your mobile device to scan this QR Code, or visit our website at www.nikkeistories.com




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2 First Immigration	7 Martial Arts
3 Steveston Cemetery	8 Beer Buildings
4 Steveston at Work	9 Immigration
5 Steveston Museum	10 Steveston at Steveston



Produced by
Globe & Mail





The ways in which local history and community stories are being shared is shifting, moving from the museum to the streets as a way of connecting with new audiences and removing barriers.

the community. Offering guided tours that share Vancouver’s rich history with a side of theatre, visitors can step into a world of murder and revenge in Gastown, explore Vancouver’s dirtiest Prohibition-era secrets from mobsters to rum-runners, and discover the jaw-dropping beauty and sinister stories of Stanley Park. The first of its kind for Vancouver, **The Really Gay History Tour** is Forbidden Vancouver’s newest tour and brings attention to important community stories that are traditionally left out of the historical narrative.

Researched and developed by storyteller Glenn Tkach, the tour weaves a colourful history of Vancouver’s LGBTQ2+ community and celebrates the successes and struggles of those who fought for acceptance and change. For Glenn, this was a personal passion project and a history that had intrigued him, fuelling his desire to uncover the hidden stories of queer history that he knew had been denied, repressed, buried and erased through the decades. A powerful part of the development process for him was “having the opportunity to sit with individuals who had lived through some of it. Having first-hand accounts of what they experienced and having them entrust him with their personal



stories was really powerful.” “Living in the digital age that we do, where we experience things mostly via screen, there is a hunger for this kind of physical experience”, a personal and human and community connection which Glenn believes these tours provide. By teasing these stories out of the historical record and sharing them as part of an live immersive experience allows visitors “to hear about what happened in the place where it happened, to stand at the building where an event or a protest occurred and to imagine it in its own context, which brings a lot of nuances to the story and to the events told.”

Another way in which the untold stories of our community are brought to life is through self-guided walking tours. Taking advantage of technology that integrates with our mobile devices, like QR codes and iBeacons, recent community video projects like **Black Strathcona, Nikkei Stories, South Asian Stories** and **East End Stories** have increased the visibility of local stories within the community. Illuminating rarely told aspects of Vancouver’s history using information panels at key sites throughout

Forbidden Vancouver storyteller Glenn leads guests on The Really Gay History Tour. Photo credit: Kiri Marr

Opposite page: Forbidden Vancouver storyteller Glenn Tkach leads guests across Davie Street’s rainbow crosswalk on The Really Gay History Tour. Photo credit: Kiri Marr



By teasing these stories out of the historical record and sharing them as part of an live immersive experience allows visitors “to hear about what happened in the place where it happened, to stand at the building where an event or a protest occurred and to imagine it in its own context, which brings a lot of nuances to the story and to the events told.”

the neighbourhood, which contain a QR code that links to a short video. Supported by archival materials, these video clips tell the story of early immigrants, key individuals, like [Jimi Hendrix](#), [Hide Hyodo Shimizu](#), [Shushma Datt](#) and [David Oppenheimer](#), as well as the lively social and political history of each area, including the [Punjabi Market](#) and [Hogan's Alley](#). Virtual reality tours, like the [360 Riot Walk](#), also make use of technology to allow visitors to follow the history in the streets where the 1907 Anti-Asian Riots, a mob that attacked Vancouver's Chinese Canadian and Japanese communities following a demonstration organized by the city's Asiatic Exclusion League, took place.

While technology will continue to advance and transform the way in which we are able to engage with the intersection of place and history, the core of any programming highlighting untold community stories will always be making connections to the important places and personal stories of those who have shaped our history. By providing a broader understanding of neighbourhood or building, these programs also bring awareness to the details that form the layered, complex story of an area and enable visitors to forge personal connections to the history through the use of compelling stories from members of the community.



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.

BC Heritage Fair students learn about the history of Victoria's Chinatown with Chris Adams of Discover the Past tours.

Photo credit: Sarah Carlson

Opposite page top: Named after the Chinese gambling game, Fan Tan Alley in Victoria was once home to a gambling district with restaurants, shops, and opium dens.

Photo credit: Sarah Carlson



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Lunch With

WWJ

RYAN HUNT

Executive Director of the BCMA

Interviewed by Adrian Paradis
Managing Editor: Roundup Magazine

A: Can you tell me about your educational background?

R: I am from Victoria originally. I did my undergrad at UVic in history. I focused specifically on the Middle Ages and on medieval book culture. Upon finishing my BA, I was accepted to do an MA in medieval history at the University of York in the UK.

I went there to study intellectual history, but I started to get more interested in digital humanities. My dissertation involved using social mapping software to map relations between people in late medieval York. After I finished that, I moved with my spouse to London, Ontario, so she could do her Ph.D. at Western University. There, I did an MA in Western's Public History program where I learned more about the public-facing side of history and heritage.

That experience brought me to do an internship at the Oil History Museum of Canada in Oil Springs, Ontario.

A: What drew you to make the jump from intellectual history to community projects and small museums?

R: Having been in academia, I realized that I am less interested in the purely academic side of history and heritage and more interested in how the past and present intersect. Looking at how people identify, learn, and engage with heritage and history is what attracted me to Western's public history program. It was very much about connecting communities with heritage.

I realized that I am less interested in the purely academic side of history and heritage and more interested in how the past and present intersect. Looking at how people identify, learn, and engage with heritage and history

When you start studying history, you don't always think of the ways the past and the present inform each other. Through the public history program at Western, and through some of my own nascent community building in London, is where I got really interested in the outreach side of things.

A: What's your experience been like working in larger and smaller institutions?

R: I've never worked anywhere all that big, but I've worked with organizations that have a big impact.

I think that's pretty normal in the nonprofit sector; there are a lot of organizations that have a big impact, but just have a small and dedicated team. I think the BCMA is like that. From the outside, you might think that the BCMA is a big provincial network that has a ton of people working behind the scenes, but really it's a small group of dedicated people.

The nonprofit sector allows you to develop a really wide range of skills and have a lot of different experiences. For someone like me, who has varied interests, that kind of setting is really enjoyable.

A: Speaking of varied interests, can you tell me how your MakerBus program came about?

R: When I was at Western, my spouse Beth Compton, our friend Kim Martin and I decided to buy a used school bus. Over a period of five years, we transformed it into



MakerBus team teaching how to make giant bubbles at the Mantis Eco Festival.

Canada's first mobile maker-space and technology education classroom. We had 3D printers, drones, electronics, soldering, sewing kits, woodworking stuff; whatever we could beg for or borrow. We used the bus to travel around Southern Ontario and Northern Michigan offering hands-on digital literacy and maker movement education.

We reached around 50,000 people in a five-year period. It was a really rewarding experience because it was just the three of us running things along with an amazing network of volunteers and occasional employees. We even ended up opening a storefront in downtown London in a historic building, and much like my experience in the nonprofit sector, it was like learning on steroids. We needed to figure out metal welding, large engine repair, computer programming, teaching teachers how to code, event planning, and budgeting. If one of us was interested in a topic, we gave ourselves permission to explore it and learn about it so we could teach other people about it.

It was a great, albeit exhausting experience. After five years of doing it, we all needed a break. In that time, Kim had finished her Ph.D. and had a job as a professor at the University of Guelph, I was working full-time with the London Heritage Council, and Beth was working full time on her Ph.D. It meant we were all working, at minimum, 50-hour-weeks if not 80 or 90 hours. We had to make a decision whether the MakerBus would become our full-time jobs or we would continue the full-time jobs we already had. We choose the latter.

I don't regret that choice as the MakerBus had run its course. When we started, there weren't a lot of people talking about the maker-movement in Southern Ontario. By

Our members are so varied and have so many needs and are so willing to experiment that it's something I'm really looking forward to.

the time we finished our five-year period, libraries and schools had their own maker-spaces. I feel like we had a significant impact on the awareness of the maker movement in that community, but they didn't need us to be the engine driving that anymore. The bus is still in London so it may drive again one day, but it would have to be in a more sustainable way.



The MakerBus.



MakerBus Co-Founders Beth Compton (left) and Kimberley Martin (right) in front of the MakerBus prior to renovations.

A: What inspired you to want to work with the BCMA?

R: My spouse and I knew we wanted to return to Victoria, we had really great connections in London and had a lot of fun there, but it never felt like home. At the time I was working for the London Arts Council and the London Heritage Council which were extensions of the city of London so I was already somewhat familiar with working in local government. Then I saw an opportunity to work for the Local Government Management Association of BC (LGMA) in Victoria. I'm very passionate about the impact local governments have on local communities. I think in many ways it's the most action-oriented form of government. Provincial and federal governments can have tremendous impacts, but that impact is often somewhat removed. Local government has that very ground-level approach that fits really well into my belief in community activism. I worked with the LGMA for two years and worked on a communications project to celebrate the association's centennial in 2019. I got to work on a historic video series and do archival research to produce a publication exploring the history of the organization.

It was a really interesting role in that it blended my background in history with my work experience in the local government sector, but my heart is in history and heritage. When I saw the opportunity at the BCMA arise, I thought that would be a great way to blend my scrappy startup experience with my government policy experience. I view this position as the synthesis of a lot of my career thus far and I'm excited to bring my experiences to my role at the BCMA.

A: How does your entrepreneurial experience with startups influence the work you do today for BC museums?

R: Having founded an organization on a shoestring budget, I have an appreciation for the struggles that small museums in BC go through. When working with the BCMA, I really want to keep in mind how we can best serve organizations that are entirely volunteer-run, that rely on grants, and don't have the degree of financial stability that larger organizations do. I want to bring some of those skills to our work with small museums.



A lesson I learned from the MakerBus is to embrace ideas that may seem strange. We had tremendous success thinking outside the box.

A lesson I learned from the MakerBus is to embrace ideas that may seem strange. We had tremendous success with the MakerBus thinking outside the box. You might think that a program that teaches kids how to pick locks might not be something that makes sense, but it ended up being tremendously successful. That kind of willingness to explore unconventional ideas is something that I really want to bring to the BCMA. Our members are so varied and have so many needs and are so willing to experiment that it's something I'm really looking forward to.

A: As someone with a varied amount of experience, do you have any advice for younger people trying to break into the sector?

The museum and heritage sector can have a reputation for not always paying people what they might get paid in other sectors. The vast majority of museums are dependent on grants and unstable revenue sources. Across Canada, there are more people volunteering for museums than there are getting paid by them. As a young person, it can be a really difficult field to make headway in. My advice for young people is to always make sure you're being valued for the work you provide. Everyone who starts in the heritage sector starts from a place of passion, but you should balance passion with being fairly paid.

As a sector, these are conversations we need to have. We need to make sure we're equitable, paying people a living wage, and that we're not forcing people into precarious



MakerBus in London, Ontario, attempting to break a world record for the World's Longest Human Circuit.

financial situations because they're passionate about what they're doing. It's a bit of a downer to tell young people they should be careful how you break into the field, but it's something that people have to be aware of when they enter the nonprofit sector. Sometimes they will have to decline opportunities they might feel passionate about because it doesn't make financial sense.

A: What else can members expect from your time at the BCMA?

R: I really want members to reach out and give me a call. It is always a challenge for our team to reach every museum in our province. While we may not be able to physically visit all of our members, I do want them to feel like they can call or email me at any time. I'm always up for having a talk about challenges, opportunities and ways we can work together.

I'm making it my priority that whenever I'm near a museum and I have the ability, to drop in for a visit. I want people to know who I am so I can learn more about their spaces and challenges. Members should not be surprised if they get a call out of the blue from me, or even see me at their museum. I think the more face-to-face time we can have with our members the better we can serve them.



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Conferences



Whoo's News



Alison Rajah has been appointed as the new Director for Surrey Art Gallery. She has been a member of the Gallery's staff since 2009, most recently in the role of Curator of Education and Engagement. Her curatorial leadership with digital art exhibitions and programs at the Gallery's UrbanScreen has been recognized nationally, and earlier this year, on behalf of the team, she accepted the Canadian Museum Association's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Education, specifically for the Gallery's Indigenous contemporary art education.



Sophia Maher is the new Manager at the Nanaimo Museum. Maher came from Edmonton where she was Director of Guest Service and Security at Rogers Place and prior to that was Managing Director of Visitor Experience at Fort Edmonton Park, one of Canada's largest living history museums. Maher was born in Alberta, but is no stranger to the Island. Her grandmother and mother lived in Nanaimo and Maher said landing the job with Nanaimo Museum is "a dream come true."



Dr. India Rael Young is the new Curator of Art and Images at the Royal BC Museum. Dr. Young, an art historian and curator, specializes in media arts and North American Indigenous arts. She joins the museum and archives from the Princeton University Art Museum, where she was the Andrew W. Mellon Research Specialist in Native American Art. She hopes to help expand understandings of art by building relationships between the Royal BC Museum collections, members of its various departments and the regional communities.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

CAROL FERREIRA

Museum of Surrey

All it took was a quick tour of the Textile Centre at the Museum of Surrey with the volunteer coordinator, and Carol Ferreira was hooked. Ten years later, Carol has become an invaluable part of the Museum. “Carol is greatly appreciated and well-liked by both staff and the other volunteers,” says Linda Montague, textile specialist. “Carol is a valued member of our Museum family. We are extremely lucky to have her.”

Carol is an experienced weaver who worked in the Archives Library at Pacific Press for 20 years before her retirement. Her unique background made her the perfect fit for the museum’s Hooser Library. The library, donated by Honey Hooser, a Surrey settler and mother of the museum’s first curator, Doug Hooser, is extensive – it has books and magazines from many time periods and in many languages, all of which are focused on textiles.

Carol’s focus has been on organizing information for the Honey Hooser Library in order to make it more accessible to the public. She has compiled a comprehensive directory of all the books by topic, from Afghans to Weaving. The directory is available physically in a binder in the library, and it is also available in the Surrey Archives & Museums Online Access. Another challenging project was assembling a glossary of textile-specific terms to help visitors understand the library collection. It is a wealth of information for the historian and artisan alike – the glossary is over 900 pages long!



Carol is a vital part of our Textile Tours offered to college students, seniors’ groups, textile guilds and other interested groups. She gives an informative presentation that includes a talk about the life of Honey Hooser and her legacy of donated textiles and books.

Carol regularly writes a delightful “Textale” that is added to the Textile Volunteer newsletter. Picking fascinating and fun topics from textile history, she entertains her fellow volunteers with clever and imaginative stories. Take for instance this excerpt on weavers’ apprentices in Paris during the 1200s: “they were treated as the masters’ sons, lived in his home amid regulated numbers of looms and bolts of cloth for sale at the window ledge... After years of training, they became valets – accomplished weavers working to buy their own permits from the King, which became hereditary. Some lucky few managed to marry the master’s daughter!”

Best of all, Carol enjoys the time spent at the museum: “It feels like it’s entertainment, not work.”

Success by ASSOCIATION

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.

BCMA Brain

BCMA's BRAIN is your learning centre on our website. Discover upcoming learning opportunities, as well as practical tools and resources on a variety of topics related to museum operations, including new landing pages for advocacy, diversity and inclusion and Indigenous culture and heritage. Content in all areas of the BRAIN will grow over time.

We welcome contributions and feedback from BCMA members and the sector at-large. Feel free to share ideas for new resources and innovative practices by emailing: BCMAbrain@museumsassn.bc.ca.

Tap into the collective knowledge of our sector at museumsassn.bc.ca/brain/

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/

2020 Webinar Sponsor



BCMA Podcast

The BCMA has a 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 provide a job board for the B.C. museum community! Check it out at museumsassn.bc.ca/members/job-board/

Who 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



We're Growing! Welcome to new members:

Individual Members

- Bridgette Badowich
- Carla Bitter
- Teresa Carlson
- Janice Nelson
- Megan Pruiett
- Colleen Sharpe
- Saintfield Wong

Volunteers

- Melissa Borgerson
- Gwyneth Evans
- Heather Flynn
- Casarina Hocevar
- Kirstan Schamuhn

Institutional

- Ashton Armoury Museum
- Boundary Historical Society
- Johnstone Strait Killer Whale Interpretive Centre Society

Back Cover: Tsleil-Waututh artist Ocean Hyland and her mother Charlene Aleck in front of her newly installed artwork at the Learning House at the Burnaby Village Museum
Photo credit: Janet Hoffar courtesy of BVM

Learning House

