



roundUp

BRITISH COLUMBIA MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION
No 259 | SUMMER 2014



roundup

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Non-Traditional Collaboration

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Cover photo Landmark statues in Penticton. Photo: Ian Mackinder.
 [Left] Wine barrels in Penticton. Photo: Gord Wylie.

Editorial Policy *Roundup* is the quarterly publication of the BC Museums Association, providing a forum to highlight BC museums and galleries, and best practices relevant to museum and gallery professionals in the province. Quarterly themes are established by an editorial committee, who direct the managing editor to solicit related content. It is recommended that people contact the managing editor before submitting unsolicited content. Unsolicited content is reviewed by the editorial committee for suitability for the issue. Though the content published in *Roundup* does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the BC Museums Association, the BCMA reserves the right to reject or require edits to content at any point in the publication process due to suitability or space restrictions.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Peter Ord

At the 2006 BC Museums Association conference in Prince George, a plenary question was asked of the attendees: *Are museums essential in the community?* It was a bold attempt at pushing museum professionals to make their institutions more relevant in the socio-economic lives of their communities. It also provided the impetus for museums and galleries to forge new partnerships with groups who they may not traditionally work with, in order to make their presence more meaningful. Exploring new audiences and relationships seemed to be at the crux of the discussion.

In 2008 at the CMA conference in Victoria, Martin Segger of the Maltwood Gallery and Jacqueline Gijssen of the City of Vancouver presented an insightful session called *Looking Ahead: Museums @ 2020*. Jacqueline had incorporated some of the feedback from the Prince George plenary into an interesting idea: Human societies behave very much like natural ecosystems, both are made up of multi-faceted networks of interconnected communities whose strength relies on each 'community' being strong and well-connected to each other. The point was that the museum sector represents one of these 'communities' and the strength of our sector's role in BC society depends on the strength of our connections with many other 'communities'

or sectors beyond the museum's traditional partners.

Have museum and galleries embraced this call for relevance? If so, what are the lessons we have learned? If not, what can we do to get the momentum going? How can we develop partnerships with Municipalities, School Districts, government ministries, charities and social NGO's? Are we any closer to realising this concept, with the year 2020 only six years away? Judging from the amazing submissions to this summer edition of *Roundup*, the answer seems to be an emphatic Yes. Examples like Surrey Museum's new exhibit that incorporates outreach work with refugees, or research by Lorraine Bell and Dr. Darlene Clover of the University of Victoria on adult education and civic engagement, show that our sector is able to branch out.

This topic will also be pursued at the BCMA conference in Penticton this October. Titled *The Third Space – Reimagining our cultural landscape*, the discussions are sure to build on the important ideas explored at sessions in Prince George and Victoria. On behalf of the BCMA council, I extend a big hometown invitation to join your peers and friends to keep this discussion going. As they like to say here in Penticton – "No Bad Days in the Peach City"!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Theresa Mackay



Change is in the air. A bit of a cliché, but at the BC Museums Association, it rings true. We've heard from you that you care for this association deeply, but you do want change, so we've taken your feedback to heart and are putting new initiatives in place that will get us there.

One new initiative now underway is the review your membership benefits, including a close look at the Listserv. On the positive side, the Listserv keeps everyone in touch with the latest happenings in our community across the province. From jobs, to new exhibition openings, to people looking for advice, it is the best way to find out what is going on! But we know you don't like the deluge of emails and large attachments, or the inability to pre-select your particular areas of interest. As a result, this summer we are looking at new options that will protect the buzz-worthiness of the Listerv but give us all a more contemporary platform for engagement and connection. For more on that, see our Membership Matters section in this issue [another new initiative!].

Also new is the development of our Innovation Committee, which is tasked with encouraging innovation in our sector. Co-chaired by BCMA Council members Hanna Cho and David Alexander, the group includes BCMA members Darrin Martens from Nisga'a Museum, Bev Kennedy from Kilby Historic Site, Thomas Hepburn from NGX Interactive, and Connie Baxter from City of Richmond. Keep your eyes open for some interesting initiatives this committee has planned as they introduce us to the concepts of innovation and innovative thinking.

These are just a few of the changes afoot as we build a new, revitalized BCMA that connects our community province-wide. I look forward to sharing more with you in the weeks ahead.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

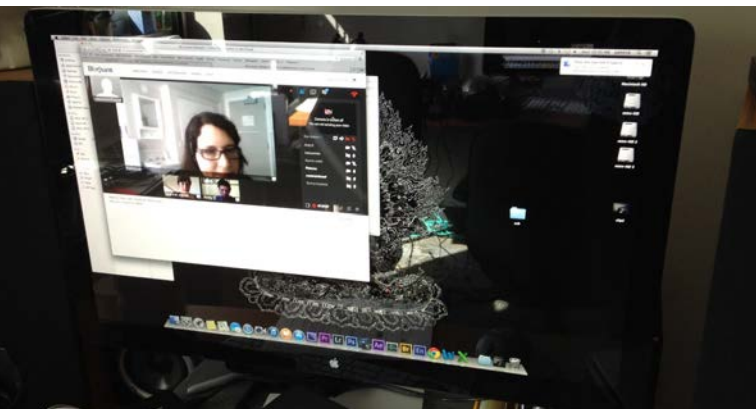


Spring Workshops a Success!

In March and April the BCMA ran four collections management workshops across the province and one Focus Forum on commemorating the First World War. We hosted collections management sessions in Creston, Prince George, Vancouver and Kelowna. Learners studied everything from how to manage digital collections, to organization principles, to storage tips.

In Victoria, online across the province, and around the world, we had over 100 people attend our forum, *BC Remembers the First World War*, the first provincial forum of its kind in Canada. Attendees had a chance to develop and share plans as well as connect with invited First Nations, Ukrainian, Japanese and Chinese cultural groups. One of the outcomes was a page of resources for our community to assist with commemoration plans. You can find the resources [here](#).

Thank you goes to Royal Roads University, Heritage BC, and the City of Victoria for partnering with us on the Focus Forum, as well as our gallery and museum partners and Canadian Heritage for supporting the collections management workshops. Watch for our new line up of Spring workshops to be announced this Fall!



[Top] Piper plays It's a Long Way to Tipperary to open BC Remembers forum.

[Above] Online collaborators from across the province take part in BC Remembers forum.

This project is funded in part by the Museums Assistance Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. « Ce projet est financé en partie par le Programme d'aide aux musées du ministère du Patrimoine canadien. »



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien

Canada



Royal Roads
UNIVERSITY

Heritage BC

CITY OF
VICTORIA

Honouring Our Community

Each year the BCMA presents the Museums in Motion Awards to individuals, institutions or agencies in BC who are deserving of the highest accolades. Celebrating excellence and innovation in the museum, gallery, archive, and heritage fields, the awards recognize the outstanding work being done in our community. There are three types of awards to be won:

Award of Merit for a recent outstanding, innovative, or creative achievement.

Distinguished Service Award for an individual who has made a unique and substantial contribution on a provincial basis over an extended period of time.

Corporate Service Award for a business that has been innovative in its support and contributions over an extended period of time.

Nominations have been accepted for this year's awards and the Awards Committee, chaired by Kirstin Clausen, is hard at work with their review. Join us at the BCMA Museums in Motion Awards Banquet at Conference 2014 in October as we honour the best in our province!

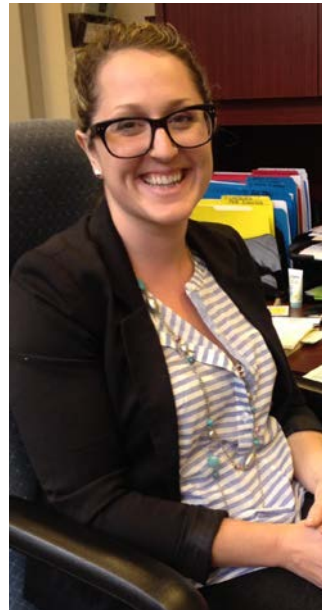
Resource Launch: Collections Care and Handling Library

NEW! The BCMA has launched an online library of resources that will assist you in the care and handling of your collections. The library includes handbooks, guides, and web sites, including a specially-produced series of how-to videos called *Your Museum Coach*. The resources are organized by topic area and include materials from organizations around the world such as the Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand, and SHARE Museums East, UK. You can find the library [here](#).

This project is funded in part by the Museums Assistance Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. « Ce projet est financé en partie par le Programme d'aide aux musées du ministère du Patrimoine canadien. »



Canada



Welcome Jen Demler!

Jen Demler will be assisting with a review the BCMA Listserv as part of our membership benefits review initiative. She will help us determine if there is a more contemporary online platform that will better serve our members, and enable all of us to engage and connect with each other. Jen is a Master of Arts in Tourism Management student and is working on the project as part of her graduate degree requirements. This project continues the partnership between BCMA and the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Royal Roads University. Welcome Jen!





Conference hotel Penticton Lakeside Resort

Conference 2014: The Third Space- Re-imagining our Cultural Landscape Penticton October 22-25

'Third space' isn't home, and isn't work – it's more like the living room of society at large. – Michael Hickey

Join us for Conference 2014 as we explore the importance of the third space in contemporary Canadian society- a gathering place where cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, heritage sites, and cultural centres live, separate from, but reflective of, the spaces of work and home. Discover the Third Space and how to re-imagine concepts of creativity and connection, learning, and community involvement in creating engaging social spaces.

Conference keynotes include **Kelvin Browne**, CEO of Toronto's Gardiner Museum, and **Professor Jack Lohman** of the Royal BC Museum. New this year is a reinvented BC Reports called *Tales from the Trenches*, and an Immersion Day that allows you to participate in specialized learning, such as marine and transport museums and First Nations cultural centres. For a full program schedule, click [here](#).

Register today and don't miss out on the opportunity to connect with your community!

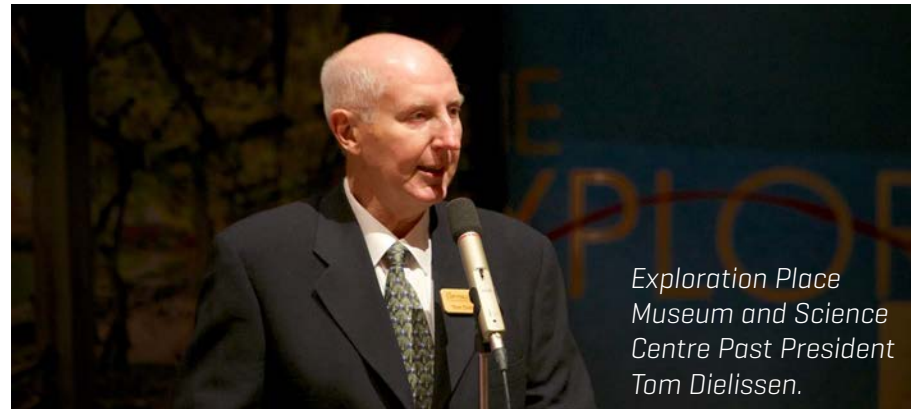
[Left] BCMA Council at the annual conference in Parksville in October, 2013. Left to right: Lillian Hunt, Peter Ord [President], Dennis Oomen, Leah Best [Past President], Jon Irwin [Treasurer], Hanna Cho, Deborah Hudson [Secretary], and David Alexander [Vice President]. Council member Erika Stenson is not in the photo. BCMA mascot "Owl" is also in the picture, held by Deborah Hudson. Photo: Jordan Johns/Nanaimo Museum.





WHOO'S NEWS

Sandra Sandy has taken on the role of Board Chair at the Exploration Place Museum and Science Centre in Prince George. Sandra is a long-standing board member having served as Treasurer for the past several years. She is excited to take on this new role at the helm! Former Chair **Tom Dielissen** has stayed on as Past President. Dielssen's contributions to the organization have been significant, including leading the institution through a major expansion which opened in 2001, a rebranding, the change of CEO's in 2003, negotiation of a multi-year funding agreement with the Regional District, and introduction of a group marketing program, The Golden Raven.



*Exploration Place
Museum and Science
Centre Past President
Tom Dielissen.*

Gary Mitchell, Vice President of Archives, Collection and Knowledge and Provincial Archivist at the Royal BC Museum is retiring in June. Gary served the museum and archives in a number of different roles for thirty years, he has been granted the title Provincial Archivist Emeritus.



WISH YOU WERE HERE

International recognition for Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden

This March, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden hosted the famed National Geographic photographer, Sam Abell, and hundreds of guests who enjoyed his glowing reviews of an exhibit of Evelyn Nodwell's photographs taken in remote Guizhou, China. Following the exhibit's major success at the Garden, Evelyn has been invited to join a cultural exchange to China and display her work at the Guiyang Art Museum – a world renowned centre for contemporary art. The garden was recently named the World's Top City Garden by National Geographic.

Elizabeth Hazell, Manager of Operations and Development at Craigdarroch Castle, and Craigdarroch Castle board member **Astrid Braunschmidt** have been listed as finalists for the Top 20 Under 40 Business and Community Achievement Awards for Vancouver Island.

Matthew Lovegrove will be moving into the role of Curator at the Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives in June 2014. He has been at the Museum for 3.5 years as the Curatorial Assistant where he has spear-headed a number of digital interpretation projects including the Time Travel Sunshine Coast walking tour that was awarded an Interpretation Canada and Heritage BC award in 2013. Outgoing Curator **Kimiko Hawkes** will continue her work as a cultural educator on the Sunshine Coast while pursuing her career as an artist.



In April, Nisga'a Museum director **Darrin Martens** accepted an award on behalf of the Nisga'a Nation and its museum from the Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC at the International Aboriginal Tourism Conference held in Whistler. The award recognized the Nisga'a Museum as an outstanding cultural centre and attraction. This prestigious award recognizes a cultural/interpretive centre or attraction that is committed to ensuring cultural authenticity in sharing knowledge, histories, exhibits and traditions.

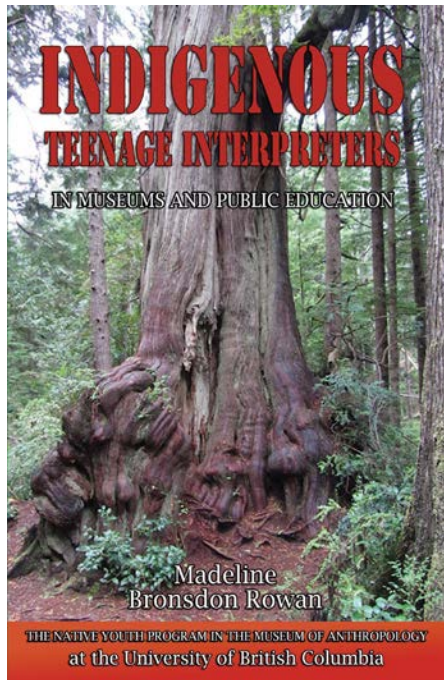


Sheila Perry has been appointed Executive Director of The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford. Ms Perry takes over from previous Executive Director **Suzanne Greening** who has left to be the Executive Director of the new Audain Gallery currently under construction in Whistler. Perry served most recently as Director of The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in St. John's, Newfoundland.



Kyle Wells has joined the Royal BC Museum team as a communications specialist, starting in May. Kyle comes from a media background, having been a reporter for Black Press newspapers in Victoria and *Monday Magazine* for the past two years. Prior to that, Kyle worked as a reporter with the *Powell River Peak*. **Shawn Embree** also recently joined the RBCM team, bringing with him a history of success in sales and marketing. Working as a sales representative covering British Columbia and Western Canada, Shawn made a name for himself with notable brands such as Felt bicycles and Kali protective helmets. As Sales Coordinator, Shawn is responsible for implementing marketing promotions, and sales initiatives, with the goal of increasing global exposure, and visitor attendance. The RBCM also welcomed **Erik Lambertson** as its Corporate Communications Officer. A long-time fan of the Museum and Archives, he is extremely happy to be promoting the activities, successes and stories of the Royal BC Museum to its stakeholders, the public and media.

The Richmond Museum welcomes **Sheila Hill** as Curator of Exhibitions and **Asako Takigawa** as Museum Assistant Intern.



INDIGENOUS TEENAGE INTERPRETERS IN MUSEUMS AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

by Madeline Bronsdon
Rowan (Curator, Education
and Ethnology, UBC Museum
of Anthropology, 1975–86)

Indigenous Teenage Interpreters in Museums and Public Education describes the development of the Native Youth Program at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC.

“Wise, moving insights into a little-known field.”

— Dr. John E. Dixon, *Professor of Political and Moral Philosophy at Capilano University, author, contributor to In the Agora: The Public Face of Canadian Philosophy, past president of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, and Senior Advisor (1990–91) on aboriginal justice issues to the Minister of Justice for Canada, from his [review on Amazon.com](http://review.on.Amazon.com).*

“This book shows how the students learned to give lectures and tours to museum visitors about their heritage and culture. Rowan’s account ... is reflective and honest. Rowan and her team show the rest of us working in museums that we have a responsibility to enable indigenous youth to have a more important role in museums and in the broader community. I highly recommend this refreshing and illuminating story to those who believe or need to be reminded that museums can be the catalyst for social change; the kind of change that helps heal and gives a stronger voice to indigenous people.”

— Susan Enowitz, *Emeritus Executive Director of the Coronado Museum of History & Art*

“If she ever got sufficient financial support, she would revolutionize museum education and we would all be better for it.

— Dr. Michael Ames, *Director, Museum of Anthropology, UBC (1974–1997, 2002–2004)*

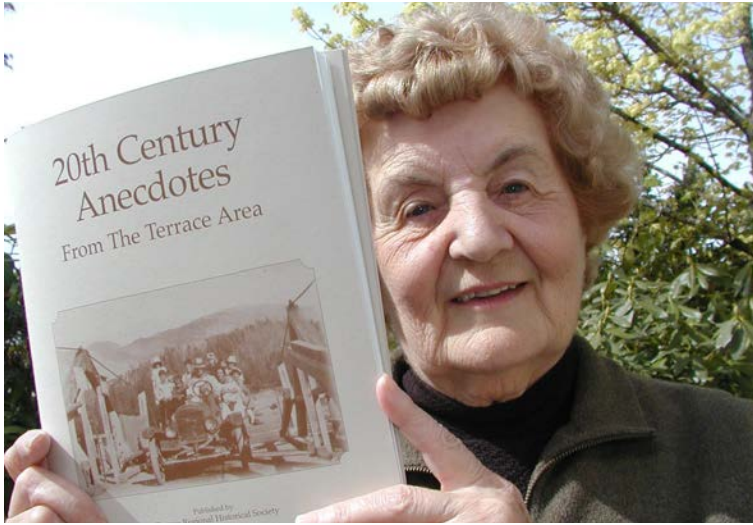
Diamond River Books
ISBN: 978-0-9878738-3-5

The Heritage Park Museum in Terrace welcomed four summer students to their team. From left to right: **Terra Nord**, Heritage Garden Coordinator; **Melodie Van Der Meer**, Educational Facilitator; **Lesley Beddie**, Marketing and Events Coordinator; and **Laura How**, Community Programmer. Missing from the photo is **Blake Hawkins**, Digital Programmer.



In April, **Reg Wilford** stepped into the Site Visitor Experience Manager position at Fort Langley National Historic Site. Reg has worked extensively with heritage attractions and interpretive environments as a supplier both at 3DS [Three Dimensional Services Inc.] and his own consultation firm, Cascadia Cultural Services Inc. In addition to founding Cascadia Cultural Services Inc. in 2005 and working with a broad range of museum, heritage and interpretive groups around the world, Reg is the VP of the Themed Attractions Association of Canada, and an active member and board member with heritage and interpretive groups throughout the BC and Washington state.





Mamie Kerby. Photograph by Kat Lee.

The Heritage Park Museum in Terrace is sad to pass on the news that long-time volunteer **Mamie Kerby** passed away in February at the age of 91. Mrs. Kerby's vision, hard work, and perseverance led to the founding of Heritage Park Museum in the early 1980s. Mrs. Kerby was, without doubt, the driving force behind the whole museum project. With dogged determination, she assembled a group of community volunteers with a whole range of skills to identify, move, and re-assemble eight log buildings. Mrs. Kerby then went on to serve as the museum's full-time director (on a completely volunteer basis) for the next sixteen years, from 1983 until 1999. In the end, the whole community of Terrace was the beneficiary of her dedication. The staff at the Museum hope to honour Mamie Kerby and her legacy by continuing to operate Heritage Park Museum for the people of our city, and to continue collecting artifacts, historical photographs and other materials that document the rich history of this region.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

New Solidarity on Ships and Shore exhibit opens

Karen Lee, Curator of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site Feature Exhibit: Solidarity on Ships and Shore: Organizing the West Coast Fishing Industry gave a tour of the exhibit for opening night on May 1. The exhibit examines the fascinating history of the many organizations—from labour unions to co-operatives and credit unions—formed to support individuals working in the fishing industry.





NVMA 2013.INV.708

FAVOURITE THING

**LUC DESMARAIS, COLLECTION
COORDINATOR AT THE NORTH
VANCOUVER MUSEUM
AND ARCHIVES, SHARES A
FAVOURITE OBJECT FROM
THE NVMA COLLECTION WITH
ROUNDUP READERS.**

This 7 foot tall painted salmon figure is one of my favourite objects in the collection at the North Vancouver Museum and Archives.

Affectionately nicknamed "Shipyard Salmon", this piece was previously undocumented and unknown to current staff at the Museum. Last year, as our museum technicians worked on a collection clean-up project at our storage warehouse, it was found deep in a dimly lit bay that had been inaccessible for years.



WISH YOU WERE HERE

Xwalacktun Print Release

On Thursday, March 13, 2014, Artists for Kids released its latest print by native carver Xwalacktun at the Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art. Entitled *Inchult Snaam*, which means "One Strong Spirit", this moulded-paper plus abalone shell print is inspired by his carving of the doors to the gallery. Just as the reception began, the stunning edition of 45 prints was sold-out.

We then discovered through archival photos that the salmon figure has a strong local provenance dating back to the 1950s-60s at Burrard Dry Dock, where it was a fixture at annual staff salmon derbies. Participants could pose for photos beside the giant figure with their prize winning catch.

Working at the shipyard was not only a job, but a way of life. Events like derbies, picnics, and tug of war or bowling leagues were essential in fostering community and boosting staff morale. These events are an important part of the social history of North Vancouver and the Shipyard Salmon is a great representation of that story.

The Shipyard Salmon is also a good example of what you can unearth in a collection review project. You never know what might be looking back at you when you shed light on the dark corners of your storage space!



NVMA 27-1180



Visitors could look through peep holes to view presentations of six moments in Vancouver's recent history when the production, consumption, and censorship of sexually explicit materials took centre stage. From *Sex Talk in the City* at the Museum of Vancouver. Photograph by Rebecca Blissett.

ADULT EDUCATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & MUSEUMS IN CANADA AND THE UK

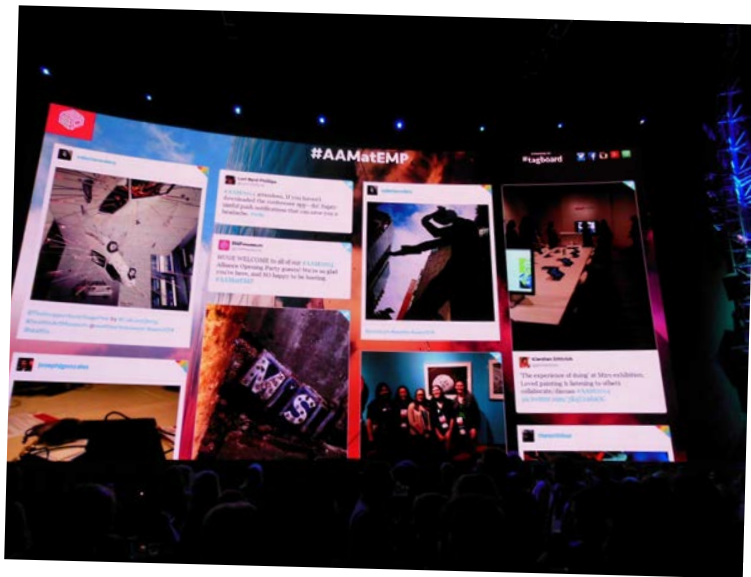
Lorraine Bell and
Dr. Darlene Clover

WISH YOU WERE HERE

American Alliance of Museums Conference

Staff from several BC museums and art galleries attended the American Alliance of Museums conference in Seattle, held in May. The Opening Party at the Experience Music Project featured a Giant Video Wall projecting Tweets, Instagrams and Facebook Posts by conference participants.

*Photograph courtesy of Nancy Kirkpatrick,
North Vancouver Museum & Archives*



The last section of the exhibit offers a space for discussion and feedback. From Sex Talk in the City at the Museum of Vancouver. Photograph by Rebecca Blissett.

adult educators and community outreach staff understood and articulated their work in relation to contemporary social and environmental problems. This article provides a few examples from the many we found of how some public museums and art galleries are connecting with their communities and providing exciting new learning opportunities to learn and engage around critical social issues.

One pressing issue facing society today is the persistence of racism and intolerance. This creation of 'the other' can be central to maintaining and exacerbating inequalities and social exclusion. We found several examples of museum adult educators creating important dialogic spaces for adults to reflect on previously unquestioned values and perceptions. One example is a programme called 'Bigot Busters' at St. Mungo Museum in Glasgow, UK.

Museum visitors were invited to learn the story of a religious statue of Shiva that had been vandalized. Importantly, the museum purposely left the statue in its now damaged state in order to share the story associated with the artefact, and to explore collectively the root causes behind actions such as this. The educators asked visitors to ponder what it was that would make someone do something like this. They ask them to reflect on terms such as

'alien', 'foreign', and how these can create distance and lessen people's humanity and beliefs.

Adult educators at this museum have also brought Northern Irish Protestants and Catholics, two communities with long-standing animosities, together through a careful yet dynamic process of dialogue and engagement aimed at building new understandings and ways of relating.

We also found museums and art galleries in Canada working in equally challenging and exciting ways. The Canadian War Museum in Ottawa and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria have joined some Canadian libraries in hosting an event called *'The Human Library Project'*. This project allows patrons to check out human 'books' and have a conversation with them, learning more about the individuals behind identity stereotypes and assumptions. Some of the 'books' who volunteered for these events were a refugee, a war veteran, a trans-gendered person, a sex-trade worker, a conscientious objector, a police officer and a graffiti artist. The adult educator at the AGGV spoke about the value of an event like this:

Usually the people embody some sort of social or cultural stereotype, so oftentimes they are people that you may not encounter in your daily life. You are having an opportunity to have meaningful dialogue. From the experiences of those who have done the programme before, it's been really fulfilling both to people who take out the books as well as the people who are books themselves that live with a lot of these stereotypes and really appreciate the opportunity to dispel some of those myths that may be associated with either their lifestyle or other aspects.

There are also other examples of new forms of active community engagement for social learning and change. A recent exhibition at the Museum of Vancouver called *Sex Talk in the City* explored sexual politics and diversity as a response to continuing animosities and misunderstandings by some in society around people who are gay, lesbian, queer, trans or bi-sexual. Importantly, the museum has positioned itself to be a site where people can come together and talk about these complex and difficult topics in a very different way from the past. The aim is to normalize discussions about sexuality and

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Dedication in Prince George

The Exploration Place Museum + Science Centre hosted the national opening for The Museum of Civilization's *Kids Celebrate!* exhibit this November 23 and used the opportunity to dedicate our new 2500 square foot temporary exhibit gallery to former Executive Director (1992 - 2003) George Phillips. The George Phillips Exhibit Gallery recognizes a man whose innovative ideas shaped our facility and impacted our industry. George's widow, Norma, and his two sons were among the 200 guests.

Photo: Art Kaehn, chairman of the Regional District of Fraser Fort George addressing the audience.





The "classroom" section of the Sex Talk and the City exhibition explores the topic of sex education. From Sex in the City at the Museum of Vancouver. Photograph by Rebecca Blissett.

diversity of expression by the simple act of illustrating them positively inside the public museum space. In other words, their aim is to play a major part in moving people beyond simply 'tolerating' LGBT people towards accepting, legitimizing and embracing difference.

The recent meeting of the BCMA was entitled *Museums as Agents of Change*. We realize that for some, this is not a goal and the idea remains contested and controversial. However, our research shows that museums have the potential to invoke positive change in society. They can and are providing opportunities for adults to ponder different perspectives, to be exposed to diversity, and to grapple with difficult subjects and issues. We believe that increased dialogue between the field of adult education and public museums and art galleries would help facilitate further collaborations and explorations such as these, and would support museums as potent sites of adult learning for social equity.

Dr. Darlene Clover and Lorraine Bell work in the Faculty of Education, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C. Darlene Clover can be reached at: clover@uvic.ca and Lorraine Bell at lmg@uvic.ca.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Société historique francophone de la C.-B. re-opens its archives

On March 12, the SHFCB launched its new archives in the Maison de la Francophonie in Vancouver. Over 50 supporters celebrated the opening, including Miss World Canada 2013, Camille Munro, who dropped in unannounced in one of her last

official acts, adding her share of glitz to the event. The Franco-Saskatchewanian wished to join the SHFCB to celebrate the preservation of the Francophone history of BC.

Photo: Camille Munro, Miss World Canada 2013, and Maurice Guibord, President, SHFCB [Photo Denis Bouvier 2014]





Low Cost Housing
Forum presented in
partnership with SPAN
Nelson (Shelter exhibit)

COMMUNITY MATTERS: NON-TRADITIONAL COLLABORATION AT TOUCHSTONES NELSON

Leah Best

At Touchstones Nelson, the contemporary practice of using novel collaborations for exhibitions and public programs grew organically [full disclosure] out of individual staff interests. And because we present up to ten temporary exhibits per year, we have more flexibility than most to explore a wide variety of subjects. What we've learned through our efforts is that cross-sector collaboration comes with many benefits and a lot of unexpected spin-offs. Although experimental to begin with, our non-

traditional partnerships introduced a seismic shift in how we engage with our community.

In 2010, the first of what came to be called a *Community Matters* exhibit was developed by curator Rod Taylor. The exhibit, *Shelter: how we live*, looked at the very real issue of low cost housing (or lack thereof) in Nelson. The idea for the exhibit came from the loss, by fire, of one of Nelson's few rental blocks, the Kerr Building. Before we started, we wanted to better

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Richmond Delta Regional Heritage Fair

The Richmond Museum and the Delta Museum & Archives presented the 12th annual Richmond Delta Regional Heritage Fair on May 2-3, 2014, at the Richmond Cultural Centre. One hundred creative projects on a variety of themes from Canada's history and heritage were on display. A highlight of this year was a visit by the Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of BC, who spoke about the importance of preserving heritage and presented the Lieutenant Governor Historical Literacy Award.

understand homelessness and its many forms. To do this, we turned to the Nelson Committee on Homelessness and the Nelson chapter of SPAN [Social Planning Action Network]. Excited by the project and anxious to get involved, SPAN agreed to develop and promote an affordable housing forum in partnership with us. They took on the work of sourcing speakers and we provided the venue and tech support. Thus began the first of a number of collaborations with SPAN, our "go to" favourite among partners working in the social sector.

Since that time we've worked with other social sector partners, including the Kootenay Lake Hospital Foundation [promotion and financial support of the exhibit, *Good Medicine: Nelson's Healthcare History* and its panel discussion *The Health/Wealth Connection*, which looked at the social determinants of health]; the Nelson Food Cupboard Society, a local food bank [assistance in identifying clients willing to participate in the exhibit, *What Nelson Eats*, photographic portraits of five local residents and their daily food]; and the Nelson Committee on Homelessness, which operates under the umbrella of Nelson Cares, a local organization that works in the social and environmental sectors [to identify people who were currently or had formerly been homeless and who were willing to work with us in developing the *Shelter* exhibit].

Environmental partners have included

- Earth Matters [for assistance with program development related to the exhibit, *Change: What's in it for You?*, local small scale solutions to global warming]
- the Kootenay Co-op, an independent natural food retailer [financial support for *What Nelson Eats*]
- the West Kootenay Invasive Species Council [program delivery]
- Small Town Films [to co-present two films, *Eyes in the Forest: The Portraiture of Jim Lawrence* and *Ed Burtynsky's, Manufactured Landscapes*, during the run of the exhibit, *Abandoning Paradise: The Northern Gateway Project*].



Robert Sanford speaks on the ethics of water control with a “tornado of plastic bags” in the background [from the Change: What’s in it for you? exhibit].



In short, non-traditional collaborations, particularly in a smaller museum, allow you to:

- Combine resources and expertise to improve exhibit and program quality
- Reach out to a more diverse audience by accessing the clients and supporters of your collaborators
- Access new funding streams including, as we’ve experienced, facility rentals by your collaborative partners
- Reduce staff workload especially with respect to developing and delivering public programs
- Introduce new voices and multiple perspectives into exhibits and programs
- Promote local organizations working diligently behind-the-scenes often with little or no recognition of their significant community impact
- More accurately and effectively reflect the diversity of your community
- Combat the perception that museums and galleries are elitist

These are just a few of the benefits we’ve experienced by seeking out novel collaborations. Still on my bucket list is collaborating with the economic sector with respect to exhibits and programs as well as developing a model for ongoing collaborations lasting longer than one project.

Leah Best is the Executive Director of Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History in Nelson.



Visitors waiting in line for the screenings of Eyes in the Forest and Manufactured Landscapes.



Inside the exhibition tent, on display at Surrey Central Library in November 2013. Photograph courtesy of Surrey Museum.

BESTPRACTICES **SURREY** A PLACE OF REFUGE Greg Yellenik

We recently had the great fortune to work with nine organizations to deliver a small touring outreach exhibit. This exhibit is part of a community-wide program to change the way people think of refugees. The experience was different in so many ways and changed the way we think about our exhibits.

Surrey, A Place of Refuge was a small cog in the Welcoming Communities Project [WCP] wheel. This is a City-wide initiative driven by an advisory board, comprised of 25 organizations and institutions; at the federal, provincial, educational, civic and NGO levels. The Myth Busting Campaign portion directly involved nine organizations. Normally I fear 'design by committee' projects, but this went very smoothly because everyone was on the same page.

It was simple to develop the overall needs. We knew the display had to be small and had to travel easily. We knew it had to pack quickly and compactly. Just like a shopping mall exhibit, we needed to quickly captivate and engage the audience. In a brainstorming meeting the idea of a tent format came up. Understandably it was not fully accepted by some of the organizations. After all, we were trying to break the myths of refugee camps, not reinforce them. However, we



One of the seven participants in the exhibit was Abdirashid Jamal who fled his home in Mogadishu, Somalia at the age of 19. During his five years in a camp in Eritrea he learned some English and met his wife. Abdirashid is living in Surrey with his wife and is learning to be a plumber. Photograph courtesy of Surrey Museum.

needed something that attracted attention and was part of the refugee experience. Not all refugees come from camps, but that is one thing we see in the media and associate with being a refugee. The tent removed visitors from the environment, engulfing them into a place of quiet reflection. Inside the tent, there were no distractions. It took some careful planning, but the tent became the icon.

Exhibit development for this project was unique. We tend to approach an exhibit based on what we have, not necessarily on what we want to say. For example, "We have fifty cedar baskets, let's do an exhibit on baskets!" It is easy enough to do some research about the baskets, talk to experts, develop a story, write some narrative, design the space and there you have it! Rather than use that traditional museum approach, we had to work backwards a bit.

We had a theme: bust those refugee myths. Remember that most of these people left their countries, where they had high social status and solid careers, with nothing. They gave everything up to save their lives. Most lost members of their immediate families in the process. Since they have nothing, there were no artefacts to show.

We had a very creative and dedicated Assistant Curator on contract for another project and we were able to add hours with the funding from this project. She did an amazing job researching, finding the participants, interviewing, writing text and sourcing photos. She interviewed seven local refugees and told their stories.

The exhibit opened at Surrey's new City Centre Library in November 2013. It has travelled to Simon Fraser University, Surrey City Hall, Kwantlen Polytechnical University,

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Pitt Meadows Centennial

The annual Pitt Meadows Heritage Tea on April 12 celebrated 100 years of civic incorporation in Pitt Meadows. Events are planned throughout the year.

Museum staff and volunteers outside the Heritage Hall in Pitt Meadows.



The exhibit installed inside Surrey's City Centre Library in November 2013. Photograph courtesy of Surrey Museum.



One of the seven participants in the exhibit was Carlos Mauricio Osorto, a lawyer and educator from Honduras. After his mother, a high profile lawyer, was shot and killed, Mauricio fled to Canada where he has found work in a grocery store. Photograph courtesy of Surrey Museum.

School District #36 Learning Centre and the Surrey RCMP headquarters. Feedback has been extremely positive and visitor numbers are great. We truly feel like we have made a difference.

The people whose stories we told are everyone's neighbours. I likened it to our very own "Group of Seven." Instead of seven Canadian artists changing the way Canadians think about art, it was seven of our neighbours changing the way we think of refugees. I was personally hit hard by this exhibit. Meeting our participants and hearing how they have persevered through incredible challenges was humbling. This is something we don't often feel when dealing with history and artefacts.

We are bringing this approach into our next in-house exhibit *Every River Tells a Story*. Rather than talk about inanimate objects, we will share quotes and personal stories from Surrey pioneers and present-day figures like MP Finn Donnelly, Rick Hansen and World Rivers Day founder Mark Angelo. This experience has changed the way we think of our exhibits, making them more personal.

Greg Yellenik is the Curator of Exhibitions at the Surrey Museum.



**1914—
KOMAGATA
MARU 2014**

GENERATIONS, GEOGRAPHIES
and ECHOES

COMMEMORATING THE KOMAGATA MARU

Naveen Girm

BESTPRACTICES

On May 23, 1914, a Japanese ship named *Komagata Maru* arrived in Vancouver's Burrard Inlet carrying 376 British Indian passengers. The passengers were challenging Canada's discriminatory *Continuous Passage Regulation* which stated that all immigrants to Canada must come via direct journey from their country of origin. Because no direct route between Canada and India existed at the time, this was viewed as a circuitous way to exclude Indian immigration. Upon its arrival, the *Komagata Maru* was immediately detained by Canadian immigration authorities and after being docked in Burrard Inlet for two months the ship was 'escorted' out of Canadian waters by the naval battleship HMCS Rainbow.

Ninety-eight years later, in the winter of 2012, initial discovery sessions were held between representatives from a variety of institutions to collaboratively commemorate the centennial

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Lieutenant Governor visits Craigdarroch Castle



The Honourable Judith Guichon, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of BC, visited Craigdarroch Castle on April 30th for the annual Builder's Night reception. Her Honour spoke about the important role of volunteers to Government House and Craigdarroch Castle: "Without the thousands of hours donated every year to these facilities we would not survive. More important than the hours donated by these wonderful members, it is the heart and soul that they bring to our facilities, the commitment and care provided by this community of devoted champions."

Photo: Craigdarroch Castle Executive Director John Hughes with Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon. Courtesy of Government House.

anniversary of the *Komagata Maru* in 2014. While each institution intended to create its own independent *Komagata Maru* exhibition, under the auspices of the Department of Canadian Heritage's *Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage* grant, eight partners decided to work together to mark this important narrative in the story of Canada.

The eight partners for the *Komagata Maru 1914-2014: Generations, Geographies and Echoes* project were the Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS) an immigrant services organization and lead partner, the Khalsa Diwan Society (Ross Street Temple) which formed a Shore Committee in 1914 to help the *Komagata Maru* passengers, the Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey Museum, Surrey Public Library, Museum of Vancouver, Vancouver Maritime Museum, and Simon Fraser University Library.

The goals of the collaboration were to showcase the living legacies of the *Komagata Maru* episode and illustrate its relevance to all Canadians. Each institution's unique theme and perspective was coupled with an exhibition and public programming that served to increase awareness, dialogue, and understanding by providing multiple perspectives and allowing audiences to add their voices to the engagement of ideas.

The collaboration amongst the group of eight was highlighted by a) co-promotion of events b) media outreach and c) thematic coherence. I was hired as a Project Coordinator to oversee the co-promotion of activities and this manifested itself through the creation of a project [website](#) that listed a calendar of events for all partners, included event highlights, media coverage, and a blog. Centralized branding was created for the overall project which was available for the partners to use for their individual projects. Along with the website, partner activities were collectively promoted in posters, towers, rack cards, and bookmarks that were available at each partner institution. Additionally each partner re-tweeted and shared every partner's *Komagata Maru* activity thereby multiplying the reach of the overall project. As a legacy, the project website will be archived within SFU Library's *Komagata Maru* [website](#).

As Project Coordinator, I helped ensure each partner was involved in the co-creation of events and exhibitions that responded to one another within a larger dialogue of the Komagata Maru, while also allowing each partner to share their own independent facet of the story.

My role included:

- Convening regular group and individual meetings to ensure communication and transparency
- Pitching story ideas to media
- Working with each institution's marketing and promotions team, and distributing media requests to relevant institutions.

I also worked on exhibits and programs for the partners, including:

- Surrey Museum: guest curated exhibit
- Museum of Vancouver: guest curated exhibit
- Vancouver Maritime Museum: helped coordinate a

conversation on apologies

- Khalsa Diwan Society: helped coordinate a dialogue with elders
- Surrey Art Gallery: convened a two-day symposium
- Simon Fraser University: helped coordinate an anniversary event
- PICS and the Surrey Public Library: helped organize a joint poetry recitation and author reading.

In creating a diverse partnership, we were able to leverage each organization's existing network and increase outreach to new audiences. Co-promotion and centralized branding allowed each partner to utilize the strength of the collective and not bear the onus of marketing independently. A challenge and opportunity for the future will be maintaining the community connections that have been created for future projects to ensure long term engagement from new audience members.

Naveen Girn was the Project Coordinator for the Komagata Maru 1914-2014: Generations, Geographies, and Echoes project.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Nisga'a Museum Art Festival

Over 500 visitors to the Nisga'a' Museum celebrated *Nisga'a Day* on May 11 through song, dance, art, elder storytelling and food. The Museum also opened its *Emily Carr Returns to Ank'idaa* and *Basketry from the Northwest Coast* exhibitions.





THE INTERNET OF THINGS

WILL WE SPEAK FOR OBJECTS DIFFERENTLY, IN AN AGE WHERE THEY CAN ALSO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES?

David Alexander

GEEKSPEAK

Close your eyes and think about the near future: it's a brave new world, technology continues to be ubiquitous, our relationships with it become more enmeshed and because of this everyday work and life is being rapidly transformed.

Think a bit more mundane: the morning wake-up routine. Your alarm goes off, it has opted to come on a bit late because it knows your schedule is light today and you will hit snooze anyhow. You get out of bed and stumble to the kitchen, where you have milk for your cereal because your fridge texted you on the way home last night to remind you. You drop by your local coffee shop before hitting the museum and your smartphone triggers a wireless sensor when you walk in; your device asks if you want the usual and the barista is making it before you join the line.

This set of interactions is called the *Internet of Things* and this isn't some far off George Jetson world; we are on the cusp of this reality.

The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to the connection of everyday objects – such as your fridge – to the Internet and how they work together as a cohesive system. The end result is you get the data you need to function in a more seamless way; your ‘things’ do the talking and leave you out of it for the most part.

Close your eyes again and let’s blue sky how this connectedness could affect museums:

- Smartphones provide a connection to visitors, potentially giving them richer content into your collections. But the same smartphones could also provide physical analytics for museums that are hard to collect currently: how long a visitor spends in a museum, in front of an exhibition, sharing exhibition information via social media, how often they come back, what they buy, etc.
- When a visitor walks by your gift shop they get a text alerting them to the perfect gift for their grandson back home and as a regular visitor they get 10% off, an enticement to shop. Extend that to the museum,

a visiting family walks by and decides not to visit your institution, as they keep on going they get a text reminding them of the current exhibition and how kid friendly it is. Obviously a few privacy issues to deal with in the future.

- Internally, as your conservation supplies run low, your building sends an email to the supplier and a new batch is on its way before you need to worry. Or your vacuum is acting up, it sends a text to the vendor and it is remotely diagnosed and fixed overnight. No fuss or worry.

Whether it be the coffee maker, the air conditioning unit or the fridge, our relationships with objects are being transformed by technology. We as museum folk have a better understanding of this than others – we get the relationship that people have with things. We understand impact and context. Who better than us to lead the conversation and help shape the change?

David Alexander is the Head of New Archives and Digital Preservation at the Royal BC Museum.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Art Battle at Kamloops Art Gallery

Inspired by the current exhibition *Unreal*, on Thursday, May 15, the Kamloops Art Gallery transformed their studios into a surreal battleground. Local musician Rónan McGrath set the mood while costumed contestants took turns climbing onstage to battle one-on-one in a blind-folded minute-long painting contest. The winner, Dion Fortie (a.k.a. Willem K. Licks), was awarded a solo show in the BMO Open Gallery from April to June 2015.



WISH YOU WERE HERE

British Invasion at the Vancouver Maritime Museum

On April 7, the Vancouver Maritime Museum partnered with 102.7 The Peak to host the UK rock band Bastille. With over one thousand people on the lawn of the museum, the band played their crowd-pleasing hits from the terrace, including "Pompeii" and "Things We Lost in the Fire." With a social media contest that ran throughout the concert, the Maritime Museum was trending on Twitter in Vancouver all afternoon.



Owl recently had lunch with **Sue Donaldson** at Relish Food and Coffee on Pandora Avenue in Victoria. Sue is the BC Arts Council's grants program officer for Visual Arts Organizations, Museums & Aboriginal Cultural Centres. Sue's job involves ensuring applicants in visual arts, museums and aboriginal cultural centres put their best effort forward in their applications. Funding decisions are made by peer-review assessment panels, according to criteria established by the BC Arts Council.

You didn't start out your career in museums and galleries. I understand your education was in journalism and visual arts (photography). Tell us a bit about your career before museums and galleries.

Even after undergraduate training in journalism with an arts criticism concentration and an unfinished attempt at grad school in visual arts, I never worked as an art critic, except for a bit of radio in Vancouver! I did, however, work as a print journalist for several years -- a general reporter with different subject areas on papers in three provinces in Canada and sporadically abroad, as a way to extend my travels. I also was a deckhand on a 42' commercial salmon troller, mostly in Queen Charlotte Sound and up to Dixon Entrance, back

in the day when a) there was a troll fleet and b) you could make a year's living from four months of intense work. Those fishing and reporting years, I now understand, not only supported my travel and photography habits but also gave me unprecedented access to the stories of places and people all along this coast.

What drew you into the museum and gallery field?

Formally, I can trace it from the start of a 35-year friendship with Jeanette Taylor, who was a curator at the Campbell River Museum when I was a reporter at the community newspaper across the street from the museum. We both lived on Quadra Island and took the ferry to work in Campbell River and became friends as a result. Jeanette was a highly reliable, if occasionally reluctant, source of story material and pithy quotes and I had an editor who allowed quite a bit of latitude on what I wrote. So, local history became an interest that I blame Jeanette for fuelling. She may see it differently.... The Campbell River Museum, in fact, was the first museum job I had: I was a contracted fundraiser when the museum launched its capital campaign in the community to build a new facility, which eventually resulted in the magnificent building that opened in 1994.

Tell us about your work in arts and heritage, before you began work at the BC Arts Council in 2004.

Contemporary art and local history have always been intertwined interests and I have been fortunate enough to work in both those fields over the course of a career: I worked in artist-run centres in Vancouver and Victoria, including seven years as Director at Open Space, as an independent curator, and then with the BC Museums

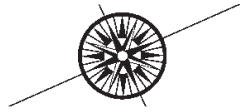
Association as a contractor for the grants programs it delivered on behalf of the BC Arts Council.

Your work was both in historical museums and in contemporary arts settings. What do you think these segments of the cultural sector can learn from each other?

In English Canada in general, and in BC in particular, we separate out history museums from art museums but that is a false separation, in my opinion. Both are building-based, collecting institutions with many, many shared commonalities, from environmental controls to storage to acquisition to exhibition, public programming and documentation issues. Personally, I feel one of the most important shared aspects is an interest in making collections accessible to their publics, through programming. Quite a few contemporary art organizations are not collecting institutions but their programming intentions are the same as history museums: stimulate your public with exhibitions and programming that reveal the stories of this place -- all the stories, not just the ones that loll around on the surface of the culture.

How do you think the BC Arts Council can support innovation, risk-taking, and excellence in BC museums and galleries?

Those are fundamental tenets of what the BC Arts Council does--have a look at any of the 40+ grant program guidelines described on the Council [website](#)—they all are based upon rewarding applicants that best demonstrate innovation, risk-taking and excellence in their field.



British Columbia Museums Association *Since 1957*

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