

The voice of the BC Museums Association

# Roundup

Issue 264 // Spring 2016

## Indigenization

Embracing Indigenous Worldviews



### When the Walls Speak

Sharing the Stories of Okanagan Elders

### SFU's Digital Landscape

Collaboration of Open Source Learning

### Not Painting Landscapes

An Interview with artist Lindsay Delaronde



BC MUSEUMS  
ASSOCIATION

# Roundup

Issue 264 // Spring 2016

**Cover photo:** Detail from "Our Stolen Sisters", Lindsay Delaronde. Subjects contributions to the "Red Dress Campaign".  
Photo Credit: Peruzzo.

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## David Alexander

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Happy New Year. It's still a bit hard to believe that we are now into 2016. Another year and we will be celebrating the sesquicentennial anniversary of Confederation – Canada looks pretty good for 150. We're interested to hear how you will be celebrating the anniversary, please share your events or ideas with Theresa Mackay or myself. And watch for a BCMA province-wide event on April 22 at Royal Roads University. Participate in person or online.

Thank you to the museums and galleries partnering with us on delivery of the new OWL Card benefits program. The program allows BCMA's Individual members to receive free admission at participating institutions, with 27 institutions already signed up and waiting for you. Check out the BCMA website for a full list and plan your summer adventures around it.

Last fall, the BCMA Council and Executive Director spent a full day examining the organization and the sector and crafted a new set of priorities for the Association. With a sold-out conference, a new contemporary look and exciting new initiatives, such as the Digital Museum Studies program, we believe the organization is on the right track.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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## These new priorities will help develop BCMA into the future.

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Our first task was identifying our reason for being: *We believe in the transformative power of museums.* From there, a vision and a mission was a piece of cake (well, not really, but they did flow naturally).

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

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

Three strategic priorities will support this vision:

1. Advocacy: increase awareness of the BC cultural sector and the work done by members.
2. Professional Hub: create professional development, information sharing and networking opportunities for members.
3. Financial Sustainability: ensure the BCMA remains a sustainable cultural leader and resources are in place to fulfill the strategic priorities of the organization.

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To support these priorities we have created a new committee structure that aligns with these priorities. The new committees are:

- Revenue and Membership Development
- Advocacy
- Professional Development Committee (including two subcommittees: Conference Committee and the Roundup Editorial Advisory Committee)
- Finance and Governance
- Executive

Committee work is a great way to participate in the BCMA. Let me or one of your local council members know if you are interested in helping. The BC Museums Association is here to provide benefit to you as members, so please, let us know if you have comments or questions about these new priorities.

David Alexander

## Contact the President...

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# NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

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## Jane Lemke

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This latest issue of Roundup, *Indigenization*, tackles the often misunderstood topic of Indigenization. As cultural professionals, we are tasked with handling a specific community's stories and in doing so, we unintentionally attribute our own perspectives on that community. While this may be minimal if we are of that community or know it well, this leap is greater if we feel a sense of caution.

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**While treading lightly is helpful, this Roundup urges each professional to at least step into the debate of Canada's shared history with indigenous peoples.**

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Each article in this issue explores a different element of indigeneity to shed light on the breadth of experiences of BC's indigenous population and how cultural professionals can incorporate these experiences into their work, while not speaking for them.

Scholars have argued that museums are inherently a colonialist enterprise and their very existence debunks reconciliation. And yet, the current museological literature has highlighted exhibits as the primary venue for enabling the agency of under-represented minorities and encouraging social change (see Richard Sandell's "Constructing and Communicating Equality, the Social Agency of Museum Space" in *Reshaping Museum Space*, 2005). As cultural professionals, we have a role to play. At the forefront of that role is communication. We hope you enjoy a part of that conversation.



Jane Lemke,  
Managing Editor, Roundup  
[jlemke@museumsassn.bc.ca](mailto:jlemke@museumsassn.bc.ca)



# Success *by* Association



Whether an institution or governing organization, a mid-career professional, volunteer, or student on the brink of a career, membership in your professional association comes with lots of benefits. Here are two that BCMA members remark on every day:

## Networking

Seek advice. Share. Build your professional network. Kickstart your career. BCMA offers a myriad of opportunities to meet successful, connected and respected people in the museums, galleries and heritage community. Through our annual conference, workshops, seminars, listserv and by serving on committees, BCMA provides ample opportunities to connect with others who have years of experience.

## Professional Development

BCMA keeps you informed about the sector's news and developments and can provide resources and advice to help you overcome challenges. Our workshops and seminars, access to online training and resource materials, as well as Roundup magazine, give you the tools to build and improve your resume.

Membership in the BCMA is open to organizations and individuals, with benefits designed specifically for each membership category. Museum volunteers are now invited to join the Association in either the Individual or the new Student/Volunteer category.

Individuals who earn income through contracts or service provision or other commercial activities for museums, galleries, heritage organizations or related cultural institutions are invited to join BCMA in the new Affiliate Member – Individual category. Visit the member's section of the BCMA website: [www.museumsassn.bc.ca/members](http://www.museumsassn.bc.ca/members).

## Welcome to new members:

- Katherine Freund-Hainsworth
- Kate Petrusa
- Rebecca Sabey
- Kathryn Molloy
- Daniella Donati, SFU
- Jessie McLean
- Elizabeth Barron
- Parisa Pajoo
- Justine Ash
- Alison Urness
- The Robert Bateman Centre, Victoria
- Catherine Ouellet-Martin

# COMING UP...

## Canada 150 Provincial Forum April 22, 2016

Join us on Friday April 22, 2016 for the Canada 150 Provincial Forum presented by the BC Museums Association, Royal Roads University and BC Heritage Branch, with support from the BC Archives Association and the BC Historical Federation.

Join others in the museum, gallery, archive, heritage and history communities in British Columbia for a province-wide day of dialogue exploring directions,

plans and opportunities to recognize Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017. Get connected with the rest of the province, help shape the provincial response and come away inspired! There are three ways to be involved: participate in-person at Royal Roads University in Victoria, collaborate online from anywhere in the world, or watch the livestreamed broadcast.

Visit [www.museumsassn.bc.ca](http://www.museumsassn.bc.ca) for details and registration. This event is open to the public.



Heritage Branch

## Who accepts the BCMA OWL Card?

North Pacific Cannery National Historic Site in Port Edward has joined a growing list of partners in the BCMA OWL Card benefit program. Individual and Institutional members can present their OWL cards for complimentary admission during regular opening hours.

As this list will change and expand, be sure to look for the OWL decal in the window of museums, galleries, or historic sites to confirm that they are a participant in the program, or check our website. We'll post a continually-updated list at [www.museumsassn.bc.ca](http://www.museumsassn.bc.ca).



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](mailto:members@museumsassn.bc.ca).

# What's NEW?

## Aboriginal Curatorial Collective

Did you know that you can partner with an Aboriginal Curator and apply to the Canada Council for the Arts for funding, <http://www.acc-cca.com/>? The Grants to Aboriginal Curators for Residencies in the Visual Arts program supports Canadian Aboriginal curators at their chosen host institution to develop their curatorial practice. The program provides subsistence support to a maximum of \$35,000 per year for Canadian-based residencies.

## History on the Move in Williams Lake

The third generation of the Patenaude family is donating the historic 153 Mile Store to the City of Williams Lake. Italian settler Louis Crosina built the stopping house and store in 1903, just outside of Williams Lake to serve pioneers trekking the Cariboo Wagon Road. After renovations, the store operated as a general store and in the later part of the twentieth century, operated as a private museum. The building and its artifacts will be relocated to the space adjacent to the Museum of the Cariboo Chilcotin in Williams Lake.

## Aboriginal Colloquium

The Aboriginal Curatorial Collective/Collectif des commissaires autochtones (ACC/CCA) will host its seventh colloquium, The Yukon National Gathering, September 28th to 30th, 2016 at the Yukon Arts Centre in downtown Whitehorse. ACC/CCA is a national arts service organization that supports, promotes and advocates on behalf of Indigenous

curators and artists. The ACC/CCA honours Indigenous knowledge through Indigenous curatorial and artistic practices. The organization shares innovative research and critical discourse on Indigenous arts and cultures as well as builds an equitable space for Indigenous artistic communities through conscious collaboration and exchange.

From its cliff-side view of downtown Whitehorse, Yukon Arts Centre is the territory's premier venue for visual and performing arts, hosting cutting-edge work from across Canada. The Yukon National Gathering is presented on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün and Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nations. The event is hosted in partnership with First Nations communities and Yukon arts organizations.

## CCAP finds permanent home at McPherson Library, UVIC

In July 2016, the University of Victoria Library will become the permanent site for an exciting new digital collection of Chinese Canadian Artifacts. In the first stage of this project, over 6500 digital items ranging from photographs to theatre props from more than a dozen local and regional museums were brought together in a **publicly accessible database** for the first time. This database constitutes the second largest such collection in the province, making available items that previously had only been accessible through visits to local museums. A valuable and accessible resource for research on Chinese Canadian history, the database was funded by the Ministry of International Trade and Responsible for Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism,

as part of the Chinese Historical Legacy Initiatives announced in 2014 in partnership with BCMA.

The second stage of the project (January-June, 2016) will see accruals from a number of additional museums and the migration of the site to its permanent home at the McPherson Library. There it will take its place among the Library's growing selection of multicultural holdings, including First Nations and Asian Canadian collections. The formal launch of the database as a permanent exhibit will take place at the 9th International Conference of the Society for the Study of Overseas Chinese to take place from July 6-8, 2016 in Richmond, B.C.

## Career Workshops for Aboriginal and Nunavut Artists

Cultural Human Resources Council is pleased to announce that The Art of Managing Your Career (TAMYC) Workshop for Aboriginal Artists and The Art of Managing Your Career (TAMYC) Workshops for Nunavut Artists are now available on our Web site at [www.culturalhrc.ca](http://www.culturalhrc.ca). The **TAMYC Workshop for Aboriginal Artists** includes 135 slides, a Trainer's Guide and a Participant's Workbook. The workshop delves into the sensitive area of protocols and weaves in examples of successful Aboriginal artists to make its points and to inspire.

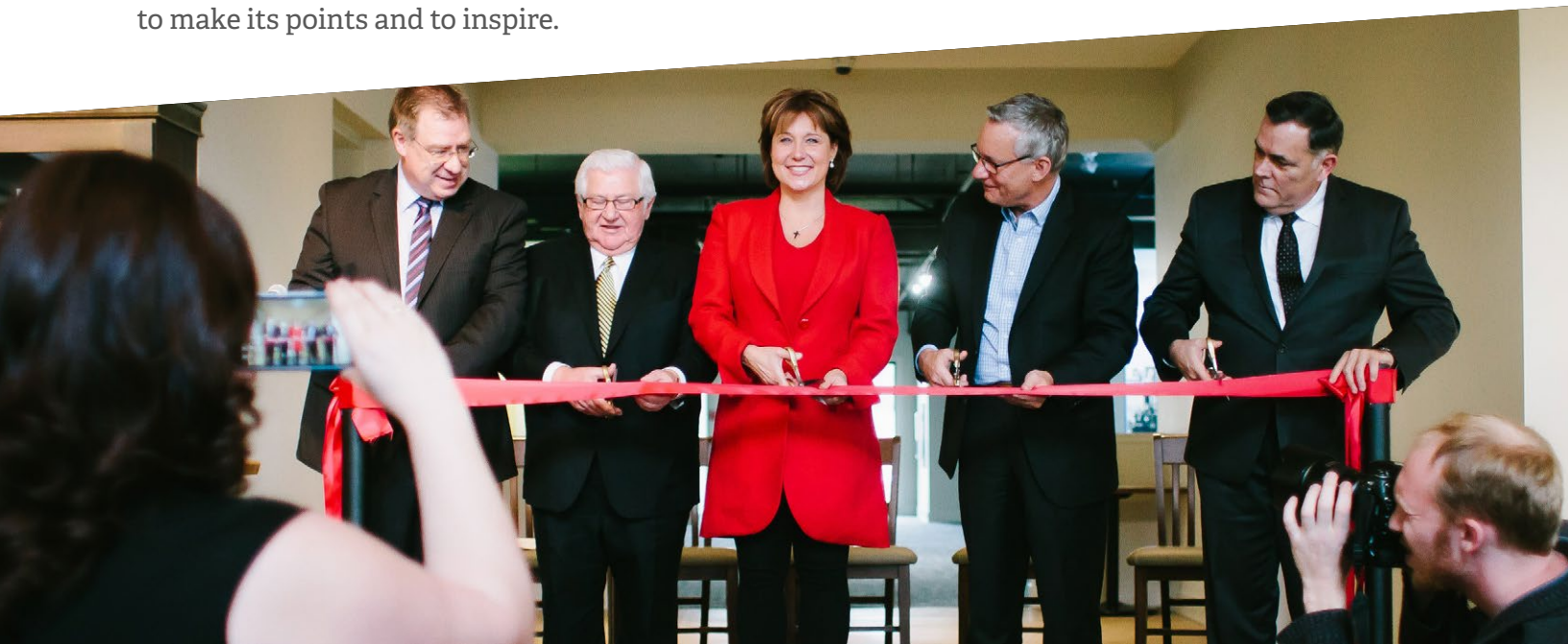
**TAMYC Workshops for Nunavut Artists**, funded by the Government of Nunavut, were created for visual artists/craftspeople, performing artists, and filmmakers. Each includes a Power Point presentation, a detailed Trainer's Guide for Inuit trainers who are being prepared to continue to deliver the workshops, and a Participant's Workbook with handouts.

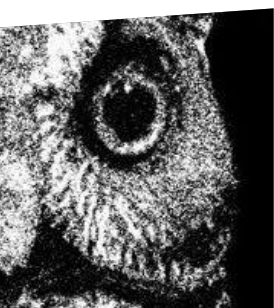
## Mennonite Heritage Museum Opens in Abbotsford

The Mennonite Museum Society hosted hundreds of visitors, including Premier Christy Clark, at the opening of the Mennonite Heritage Museum in January 2016. The new Museum is located on Clearbrook Road in Abbotsford.

**Below:** BC's Premier Christy Clark opens the Mennonite Heritage Museum, Abbotsford.

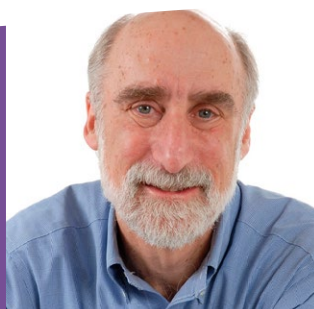
*Photo Credit: Michelle Karst*





# Whoo's News

## Canadian Heritage Awards



The Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals presented nine awards in various categories. The awards were presented at the National Trust for Canada conference in Calgary in October 2015. The goal of the awards is to recognize heritage conservation work and the ongoing importance of heritage to our cultural identity.

Congratulations to BC's winners:

- **Harold Kalman**, author of "Heritage Planning: Principles and Process", was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award and an Award of Excellence in Heritage Education.
- **Donald Luxton and Associates** were recognized with an Award of Merit for their excellent conservation architecture work on Congregation Emanu-El in Victoria.

In December 2015, **Carolyn Holmes** assumed the role of Managing Director of Two Rivers Gallery in Prince George, British Columbia. During her tenure as Director of Public Programs at Two Rivers Gallery, Holmes developed an educational department and team that has been recognized nationally. **Anna-Maria Lawrie** is Two Rivers Gallery's new Director of Public Programs. Lawrie is a practicing artist and educator who has been with the Gallery for more than six years.



**Sandra Parrish** is the newly appointed Executive Director of the Museum at Campbell River. Parrish's career journey has been dedicated and passionate at the Museum at Campbell River over 32 years. Over the years she took on the role of registrar, collections/exhibits manager, associate director, acting director - under several different Boards of Directors. Parrish believes in the role of the museum, she believes in the value of what she is doing, and she believes in her career choice.



Richmond Museum welcomes interns from the UBC Faculty of Arts Internship Program. **Sheryl Lim** will act as Museum Assistant Intern.



Richmond Museum welcomes interns from the UBC Faculty of Arts Internship Program. **Andrea Lucy** will act as Museum Assistant Intern.



Richmond Museum welcomes interns from the UBC Faculty of Arts Internship Program. **Nazliza Cahyani** is the Heritage Fair Special Event Assistant Intern.



## Nanaimo's Honour in Culture Award

City of Nanaimo announced that **Debbie Trueman** has received an Honour in Culture Award, presented to an individual, group or corporation known for their dedication and support of the development of the cultural fabric of Nanaimo. The award recognizes Trueman's efforts to raise awareness and deliver guidance, support, and professionalism in her role at the Nanaimo Museum for the past 25 years.

The Robert Bateman Centre is pleased to welcome **Peter Ord** as the new Managing Director. Before becoming the Managing Director, Ord was Vice President/Operations Manager for the Knowledge and Collections division of the Royal BC Museum. He spent nine years as the Director of the Penticton Museum & Archives. He is founder of *Archaeomark Consulting*, a cultural resource management company working with First Nations and Environmental NGO clients since 1997. He is presently Past President of the BCMA and has served on Council since 2004.



**Karen Dearlove** has joined the North Vancouver Museum and Archives' team as Curator. Dearlove earned a PhD in History from McMaster University and has several years of experience teaching, researching, writing, and presenting public history. Prior to this position, Dearlove worked as Capacity Planner with Heritage BC in Vancouver, and Curator and Director of Chiefswood National Historic Site located on the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve in Ontario.



## Governor General of Canada's Caring Canadian Awards

Congratulations to the BC winners of the Governor General of Canada's Caring Canadian Awards:

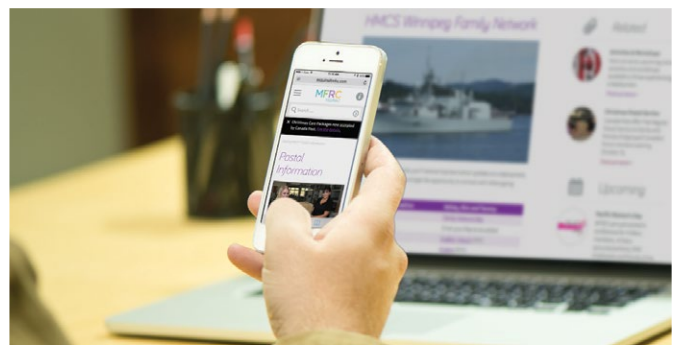
- **Charlotte "Dollie" Kaetler**, for her 20 years of volunteering as an archivist at the Creston Museum and Archives.
- **Jack Farley**, for his volunteer support steering the success of the BC Sports Hall of Fame in Vancouver.
- **Ann Jones**, for her more than 10 years of volunteer service with the Maritime Museum of BC in Victoria.

The Museum of Vancouver welcomes **Amanda Burrows** as Director of Development. Burrows has years of experience raising funds for arts organizations including at the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Guggenheim NYC. Burrows studied Fundraising management at Ryerson University and has a Master's Degree in Museum Studies from the University of Toronto.

**Stephanie Halapija** has recently taken over the post of Curator/Director of the Nisga'a Museum in the Nass Valley.

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# Harry Loewen

## Reading Room





**Above:** Entry to pithouse, 2013.

Photo Credit: Sncəwips Heritage Museum

# WHEN THE WALLS SPEAK

## Sharing Okanagan Stories

**Jordan Coble**

It is a dark yet restless winter evening in the heart of the Okanagan valley. The sounds of the first frostbitten snowflakes blanketing the earth and the faint trickle of the nearby frigid creek is all that can be heard outside the winter dwelling / q<sup>w</sup>ač<sup>i</sup>? (pronounced qwa-tsee). But, it's far too cold to be outside. The sqilx<sup>w</sup> people of the Okanagan are familiar with this inhospitable weather in this unforgiving land. It has been a whole season since the leaves turned and the Sandhill cranes flew overhead. The preparations have been made. It is time to allow the embrace of Mother Earth to keep the people warm until the sunflowers appear once again.

**Now is the time to share stories of the work that was done, the adventures the travellers endured, and for the Elders to communicate with the land, resources, and spiritual realm in a way only they know how to do.**

There are dozens of q<sup>w</sup>ač<sup>i</sup>? along what is known today as Mission Creek, but at this time it is still sənč<sup>w</sup>a?q<sup>w</sup>a?stn, the place where arrowheads are formed. Each q<sup>w</sup>ač<sup>i</sup>? houses between 10 – 20 individuals and there are thousands of sqilx<sup>w</sup> just in this section of the Okanagan alone making their way inside their respective pit-houses.

Inside, the smell of freshly gathered fir boughs and burning pine fills the spacious and comfortable interior. Most of the young children are sleeping while the more mischievous ones keep one ear open as there is an unsettling discussion taking place. Although each q<sup>w</sup>ač<sup>i</sup>? is having its own conversation, they are all telling the same story. The smoke from each fire carries talk of new people that have entered into the territories of neighbouring tribes with different beliefs, technologies and ideologies. This is not a new conversation as prophecies of these visitors have been shared for thousands of years through cəptik<sup>w</sup>əł, the history and living oral documentation of the syilx / Okanagan people.

Some of the leaders become upset while Elders speak of the final stages of evolution of the

Okanagan people - the time when we are no longer able to hunt or gather. Uncertainty billows with the heat of the flame as the people agree their ways of being will be forever altered. Although it will be a particularly unforgiving season, it will also be the last peaceful winter they will see in their lifetimes as the new people will arrive soon after the trails are free from the clutches of the winter snow.

Although the first few years of shared experiences between the sqilx<sup>w</sup> and non-indigenous people were mostly positive, we are now recognizing that it was based on necessity as opposed to genuine appreciation for what was provided.

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**The Okanagan people have always cared for their guests. In this instance, they shared resources and knowledge in regards to how to live in this fragile and unforgiving land based on thousands of years of experience and understanding.**

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In return, the guests shared their resources and knowledge amongst other things, not all of which has been to the benefit to the sqilx<sup>w</sup> people.



**Above:** Traditional Okanagan pithouse, ca.1920.  
Photo Credit: Sncəwips Heritage Museum

The most important resource the Okanagan people provided was a safe and warm place to live during the harsh winter months. These are the winter dwellings of the Okanagan people, the pit-houses / q<sup>w</sup>ačì?. Without this, the first stories of the pioneers of this area could easily have been of demise, death and failure.

Despite the sharing of knowledge, there has been persistent misunderstanding and miscommunication which have dictated the relationships between the sqilx<sup>w</sup> and non-Indigenous people. These misunderstandings have resulted in the devaluing of Indigenous knowledge, language, people as well as the land and resources.

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**This lack of appreciation and connection to Okanagan worldview has been tenaciously misrepresented in institutions such as museums for decades adding to the depression and identity crisis within our communities.**

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As we enter our present day and age, the Okanagan Nation, which is now separated into 8 communities, have come to realize that the concerns of the Elders were extremely close to becoming a reality. The land and resources have been altered so drastically by a Eurocentric mentality that people no longer harvest the kokanee salmon that inhabit the beautiful and world-renowned Okanagan Lake. Wetlands which were home to thousands of diverse flora and fauna species are dead silent or non-existent while rivers and creeks have been depleted to the point of little use. The unforgiving environment is still a reality but for different reasons. The culture, language and spirit of the Okanagan people has been battered, beaten, stolen, displaced and replaced since that last peaceful winter in the mid-1800s. It has been a long and devastating season for our people... but, we are still here.



The Okanagan people are starting to believe that spring may be upon us. We have never relinquished our rights to our territory and we have begun to reclaim our land, our connections and our identities in numerous ways. Although we have endured suffering over the last 100 years, it has resulted in our becoming more resilient and more vigilant. We are now starting to reap the benefits of the efforts of our Elders to establish recognized institutions to teach our children our culture, language and history. The architectural design of Sensisyusten, Westbank First Nation's (WFN) community school, is based on the design of the q<sup>w</sup>ač̓i?, not just for the aesthetic appeal but because it provides the appropriate cultural setting that encourages learning and growth based on our experiences. Sensisyusten is just one example of Okanagan communities taking charge of their education.

To complement this growth, in 2014 WFN opened the Sncəwips Heritage Museum so that our own people could reclaim our history and reconnect to our past in order to build a healthier and more inclusive future for our children.

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**The Sncəwips Museum is our way to claim our place in history, to acknowledge that our perspective is quite different from that of representations in educational institutions and quite often other museums.**

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Prior to the opening of Sncəwips, we constructed our very own q<sup>w</sup>ač̓i?, a space for our community to remember where we came from. The Sncəwips Museum expands well beyond the walls of the actual building space; it is the land and people who are still here and the q<sup>w</sup>ač̓i? is part of our ways of being. This q<sup>w</sup>ač̓i? is also a great representation of where we are today as a community. It combines western technologies with Okanagan tradition - a cement foundation as opposed to rammed earth and metal spikes in place of traditional ties. This was done to ensure the space is safe and secure for all peoples who are fortunate enough to enter. The architecture is still based on traditional practices utilizing the four foundation poles, which also represent our Four Food Chiefs ntitiyix (King Salmon), spiłəm (bit-

# Secwepemctsin Language

Spring Salmon = ntityix

Bitterroot = spiłəm

Black Bear = skəmxist

Saskatoon Berry = siya?

Place where arrowheads are shaped (commonly known today as Mission Creek)  
= sənXʷaʔqʷastn

Ceptikʷəɬ (oral history, stories, how things came to be) = ceptikʷəɬ

Pit house (Okanagan) = qʷaʕiʔ

Pit house (Shuswap) = kekuli

Sqilxʷ (Indigenous People from anywhere)  
= sqilxʷ

Sylx (weaving many strands to make one strong whole / original name for Okanagan people) = sylx

Sensisyusten (house of learning / name of our community school) = sensisyusten

Sncəwips (how our collections tell of how we came to be / name of our museum)  
= sncəwips

terroot), siya? (saskatoon berry), and skəmxist (black bear). In this way, the Okanagan people provide life and spirit to their qʷaʕiʔ. They were to be respected and always kept clean. Each pole and Food Chief represent more than just a resource, they are reminders of the responsibility of each individual to look after each other and the land no matter what age or gender we identify with.

Now that our people are reconnecting with our identities as sylx / Okanagan people, we are making our presence felt through partnerships with other organizations, institutions and community projects and events. A prime example of this is the relationship between Westbank First Nation (WFN) and the Okanagan Heritage Museum (OHM). It started with the presentation on WFN's behalf to provide a unity staff which connects our communities to ensure we will help each other on this journey.

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**Yes, we still have quite the trail ahead of us, but finally Okanagan Nation members are being asked to sit at the table to provide insight to ensure authenticity and respect is maintained.**

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As the OHM continues to revitalize their primary exhibition space, one main aspect is the rebuilding of their pit-house to better reflect Okanagan practices and culture. The OHM reached out to WFN who in turn suggested they invite Okanagan Nation member Dr. Eric Mitchell to aid in the construction of the pit-house to ensure it is a reflection of our traditional qʷaʕiʔ. The original pit-house was not a good representation of Okanagan culture despite being located in the heart of the Okanagan valley and was even referred to as a kekuli, the Secwepemc word for winter dwelling as opposed to qʷaʕiʔ, the Okanagan word for pit-house. We are beginning to speak the same language.

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## **We are beginning to see what we can all agree on moving forward.**

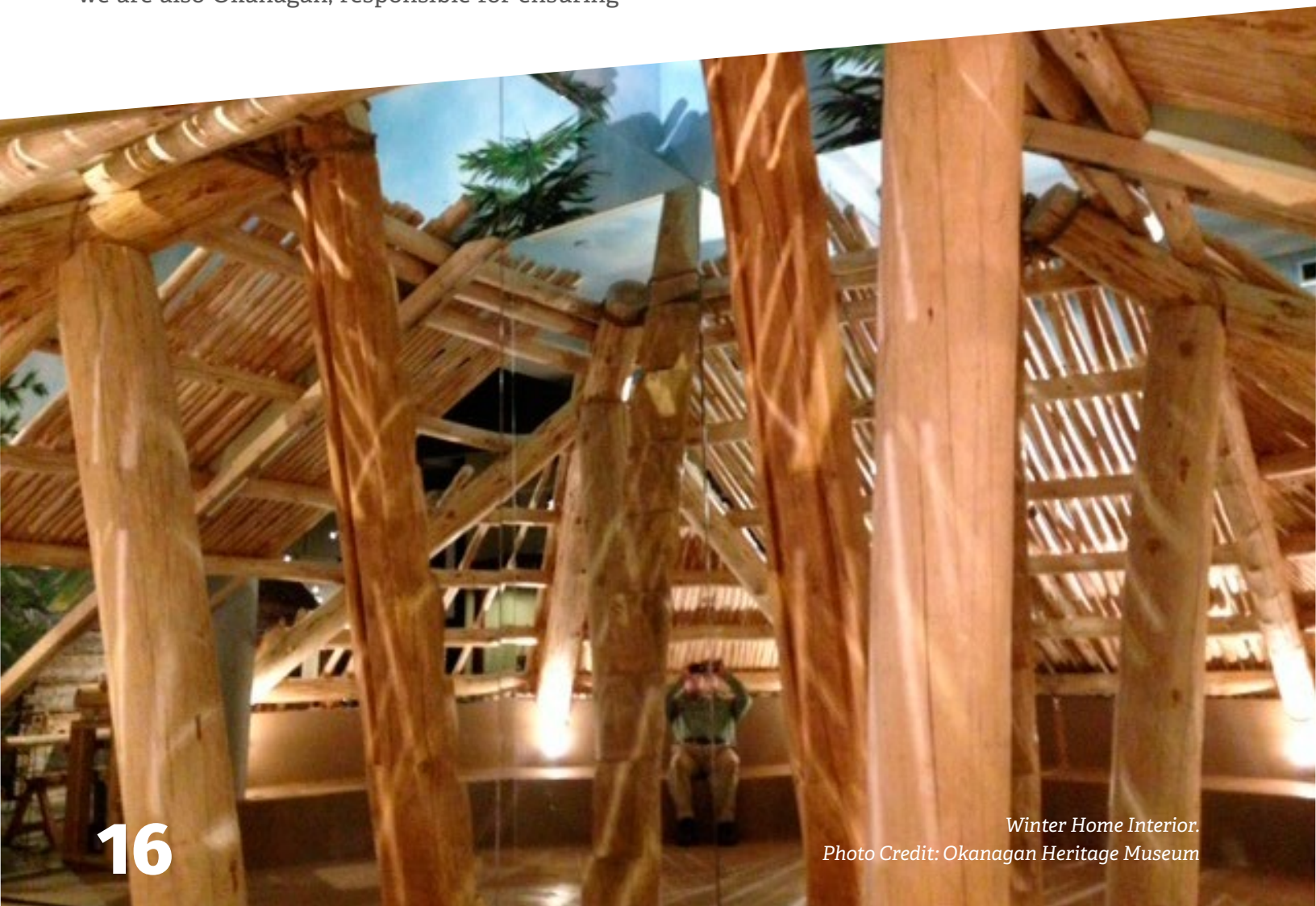
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Respect and inclusiveness are the new foundations for the pit-house that is the Okanagan valley. There is a new sense of positive energy as our homes have been cleansed and the missing pieces of knowledge from our ancestors are being gathered and put to good use. There are still a number of issues we continue to face as colonization and assimilation efforts are still a reality. But, we are beginning to appreciate one another and collaboration has been a huge aspect in our growth together.

We give thanks to the q<sup>w</sup>ačí? for sheltering us from the winter storm that we have faced for over 100 years. It is our home, it provides our sense of place, literally buried in the warmth of Mother Earth. We are syilx, interwoven with the strands of life, but we are also Okanagan, responsible for ensuring

our message, our story and our ways of being are passed on to future generations. We are the beautiful people and will continue to be as long as the land around is kept beautiful.

***Jordan Coble is the Curatorial and Heritage Researcher with the Westbank First Nation Sncəwips Heritage Museum. Coble was raised in the heart of the Okanagan and is dedicated to working for his community and people through his work at the Sncəwips Heritage Museum. Although new to his role and position, Coble has been able to establish Sncəwips as one of the more important spaces to access Okanagan history, culture and heritage.***





# Creating a Digital Landscape

## A Collaborative Project for Open Source Learning

**Mandy Nilson, Kristen McLaughlin, Barbara Winter, Karen Aird, Denée Renouf, and Sandi McKinney.**

The Simon Fraser University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (SFU MAE) in partnership with Treaty 8 Tribal Association (T8TA) and the Tse'K'wa Heritage Society (THS) at the Charlie Lake Cave site, has begun an innovative digitization and educational project. This project will create a digital landscape for open source learning to be used by the THS, Treaty 8 First Nations (T8FNs) and the Aboriginal Education Centre (AEC) in School District No. 59 for education and research related programs in the Peace River Region of northeastern BC.

**This collaboration is a continuation of a long standing relationship between SFU, T8TA and THS.**

In 1974, Knut Fladmark, professor emeritus, excavated at Charlie Lake Cave (CLC) with subsequent excavations in the 1980s, and again in the 1990s by Dr. Jon Driver, now vice-president academic and provost of SFU. Their research into the ice-free corridor hypothesis of the original peopling of North America helped establish the pre-contact use of the CLC by the indigenous peoples. On May 29, 2012, the First Nations of Doig River, Prophet River, and West Moberly, purchased the land containing CLC. Their intention is to reclaim and repatriate this land and use it once again as part of T8FNs' cultural heritage – as an active, and interactive landscape.

Over sixty years ago, a young Len Donaldson began his passion of collecting lithic artifacts as he worked the soil of his nearby farm. Yet Donaldson, now a retiree, knew this collection did not belong to him. Donaldson turned to his friend Arthur Hadland, farmer and former director of Area C in the Peace River region, for advice.

**Above:** Rudy Reimer demonstrating pXRF.  
Photo Credit: Mandy Nilson



**Top Left:** Barbara Winter and Arthur Hadland.  
Photo Credit: Mandy Nilson



**Top Right:** Jon Driver discussing the features of a lithic from the TseGÇÖKGÇÖwa Collection with Karen Aird and Len Donaldson.  
Photo Credit: Mandy Nilson



**Right:** Tiinesha Begaye, ARCH 349-5 student, examining lithics.  
Photo Credit: Mandy Nilson

In turn, Hadland contacted Barbara Winter, director of SFU MAE. Winter accepted the collection from Donaldson on the stipulation it would be returned to the Indigenous owners in the Peace River Region. In the spring 2015 semester, Winter's museum collections class, ARCH 349-5, spent several hundred hours sorting, numbering, cataloguing, photographing, and packing what would become the well prepared and documented Tse'K'wa Collection. Karen Aird, the cultural heritage advisor for T8TA and the THS, gave a presentation to ARCH 349-5 about the proposed Tse'K'wa Interpretive Centre and the significance of the Charlie Lake Cave site to Treaty 8 First Nations. Jon Driver and others explained the significance of the site to the students.

This collection of over 1000 artifacts will be returned to THS, to be housed at the planned Tse'K'wa Interpretive Centre. Tse'K'wa, or the "Rock House" in Dane-zaa language, refers to the Charlie Lake Cave site and the larger cultural landscape (or land) in and around Charlie Lake which was used by the Dane-zaa people for thousands of years and

continues to be an important part of their seasonal activities.

During the collections review process, students gained valuable hands-on experience that translates to highly applicable field skills. This includes learning about what a surface scatter would look like, the types of lithics that were manufactured, and materials used for stone tool construction in the region. The SFU archaeology program provides an opportunity for students to learn from experienced researchers. During the lithic sorting phase, there was over 200 years of combined archaeological experience from archaeologists and academics who supervised the students. One of these was Rudy Reimer, an assistant professor in the department of archaeology, who performed x-ray fluorescence (XRF) on some of the stone tools.

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**XRF is a non-destructive technique that uses low-level radiation to reveal an object's elemental fingerprint.**

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**Below:** Left to right: Denée Renouf, Kristen McLaughlin, Barbara Winter, Mandy Nilson.  
Photo Credit: Robyn Ewing



XRF is an inexpensive way to allow for live time viewing of results, giving students an opportunity to see how the testing is performed. For more information on this technique, see the *What is X-Ray fluorescence?* exhibit in SFU MAE co-curated by Robyn Ewing, heritage consultant, and Rudy Reimer. In the Tse'K'wa case, XRF was used on obsidian tools, which showed the tools were made from stone originally quarried near Mount Edziza, a volcano in northwest BC several hundred kilometers from Tse'K'wa. This indicates networks and trade routes that existed across northern BC in ancient times.

The Tse'K'wa Collection is now central to a project that will create a digital landscape through open source learning. It is anticipated that this digital landscape will provide online resources for students, educators, heritage workers, and First Nations throughout BC. Moreover, this collaborative project between SFU MAE, T8TA and THS recognizes the value of primary resources in First Nations historical and archaeological research and interpretation. Its objective is to repurpose original digital assets, including two web sites from the original 1993 SFU MAE website, and combine them with a new online exhibit of the Tse'K'wa Collection. The digital assets that are being repurposed are the *Charlie Lake Cave* webpage, written by John Breffitt in 1993, and the award winning *A Journey to a Newland* website originally created by the SFU MAE as part of an investment from the Virtual Museum of Canada in 1995 and edited in 2005.

To integrate these two repurposed digital assets and develop a new online exhibit of the Tse'K'wa Collection, SFU MAE, through several of its Research Assistants (RAs), is developing education modules and 3D learning kits. These 3D learning kits will contain several 3D-printed artifacts that will be correlated with artifacts in the online exhibit, as well as an intended physical exhibit at the

planned Tse'K'wa Interpretive Centre. SFU MAE is creating these online education modules using readily available and accessible technology provided by SFU. Education modules will consist of a game for various school grades that will take the students through the repurposed websites, and the new online exhibit. Accompanying these education modules will be teacher resources that will also be used with the 3D learning kits.

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### **The SFU MAE website will host the digital portion of the kits making them freely and publicly accessible provincially and nationally.**

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As such, this digital landscape being created in conjunction with T8TA and THS will be accessible in rural northeastern BC school districts and Indigenous communities.

SFU embraces and promotes far reaching community engagement through research and education. The SFU MAE is actively cultivating this strategic vision through its collaborative partnership with T8TA and THS that will result in an open source learning resource, as well as 3D learning kits. Resource sheets for this digital landscape will allow teachers, heritage workers, researchers, and First Nations to optimize the resources on the SFU MAE website. A more tangible, and fun, experiential learning experience will be given to students through the 3D kits. These kits will be housed with the Tse'K'wa Heritage Society in Fort St. John, under the direction of Karen Aird.

Prior to the completion of the Tse'K'wa Interpretive Centre, the Tse'K'wa Collection will be housed at the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery, Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation. There is a positive pre-existing relationship between T8TA, the THS and the

Dinosaur Discovery Gallery under the ownership of the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation. Upon the collections' return, there will be a small exhibit of the Tse'K'wa collection on public view at the Dinosaur Discovery Gallery until it can be housed more permanently at the interpretive centre.

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### **It is the intention of the THS to cultivate positive relationships with community neighbours.**

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One of the ways positive relationships can be cultivated is to invite school groups to the Tse'K'wa for day trips. Of note, although the landscape around Tse'K'wa may have been impacted and excavated,

it remains strongly connected to the narrative and stories of Indigenous people today. By understanding the history and prehistory of the Tse'K'wa area, more positive and proactive relationships can be formed by all communities in the Peace River region. People may leave the physical landscape, but still freely explore the digital landscape based on Charlie Lake Cave and the Tse'K'wa Collection, as provided by SFU MAE.

While on the surface this is a collaborative project to repurpose digital assets, create an online exhibit, 3D learning kits, and form a new digital landscape, it is more far-reaching. It has helped equip SFU archaeology students to work in northeastern BC at a time of gas and oil development, industrialization, and a proposed dam project. It will provide a consistent resource for long term use by students, educators, researchers, heritage workers, and First Nations in an under-represented area of northeastern BC. The digital landscape will bridge geographic obstacles for remote communities. It is this important connection with T8TA and the THS that has allowed this project to progress in a responsible and respectful manner. Lastly, it is the hope of our partnership that similar positive and considerate behaviours will be demonstrated by everyone accessing Charlie Lake Cave physically or digitally.

*Dr. Barbara Winter, Director of the Simon Fraser University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, leads a team of Research Associates including Mandy Nilson, Kristen McLaughlin, Denée Renouf and Sandi McKinney, who have a strong background in archaeology and cultural resource management. Karen Aird is the cultural heritage advisor for the Treaty 8 Tribal Association and the Tse'K'wa Heritage Society.*

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# "I'm Not Painting Landscapes Here"

## An Interview with artist Lindsay Delaronde

**Ava Hansen**

A woman lies with her back on the earth, pulling on a leather boot as if ready for action. Though she wears no other clothing and flames flicker nearby, the woman expresses no caution or vulnerability, she exudes calm and strength.

This scene is one of 30 self-portraits of First Nations women in a photo-series, which will premier in an exhibition at the University of Victoria Legacy Art Gallery this fall. Each woman worked with Lindsay Delaronde to develop a photographic portrait of herself that would portray her as she wished to be seen and understood.

Delaronde, whose own portrait is described previously, sees herself primarily as the facilitator, rather than the artist, of the body of work. The Iroquois, Mohawk artist grew up in Kahnawake, Quebec, and now lives and works as an artist in Victoria, B.C.

On a grey December morning, I am welcomed into her home to discuss her photo-series which has at its basis, her desire to counteract the negative stereotypes of Indigenous women, something epitomized in the derogatory term "squaw" – a word Delaronde thought a lot about in her development of the project. Over cups of tea she explained how the overall project, which includes both the photographs and each women's own statement, is about

**Top:** "Lascivious Fire", Lindsay Delaronde, 2014, part of the photo-series "Squaw". Photograph by Ellie Dion

“conflict and resistance” against what is carried in the term “squaw”. Delaronde’s motivation for much of her work comes from recognizing tension and then allowing the work itself to resist or defy that negative history.

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**The photographs dismantle blanket conceptions of Indigenous cultures in Canada and draw attention to the strength, courage, beauty, and rich cultural lives of a diverse group of women. “Art is a radical way of keeping culture, keeping identity, keeping the stories. It’s a very radical action to be a part of,” Delaronde says.**

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Delaronde’s role as facilitator for the current photo-series, enabled her to sustain a supportive environment. Many women who sat for Delaronde expressed to her “I’ve always wanted to do something like this. To have somebody ask me what I want. Somebody just ask me what feels right for me”. Delaronde adds, “To be exposed in front of a camera is very empowering.” Many of the participants gained confidence over the course of their photo shoots, transforming in front of the camera.

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**“This is a really intimate body of work,” she says. “I’m not painting landscapes here...I’m talking about the deepest part of the human soul.”**

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A strong aspect of the project is about “exploring sexuality in relation to vulnerability and empowerment and finding strength within sexuality that’s been very tainted.” Delaronde sees sexuality as tainted with conceptions that are perpetuated by colonial popular culture.

Much of Delaronde’s previous work has also urged viewers to contemplate sensuality in relation to identity. “Sexuality is a powerful force. Without our sexualities we would not be able to create... Sexuality is an aspect of one’s self.” This series also explores sexuality as an integral part of the women’s identity. However, for Delaronde, sexuality is much more complex than what popular colonial culture reduces it to. In this series, she allows the women to express vulnerability, empowerment and strength in relation to this aspect of their selves.

“How I perceive eroticism and sexuality is a deep, deep, deep connection and relationship with the self. That’s where eroticism comes from and where sexuality lives,” she says. “Some of the images are not typically what you’d expect to be sexual.” In this way, Delaronde explains, they dismantle popularized visual conceptions of sexuality.

The creation of each photograph required a courageous marriage of vulnerability with empowerment on the part of the women who were photographed, and she knew she would have to undergo the process herself before asking others to do so. Her initial inspiration for her own self-portrait came during a two-day potlatch where the central fires of the longhouse and the fire dance mesmerized her. She remembers thinking, “that is the dance of eroticism. The fire was the natural element that was related to the natural instinct of sexuality.” The experience motivated Delaronde to incorporate flames into her self-portrait.

Every woman involved in the project similarly has a story behind their portrait. Participants chose poses, props, and settings that they felt most comfortable in.



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**“To give agency and autonomy the whole way was my goal,” says Delaronde.**

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Additionally, the photographs are “really grounded in that person and supported by the environment.” Mud, earth, dirt, water, and forest were frequently incorporated, creating a sense of “going back into Mother Earth. Going back into the womb,” Delaronde says.

Delaronde has sewn within this work her personal perspectives, drawing values from traditionally matriarchal Iroquois culture, while respecting the backgrounds of a diversity of women. “Women were the holders and the carriers of what was important to the Iroquois people,” she says. Implicitly, the series addresses issues around the ownership of the female body in the wake of mistreatment, and aims to “reclaim the body, where this has been stolen, raped, ripped apart, severed in all ways,” she says.

“This narrative is not isolated as an Aboriginal issue. It’s stemming from this Indigenous lens because I’m an Indigenous artist, but I’m also a human being and also a woman, so I’m inclusive in the way that I’m trying to make space,” she says. “[An] Indigenous worldview can be so powerful because it’s so gentle... It extends [across many] realms and looks at the uniqueness of a person but [that person in connection with] community - it’s more of a holistic view.”

In another body of work Delaronde completed in 2015, titled “We All Bleed Blood”, Delaronde expressed the message of inclusion and interconnectedness from an Indigenous perspective. To do so she used the symbolism of blood and a blade from the Royal BC Museum, and the Medicine Wheel.

Considering this work holistically, Delaronde reflects, “It was a chemistry of different things that came together all at a very specific time, like making

**Top:** “Our Stolen Sisters”, Lindsay Delaronde. Subjects contributions to the “Red Dress Campaign”. From left to right- Natu Bearwolf, Tiffany Joseph, Erynne Gilpin, Keilah Lukenbill-Williams, Lindsay Delaronde.  
Photo Credit: Peruzzo

a baby, conception... It's all about spiritual time," she says. She goes on to explain how timing for this project was not intellectually determined, but "was following the spirit of the work."

Delaronde's familiarity with emotion and spiritual realms of being comes from both internal exploration as well as her background in counselling. Delaronde began her Master's degree in Counselling at almost the same time that she started this project. While she separates counselling from facilitating, one of Delaronde's motivations in her art practice is a desire to help viewers and artists begin emotional healing. "I really have gone through a lot of challenging life experiences that helped me to understand that healing can happen and that life is good."

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**In her experience, healing can come from working through personal prejudices. Often prejudices can be explored by how we respond to our environment, or in the case of this body of work, how we respond to art.**

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A way for people to respond to and engage with the series will be through workshops hosted at Legacy Art Gallery's downtown Victoria location throughout the Fall of 2016. The workshops explore the construction of identity – one through mask-making and the other through creating corn-husk dolls. Both "give people the time and space to express themselves." Through corn-husk doll and mask-making participants can contemplate the paradoxes presented through the photographs, such as how no matter what we do to project our internal identities, we can never fully control what others may project onto us.

In addition to the workshops, the Legacy Gallery is also holding a panel discussion to address questions raised by the exhibition and stereotypes of Indigenous women.



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**Delaronde sees holding discussions around Indigenous issues as one way that museums, such as Legacy, and other institutions are shifting to be more inclusive.**

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"It's moving slowly, but it's just again looking at alternative world views being implemented in very Western Eurocentric dominant places that only provided one view of things," she says, noting that creating a space for alternate views to be presented is a crucial component of decolonization and breaking down dominant narratives.


"It's in the arts, where people are speaking up and telling their stories - showing their stories." Currently, photography is Delaronde's way of providing that platform. "[These photographs] are a documentation of where we're at historically, in terms of our healing, Indigenous people are healing right now, creating spaces, we're creating art, we're creating spaces and places in education, health, all realms."

Delaronde cautions that while there is a vast history of violence against Indigenous peoples in Canada, recognition of this history should not create "a deficit model, a victim sort of narrative of Native people, and we have been victims, yes...but there's also transcendence, there's also the culture, there's also the strength, there's also the pride."

Ultimately, the photographs redress this victim narrative by presenting alternative narratives about culture, strength and pride of Indigenous women through visions of their identities created by the women themselves.

***Ava Hansen is a fourth-year co-op student (majoring in Art History) at the University of Victoria, serving her second co-op term as curatorial assistant with Legacy Art Gallery. Hansen previously worked at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies as a summer interpreter.***





# THE HAIDA AND THE HAIDA GWAI MUSEUM AT KAY LLNAGAAY

**Suuda Ganunsid, ad gina waadluuxan gan yahguudang  
Xaayda Gwaay.yaay iiji. To inspire understanding and respect  
for all that Haida Gwaii is.**

**Nika Collison and Scott Marsden**

## In the Beginning

We come from supernatural beings that came out of the ocean. Our world began thousands and thousands of years ago. Haida oral histories tell of these beginnings and the many events that followed, including the affairs of the notorious Raven. Welcome to our world.

*"This island was nothing but saltwater, they say. Raven flew around. He looked for a place to land in the water. By and by, he flew to a reef lying at the south end of the island, to sit on it. But the great mass of supernatural beings had their necks resting on one another on it, like sea cucumbers...It was both light and dark, they say." - John Sky of the K'uuna K'iigawaay, Skidegate Haida Myths & Histories.*

Nika Collison, Associate Curator for the Haida Gwaii Museum examines the concept of art from a Haida worldview, *"In our language, as in many indigenous languages, there is no word for art because it cannot be separated from our way of life. It should be noted, however, that our language does have words to describe the act of creating art, such as gyaa k'id (to carve), kiiGuuxaay (to weave) and k'uudlaan (to paint). There are also words to describe aesthetic achievement in these mediums, such as hlgadxuunang (to carve deeply, i.e. on a pole) and maats'ilang (the carving of fine lines on a bracelet). We even have words to describe the people who create these works, such as st'iinl (those with clever hands, or who are good at whatever they do)".* N. Collison, (2006) pg. 63, Raven Travelling-Two Centuries of Haida Art, Vancouver Art Gallery, Douglas & McIntyre

Retelling Haida oral histories and addressing of other contemporary social issues concerning the politics of land, the environment and interdependent ecologies and Indigenous thought-worlds and politics of cultural heritage and memory is a critical part of the mandate of the Haida Gwaii Museum. Through the collections the Museum acquires, preserves and presents objects, archeological artifacts, art works and settler material culture all connected to the human and natural history of Haida Gwaii.

## **Saahlinda Naay ~ Saving Things House: The Haida Gwaii Museum**

Opened in 1976 and located in Skidegate, Haida Gwaii, the Haida Gwaii Museum is a community-driven institution that's become part of the Haida way of life. In taking direction from and working closely with the Haida Nation, the Museum has come to play a central role in the revitalization of Haida art and culture: supporting local artists; amalgamating an extensive collection of

Haida art, artifacts and archival materials; partnering with museums around the world; providing a centre for education; and serving as an economic hub for all of Haida Gwaii. We are also the only cultural facility on Haida Gwaii, and only one of 12 museums in BC, that has been designated as a Category "A" institution.

The Museum regularly consults and works with the community on all aspects of our operations, from creating exhibitions, programs and publications to core projects such as the repatriation of Haida ancestral human remains and cultural treasures, reconstructing genealogies, documenting ancient and contemporary Haida songs, promoting and preserving the Haida language and conducting oral history interviews with community knowledge holders.

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### **We care for and safekeep Haida objects and other knowledge held in our Museum on behalf of the Haida Nation.**

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Another key development regarding our Museum's relationship with the Haida community has been in the area of internships, which have proven to be very successful in providing excellent work experience and on-the-job training in the fields of arts and culture. In turn, these interns enrich our Museum with cultural knowledge and ways of looking at the world, as well as knowledge gained through their work in community-based research with Elders, artists and other community knowledge holders.

An extensive amount of work has been in partnership with other museums and the greater community, such as repatriation. Together with the Haida Nation, we've been one of the most successful in repatriating ancestral remains and cultural treasures. Since the mid-1990s, we've brought home over 500 ancestral remains from museums and private homes across North America, and in 2010,

repatriated our first ancestor from the UK. In doing this work together, both our Museum and the Haida Nation have been able to build strong relationships with organizations that continue to hold many of our most important treasures.

Over time, this work has led to a level of trust, understanding and companionship between the Haida and museum community. This trust has allowed the Haida and museums to move forward together, leading to Haida involvement in the development of exhibitions and interpretations, partnerships, sharing of information and resources, increased success in repatriation and the recognition of Haida scholars as equal to western scholars.

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**These achievements have helped influence and support other First Nations and museums in working together, and create a complex, hybrid culture of First Nations and museums that is centered around mutual respect, understanding and cooperation, from which all of society can benefit.**

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The Museum's principal research, collecting and presentation focuses on the recovery of art, objects, knowledge and documentation pertinent to Haida history and contemporary culture. Secondary priorities are collecting and research related to the natural sciences of Haida Gwaii and the history of Canadian settlement. As with our Haida community, the Museum conducts work in consultation with the greater Islands' community.



**Top Right:** Haida Halibut Hook, c. 1860-80, on display at the Haida Gwaii Museum.  
Photo Credit: Jason Shafto



**Bottom Right:** Archaeological Collection, Haida Gwaii Museum.  
Photo Credit: Jason Shafto

The work of the Museum includes:

- Support the surrounding community of researchers and educators who preserve and practice our cultural knowledge.
- Reconstruct genealogies, record ancient and contemporary Haida songs, and digitize oral histories.
- Uphold Haida art and culture, invigorating the continuity of inspirational artistry that has borne our community through the centuries.
- Protect the memory of Haida Gwaii so the Islands' Community can understand where it comes from and where it is going.
- Promote Haida Gwaii's compelling contributions to the coast, Canada, and the world by partnering with museums worldwide.

The Museum plays an important role in making arts and heritage more accessible and in raising public awareness of the importance of the heritage and history of Haida Gwaii and the unique way of knowing from the Haida perspective. We house a unique and comprehensive collection of historical

and post-contact archival materials, made accessible to the public within a setting that evokes the community identities of both Haida and settler communities on Haida Gwaii. Our collection includes ancestral and contemporary Haida works, both utilitarian and ceremonial, settler pieces, audio recordings of Haida songs, histories and stories as given by Haida elders in both Haida and English languages, and a plethora of photographs.

In our Museum, Haida treasures serve many important uses in addition to the usual museum functions of exhibit, research, educational programs and conservation. For example, in our collection policy some pieces are used within Haida ceremonies, feasts, and other significant events.

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**We work hard to make these pieces available for special uses while maintaining our responsibility to care for these objects and maintain their security.**

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**Above:** Haida Gwaii Museum's permanent exhibition.  
Photo Credit: Jason Shafto

## Everything Depends on Everything Else

The underlying theme running through all permanent exhibitions is the complex link between the land, the sea, human beings and the Supernatural Beings that give Haida Gwaii its incomparable natural and cultural character. Every object, art work and archeological piece offers a narrative focusing on its aesthetics, construct, cultural use, and history as derived from our focus on community-based research. Where possible, lineage and/or personal connections for each piece are revealed.

Exhibit messages encourage a holistic learning experience by cross-cutting the traditional museum boundaries that separate our experiences of the natural and cultural worlds. Scientific information, natural specimens, Haida knowledge, oral history and art are brought together in the same exhibit context.

Other aspects of the permanent exhibitions include the following:

- Working with Elders to promote the learning and preservation of ȷaayda Kil, the Haida language
- Permanent exhibitions featuring a world-class collection of Haida art spanning the late 1700s through to today, including the works of Bill Reid, Robert Davidson, James Hart, Isabel Rorick, Evelyn Vanderhoop, Charles Edenshaw, and many other talented artists
- Public programs focusing on Haida art and culture, and contemporary issues pertinent to Haida Gwaii
- An extensive photographic archive of Haida Gwaii's people and places
- An excellent representation of the flora and fauna of Haida Gwaii
- A Visual Arts Gallery featuring exhibitions by local, national and international artists.

The concept of reconciliation between First Nations and Museums should be of vital concern to all of us in the museum community. The collective voice of the Haida as a viable, significant contributor — not only to the history and future of First Nations communities, but also as this relates to the history and future of Canada — is recognized, celebrated and presented at the Haida Gwaii Museum. We humbly propose that this relationship could be explored as an example for other museums and First Nation communities in BC.

***Haa'wa /Thank you.***

***Jisgang, Nika Collison, belongs to the Ts'aahl eagle clan of the Haida Nation. She is Associate Curator of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay – specializing in Haida art, history and culture. Over the past 15 years Collison has had the honour of working with her community in the creation of several major exhibitions and publications. She serves as a senior negotiator for the Haida Repatriation Committee and works to build partnerships with museums world-wide. Collison is a traditional singer and student of all things Haida.***

***Scott Marsden is currently the Executive Director at The Haida Gwaii Museum. Previously, Scott was Curator at The Reach Gallery Museum Abbotsford from 2008 – 2013 and was Director/Curator at the Yukon Arts Centre Public Art Gallery from 2002 – 2007. Marsden recently earned his Doctorate of Philosophy, Education Studies specialty in Art Education at the University of Victoria, has a Master of Fine Arts degree from York University and is an Associate of the Ontario College of Art and Design University in Toronto.***



# INDIGENIZING

## Simon Fraser University

### Through the Installation and “App”lication of Culture and History

**Bryan Myles and William G. Lindsay**

Simon Fraser University's Burnaby campus is located on the traditional territories of three Coast Salish First Nations: The x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and Tsleil-Waututh (Burrard). These nations have had spiritual, cultural, and economic connections to their lands and waters for thousands of years. This is evidenced by the naming of many places throughout their respective territories with meaningful traditional names and stories passed down through oral traditions.

It has become customary at SFU for guests to acknowledge these host nations and their territories. For instance, it has become a practice for hosts to begin a university event by saying “We would like to acknowledge the traditional unceded territory of

the Coast Salish peoples” or to mention the specific nations themselves. The word unceded is used because, unlike other parts of Canada, the vast majority of British Columbia First Nations did not sign treaty agreements that gave incoming settlers rights to their land.

In past years, there was often little recognition of Indigenous contributions, perspectives, and interests on the SFU campus. However, over the past few years there have been numerous Aboriginal initiatives and services established at the University which have made a big difference. In 2007 the original Aboriginal Strategic Plan for SFU was put into place. In 2010 the Office for Aboriginal Peoples

**Top:** Jim Hart performs Haida blessing at reception to install *Constellation of Frogs*, 2012.  
Photo Credit: Greg Ehlers



was established. Since then, there has been an articulated vision for establishing a secure future at SFU for Aboriginal peoples. Under the auspices of the OAP and its campus allies, a revised five-year action plan (2013-2018) has since been released.

At the forefront of SFU's updated five-year plan is a section titled "Thoughts about 'Indigenization'" and a quote from Elina Hill (2012) discussing Linda Tuhwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Hill writes:

*Indigenizing, is a project with two dimensions. The first involves an intense awareness of Indigenous perspectives and interests, and an acknowledgment that such world views are not continuous with or subordinate to the world views of "settler society"...Indigenizing is one of many ways toward decolonization and toward improving Indigenous lives...decolonization is the primary goal. Sharing knowledge at the site of the university may be part of decolonizing processes, and the university can be a space where both settlers and Indigenous peoples learn to respect and even offer support for common goals.*

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**The above philosophy of "Indigenizing while decolonizing" has been the bedrock of SFU's recent approach to Indigenous initiatives. The work of the Bill Reid Centre has been a key part of this recent success.**

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## The Bill Reid Centre

The Bill Reid Centre for Northwest Coast Studies (BRC) is a research centre and virtual museum within the Department of First Nations Studies at SFU. The Centre is committed to exploring the visual culture of Northwest Coast First Nations past and present, while promoting understanding and respect. In June 2014, the BRC relocated from downtown Vancouver where it shared space with the Bill Reid Gallery, to SFU's Burnaby campus where it could gain better access to students and the broader SFU community. Although the move did not entail a redefinition of the BRC's purpose, in its new location the BRC saw it fitting to align itself with the OAP's strategic vision. After only a year and a half on campus, the BRC has played an

important role and/or led a number of Indigenization projects in consultation with the Office for Aboriginal Peoples.

## Aboriginal Gathering Spaces

In partnership with the OAP, the BRC has supplied a number of historic images of Coastal First Nations communities and monuments to two new Aboriginal gathering spaces located on SFU's Surrey and Vancouver campuses. These photographs taken between 1866 and 1920 are intended to promote reflection and discussion regarding the intersecting histories they display and convey. The images are accompanied by text that highlights the various interpretations of time and place that historic images are capable of generating and asks viewers to consider such.

## The Black Eagle Canoe

In late 2014, the Bill Reid Centre undertook a project to relocate a fibreglass replica of Bill Reid's famed dugout canoe *Loo Tass* from VanDusen Botanical Gardens in Vancouver. The vessel, one of a set of first-generation replicas, was commissioned by the Canadian Museum of History in 1987. It was with great pride and gratitude that SFU was able to bring the *Black Eagle* canoe to Burnaby Mountain and share its significance with the broader SFU community.

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**At its new home, the *Black Eagle* remains a symbol of knowledge, community, and cultural regeneration.**

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It will educate the SFU community, and its visitors about the visual, symbolic, and cultural significance of these majestic vessels.

*Black Eagle* was welcomed to the SFU Burnaby campus with an *Ust'am* (Witnessing Ceremony),

in accordance with local Coast Salish protocols. The ceremony was presided over by Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh faculty member, Dr. Rudy Reimer (*Yumks*), and included speeches by Bill Reid's granddaughter, Nika Collison (*Jisgang*), and SFU board member and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Councilor Chris (*Syeta'xtn*) Lewis.

(ceremony highlights: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_zOV6WV1fEI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zOV6WV1fEI))

## ímesh (To Walk) Mobile App

One of the most exciting initiatives from the BRC's perspective is the mobile app and companion website currently in development, and undertaken with support from the OAP and SFU's Office of Community Engagement. The goal of this project is to communicate the unique worldviews represented in publicly available Indigenous art on campus, and to create a stronger awareness of the Coast Salish territories on which SFU is situated. The mobile app is composed of three walking tours.



**Above:** Dr. Rudy Reimer (*Yumks*) conducting *ust'am* (witnessing) of the installation of *Black Eagle*, October 21, 2015.

Photo Credit: Greg Ehlers



The Coast Salish Lands Tour is being developed in consultation with the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and Tsleil-Waututh (Burrard) First Nations. It is an acknowledgement of Coast Salish territories that takes recognition beyond words, and allows for an embodied experience of local landscapes and languages. The tour provides an interactive walk around Lhukw’lhukw’áyten (Burnaby Mountain), where SFU is situated.

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**This aspect of the app combines community narratives with geolocation, and provides traditional place names and histories for a selection of landmarks and vistas seen from campus.**

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For example, the location at the north base of Burnaby Mountain is known today as Barnet Marine Park. This place is known to the Squamish as

**Above:** Bill Reid’s Black Eagle canoe located in the Northeast corner of the Academic Quadrangle (AQ), SFU Burnaby.  
Photo Credit: Bryan Myles

Lhukw’lhukw’áyten, ‘where the bark gets pe[e]led’ in spring.” The name is derived from the Squamish word for arbutus, lhulhukw’ay, which comes from lhukw’ (peel), and means “always peeling tree.” The app introduces users to eight such locations in the hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh dialects.

Finally, the Aboriginal SFU section of the app is meant to provide users with a consolidated list of services and initiatives oriented towards Aboriginal students and visitors to the Burnaby campus. Using geolocation and summary information on the purpose of each office or service, users are connected to Aboriginal-oriented events and to the campus’ extensive Aboriginal support network.

SFU is making great strides in recognition of the local First Nations and the territories on which the university was built. The initiatives outlined above serve to honour the presence of these and other Indigenous cultures and peoples, and to create an environment in which all feel welcome. It is also

supplying leadership in support of the truth and reconciliation process. Through these and other important projects, the university is now a forum for sharing Aboriginal history, culture, knowledge, and experience. These projects are intended to benefit all of Canada, really, which has much to gain from learning about its First Peoples.

*Bryan Myles is the Interim Director of the Bill Reid Centre for Northwest Coast Studies at SFU, where he has worked for the past six years. Myles has a background in sociocultural anthropology and received a Masters degree from Carleton University in 2008. Myles is also in the first year of a PhD at SFU, where he is focusing on Indigenous cultural heritage in digital contexts.*



*William G. Lindsay is of Cree-Stoney heritage and is the Director of the Office for Aboriginal Peoples at SFU. Although his ancestors are from the Great Plains of Canada, he has grown up in British Columbia for most of his life in both rural and urban First Nations communities. Lindsay has worked for many years as an Indigenous teacher, professor, student services provider, and senior administrator, at numerous Lower Mainland colleges and universities, including the Native Education College, the Institute for Indigenous Government (now the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology), Douglas College, the University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University.*



**Above:** Historical images decorating the Aboriginal gathering space at SFU's Vancouver Campus.  
Photo Credit: Bryan Myles

# AMusing

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**Columnist: Mairin Kerr**

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*This column explores how cultural institutions can encourage visitor interaction through new media, technology, and exhibitions. I will seek to uncover the innovative ideas within our provincial institutions, across the country, and internationally.*



## Indigenization through Collaboration

One of the big trends currently in museums is collaboration - **52 Museums** sharing an Instagram account, [Instagram takeovers](#) by artists or [other museums](#), and [Twitter takeovers](#) (just a few examples). I suppose it's not something too new. One of the most famous examples is Fred Wilson's [Mining the Museum](#) back in 1992. What is new is how much easier it is to do this now that we have social media as a tool. This has led to a revamping of interest in collaborating in more traditional ways like exhibitions.

### Why Collaborate?

Let's start with *Mining the Museum* – that famous example of collaboration. An artist, Fred Wilson, created an exhibition at the Maryland Historical Society showcasing a different story than what was normally told in our institutions. He used satire and irony to present rearranged objects that showcased an African-American perspective on the colonial collections. Wilson exposed that museums do not

tell stories in a neutral objective way but with a cultural bias. In short he blew our minds and made us take a second look at how we present our collections.

If that is not enough of a reason, collaboration also gives both participants exposure to each other's followers - a new audience you may not have reached before. Bringing in other voices and ways of seeing helps give visitors more entry points into understanding and making meaning with museums.

Why is collaboration important in terms of Indigenization? Museums started by speaking about Indigenous groups while being part of the dominant culture oppressing them. Then we learned to consult First Nations, which was a good first step, but not enough. Now we are moving beyond to work with Aboriginals in partnership. Collaboration allows museums to facilitate First Nations speaking for themselves.

## ćəsnaʔəm, the City before the city

It's easy to say this is what we should be doing. It's harder to do it. What helps is having good examples to look to for ideas, inspiration, and lessons learned. We happen to have a stellar example right here in Vancouver. Winner of the Governor General's History Award for Museums - **ćəsnaʔəm, the City before the city** is a multi-site exhibition at the Musqueam Cultural Centre Gallery, Museum of Vancouver, and Museum of Anthropology. The exhibition was the subject of a well-attended and informative session enjoyed by many at BCMA's annual conference in New Westminster in October 2015.

The exhibitions opened at the end of January 2015. Each location highlighted the original city, **ćəsnaʔəm**, one of the largest ancient villages and burial sites that Vancouver is built on. This Musqueam village dates back 5,000 years.

Jordan Wilson, MOA Curator and member of the Musqueam Nation explains in a [CBC interview](#) that these exhibitions are about "Connection to this place, the sophistication of our ancestors that lived here. And all three exhibits also talk about who we are today. Basically our community is sharing a bit of who we are and where we come from."

## Working Together

As you can imagine, organizing so many people across three sites was no small feat. So how did so many people from different institutions work together effectively?

Team collaborators:

- Leona Sparrow, Director, Musqueam, Treaty, Lands and Resources
- Susan Roy, Professor, University of Waterloo
- Viviane Gosselin, Curator, Museum of Vancouver
- Susan Rowley, Curator/Associate Professor, UBC Museum of Anthropology

- Larissa Grant, Researcher, Musqueam, Treaty, Lands and Resources
- Jordan Wilson, Curator, UBC Museum of Anthropology
- Jason Woolman, Senior Archivist, Musqueam, Treaty, Lands and Resources

Susan Rowley, MOA Curator, explains, "We set up a diagram with working groups and a set of information flows. As with any diagram - some things worked better than others." Dive in and start with a plan. Be flexible so you can adjust as you discover what works and what doesn't.

## Language Matters

Something that struck me was the importance of language. Viviane Gosselin, MOA Curator explains in a [Vancouver Sun article](#), "When we met with Musqueam community members, they asked us to use certain terms. One of them was the term *belongings* rather than *artifacts* and *objects*." Artifact and object are sterile terms that distance us whereas *belongings* makes you consider who created and used these, and be aware that they are a part of a current culture. Using the term *belonging* reframes how we see and treat them. An important lesson that museums learned from the Musqueam partners.



**Above:** Filleting salmon at Musqueam. At MOA you will be able to explore ancient belongings from ćəsnaʔəm on a tangible table. The use of this innovative technology is being co-developed by MOA and the School for Interactive Arts and Technology at SFU Surrey.

Photo Credit: Reese Muntean.

## Relationship Building

Collaboration of any kind is about relationship-building. It will be stronger if you build a solid relationship. So if your goal is to do one project quickly and then be done it is not going to work.

You have to build trust, especially in relationships where trust has been broken. Part of the strength of this exhibition was the Museum of Vancouver addressing their institutional history of holding belongings taken without permission from a Musqueam burial ground and creating displays that perpetuated negative colonial narratives. They are not alone. A lot of museums have this history. It is the first step in reconciliation – acknowledging we have done wrong.

This multi-site exhibition goes even further and challenges the current dominant narrative that Vancouver is a new city of immigrants. The exhibitions show that there have been people living and thriving here for 5,000 years. To give some perspective, that's longer than the Roman Empire – a mere 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean.

Collaboration helps museums gain a new understanding of the belongings we hold on behalf of the community. It's incredibly rewarding.

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**"I will carry the gift of working on this exhibit with me for the rest of my life."**  
- Susan Rowley, MOA Curator.

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The best way to describe why this collaborative exhibition is important is contained nicely in a quote

in a [Vancouver Sun article](#) from Musqueam Elder Howard E. Grant.

"When contact came, historians, archaeologists, and writers, wrote a lot about other tribes but very little was written about Musqueam. It is now our time to tell our story."

Indigenization is best achieved when we stop telling other people's stories. So don't listen to me. Go see the exhibition (MOA's exhibit has closed but the [Musqueam Cultural Centre](#) and MOV still have theirs on display) and talk to those involved. Let them tell you their story for themselves.



**Mairin Kerr is the Marketing, Communications & Events Coordinator at the Beaty Biodiversity Museum and a Blogger at [edgital.org](#). Kerr had previously worked at the V&A Museum in London and the J. Paul Getty Museum in LA. She has a Masters of Museum Studies from the University of Toronto.**

**Above:** Pillar under Arthur Lang Bridge. Reminder that although the 200+ day onsite vigil has ended Musqueam is still protecting their ancestors.  
Photo Credit: Rhiannon Bennett

# I'm Still KNOCKING...



## Columnist: Sarah Sewell

In the search for the elusive full-time career in the museum field, making sure you have the right education and skill-set is no easy feat. Whether you are trying to find that first job, or looking to update your skill-set as a mid-career professional, professional development is key at all stages. But where does one go to get those skills? What skills should you be getting?

This column will seek to address these concerns from my perspective, (a determined museum professional, with 4 different part-time jobs, only one actually in a museum), but I hope professionals at all stages of their careers will be able to learn something here as well. After all, one of the great things about our field is the collaboration and sharing of information that occurs.

## Getting More Than a Foot in the Door

*This issue begins a two-part piece that will explore what employers are actually looking for in employees and what newcomers to the field are doing to make themselves stand out. For this issue, I contacted two well known and successful museum professionals (with over 30 years of combined experience) and asked them to share what they look for in employees. And hint, it's not all about your education.*

**David Alexander**, Head of Archives, Access and Digital, **RBCM**, President of the British Columbia Museum Association and Chair of the Roundup Editorial Committee. "I am responsible for the BC Archives, physical and digital access to museum and archives collections, and preservation and digital services and initiatives. I manage a team of about 30. I have more than a decade experience in the museum



world, five years at the Royal BC Museum and before that I was CEO of a technology company called Zero One Design that developed web and software products for museum and gallery clients."

**Tracy Calogheros**, CEO, **The Exploration Place + Science Centre**. "I have been with The Exploration Place Museum + Science Centre in Prince George for almost 22 years; I've been the CEO since 2003. Over the years I have served as President on the BCMA Board, Vice Chair of the Emily Carr University Board of Governors, Secretary for the Canadian Association of Science Centres, as well as held a variety of positions with tourism, business and political organizations."



***What do you see for the future of the field, especially job wise? Do you see more jobs opening up or will the job market get even tougher?***

**David Alexander:** “It really depends on funding and how entrepreneurial museums are in the future. I don’t see government funding increasing but I do see interest in the museum experience rising among visitors so if we, as a sector, are able to find alternate sources of funding – then yes, I see the job market opening up.”

**Tracy Calogheros:** “The general consensus is that there will be a lot of movement in our industry over the next 10 years. People do tend to stay in their positions much further into their senior years in museums, but time is linear and it will inevitably create openings. For fellow Gen X’ers and the cohorts younger than us, that means that jobs across the whole industry are about to open up. I believe we will see wholesale change in the approach to museums as the current leadership retires in large numbers and young professionals get the chance to take the reins. At the same time, funding is under pressure at all levels of government, leaving museums to operate with smaller teams and restricted programs. A fresh approach to earned revenue, streamlining through technology and targeted expenditure of human resources within organizations creates a challenge that to me, is exciting; one that is tailor-made for a collaborative and inspired youth. We have the unique opportunity to craft our facilities with the next 100 years in mind as we hit Canada’s sesquicentennial under the leadership of a new government that is looking to invest in Canada, our brand and our youth.”

***What education do you look for in potential employees? Are there any specific programs you see as beneficial?***

**David Alexander:** “It depends on the position, but I always look for leadership potential. Training can

happen while on the job but I look for experiences, whether paid or volunteer, that indicate a potential employee has gone above and beyond in their career and will bring that to my workplace.”

**Tracy Calogheros:** “I look for people who are excited to learn and for people who love people. I need reliable, collaborative staff who are eager to work in teams, are flexible about their duties and job description and who know things that I don’t. My team has benefitted from having people join us from all industries; accommodations, food, tourism, forestry, biology, archaeology, fine art, military, business, education, child-care and more. It’s not so much the education a person brings to the table as it is their approach to work, life and learning that allow me to add them to my team.”

***What skills do you see as most important in your employees?***

**David Alexander:** “I see digital literacy as an important skill that all employers, not just museums, will be looking for. In all areas. Digital used to be the realm of communication types, these days it is vital for all staff.”

**Tracy Calogheros:** “Honesty, commitment and flexibility. People who are eager to learn, to grow and who do that from a place of intellectual curiosity best fit with my vision of “museum as community forum”. Our work, while rooted in collecting, research and dissemination, must be informed by local needs, global events and cultural evolution... In order to be successful in this type of corporate culture, a staff person must be a self-confident communicator, a self-motivated worker and a self-guided learner; in return I offer a large degree of autonomy, the chance to explore personal passions, management support and work/life flexibility (you’ll notice I didn’t say money – museums are not about the “Benjamins”).”

**What training would you like to see employees (both potential and current) have when it comes to First Nations histories and cultures?**

**David Alexander:** “With the results of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, having an understanding of First Nations culture and history is necessary in our work.”

**Tracy Calogheros:** “We have an outstanding relationship with the Lheidli T'enneh Nation; a relationship that has taught me much. Every First Nation



**Above:** Royal BC Museum.

is different, each one has its own history and traditions so the most important thing a staff person can bring to this ever deepening relationship is that curiosity I mentioned earlier. Genuine interest in learning from each other, a willingness to be honest about the past and excited about a collaborative future with a realistic view of the capacity and finances of both the Museum and the First Nation is all it takes to start the process. I think that this is a life-long learning process; that there is no course you can find that will give you everything you will ever need to know to understand First Nations' culture. Having said that, a grasp of what we already have learned about First Nations' histories and an

understanding of post-contact history is an invaluable asset.”

**Finally, do you have any advice for those of us looking for a job or looking to move up in the field?**

**David Alexander:** “Talk with potential employers, so few people do informational interviews and it is a great way to make a direct connection and tap into the connections of the person you are talking with. An email inquiry is fine, but I'll remember someone much better if they've taken the time to set up a meeting with me. And volunteer. It shows that you have a passion for what you do.”

**Tracy Calogheros:** “My advice to anyone in our field is to explore. Learn from the successes and failures of those of us who have been doing this awhile and never be afraid to offer your opinion and your ideas. Always keep an open mind, recognize that while you don't know everything, neither does anyone else, treat your coworkers with kindness, your partners with empathy and your audience with respect. We have the best jobs on the planet for someone who is creative and curious, who likes to be challenged and take some risks, who understands that our work has always created a foundation for, and launching pad to, the future. I often tell my kids that I don't know what I want to be when I grow up, and as a metaphor, that sentiment describes this industry perfectly; it's not about arriving, it's all about what you learn while you're getting there.”



**Above:** The Exploration Place + Science Centre.

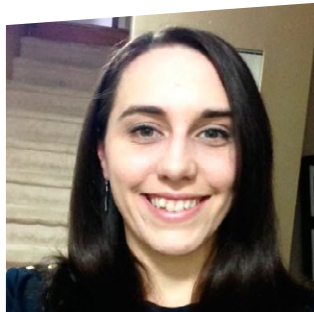


**Above:** The Exploration Place + Science Centre.

Thank you to both David and Tracy for lending their knowledge and experience.

Are you a new professional with a story or advice to share? Please contact me at [sarahksewell@gmail.com](mailto:sarahksewell@gmail.com). I'd love to hear about your experience and share it with the readers of *Roundup*.

**Sarah Sewell is currently a Historical Researcher with Canadian Development Consultants, Museum Assistant with the Langley Centennial Museum and a Researcher with the West Vancouver Memorial Library. Sewell holds a Master of Arts degree in Canadian Military History from the University of Calgary.**



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# Lunch With WL

**Above:** "Copper from the Hood" by  
Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas

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## Jane Lemke

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*Roundup Editor, Jane Lemke, recently sat down with Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, an award-winning visual contemporary artist, author and professional speaker. Yahgulanaas's blend of Haida iconography and contemporary Asian visual culture, create a broad practice and application for the vitality and originality of Canadian cultures.*

For more with Yahgulanaas, see his [Ted Talks](#).

***I'd like to hear your background and how you found yourself at this stage in your career?***

I was raised in a Haida village on a north Pacific island. I later moved to a nearby fishing village due to my classification as a "non-status person" in Canadian legislation. I served a couple of decades playing generational roles within my Indigenous community as my family had before me. During this time, I set aside my art adventures in order to work for my community. Having spent decades wrestling with social, economic, cultural and political devils and enjoying some significant successes, I remained alert to the horrific circumstances that characterize Indigeneity within the Canadian ex-

perience. It became time for me to dance with art.

***Where do you find your inspiration?***

My sense of cosmology is not fully constrained by any sense of ethnic purity but straddles both Indigenous and settler identities. I play amongst the challenges and opportunities of the "hybridized", "mixed blood", "non status" and all these imagined spaces that arise out of the mythic identities of "race". I aspire to be a complex contemporary and engaged artist that is not static, blandly predictable or scripted.

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***I am inspired by the vastness of this space in-between.***

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My decades of experiences in the spaces in-between political identities continue to inspire my practice. The lack of any treaties between Haida peoples and Canada has created an open space between the legally defined two sides: Indigenous peoples and a settler society.

This living generation can do what none other has done before: we can get it right. We can apply morally defensible concepts consistent with the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Canadian Constitution, and be creative, thoughtful, innovative and mutually rewarding. What an amazing opportunity.

Our species is born with a sense of fairness and compassion. We are able to see “others” as complex human beings and live as neighbours. Even when we allow ourselves to slip into the madness, we remain more than selfish fools. Every baby born is a human born with a loving inclination. We do not inherit the sins of our fathers. That is just our fathers avoiding their parental accountability.

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**We can measure our movement towards our better selves by observing how we treat those we call less fortunate. How we collectively integrate difference into our lives is a marker of our societal ability to be true to that better nature.**

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This is the first time Canada has ever had an Indigenous citizen serving as a Minister of Justice, a significant and potent symbol for what is possible. It has been a long night filled with creeps, and crawlly things that avoided daylight. Canada now has a Prime Minister calling on the better nature of his citizens. And with a hopeful vision we can begin to repair relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Canada. The scope of what this relationship touches is immense. No part of our National identity is far removed from this primary relationship. Yet the immensity is inspiring.

### ***What is Haida Manga?***

Haida Manga is the artistic representation of my identity, a merging of things that we would say are different. Creativity is how we make such associations.

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**In order to challenge the notion that difference equals oppression, I needed to describe that those unusual combinations can be useful and even beautiful.**

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So I created Haida Manga, which loves the tertiary spaces. It is not a narrow view, it avoids the pretentious, refuses the authoritative pronouncement by welcoming observers to participate in creating new relationships. Like classic Haida design theory, it relishes the pun and is playful.

Haida Manga has roots connected to the historical relationship between Japan and Haida, at a time when racism was encouraged, named and so acceptable that it was invisible to many. For others, it was and still is brutally obvious. Recall Smiles Cafe, fortunately still in business, is the only restaurant in Prince Rupert that welcomed Indigenous patrons. My grandmother recalls that every other restaurant in that little town posted a sign on the window that said “No dogs, No Indians”. Another grandmother, Aunty Jane, went to the theatre in this little seaside town, paid her ticket and waited for the movie to begin. And after sending the “poor nervous usher” down the aisle numerous times to ask her to move from the “white section”, management finally had to accept that the Indian woman was not moving out of her seat. They started the movie. This dear woman from Massett was our own Rosa Parks and these dark days are within living memory.



On the other side of the ocean was a more welcoming place. Decades earlier, Haida relatives worked on pelagic seal hunting voyages across the North Pacific and to the island of Hokaido. They returned to Haida Gwaii with stories of walking freely on the street, buying goods in any store they wished, eating in any restaurant and all this as a full human being. I grew up hearing these stories thinking what a blessed relief this experience was for these men, a sanctuary across the Ocean.

I wanted to speak to that important moment and also avoid the colonization of my own artistic efforts as a variant of the western graphics, a Haida “comic book”.

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**While raising the question of differences, I needed to remember and share how relationships between ethnicities can be friendly and welcoming. This became Haida Manga.**

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***What can museum and gallery professionals do to use this type of welcoming relationship-building when they construct an exhibit?***

Can we create opportunities for passive visitors to become physically engaged and explore, discover and even articulate new possibilities? Yes we can and we must. Consider that although descriptive labels are helpful, they also substantiate the idea that there is an authority, a final arbitrator that has



carefully prescribed the world. There are ways to deflect the inclination to simply accept and encourage questions.

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### **The key question is likely to what extent do such professionals wish to increase relevancy in relationships.**

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Questioning assumptions or perhaps even questioning authority opens up new ways of imagining liberated spaces. When horizons shift, so do our perspectives. Making a space for the observer increases awareness of how familiar meanings are buttressed and assumed. Considering the presence of the “other” and our manufactured geography can be a potent democratic and creative act. Realizing that people do want to be engaged in real and honest ways may encourage institutions to be more trusting and adventuresome. Safe approaches and predictable themes are then tediously rolled out with alarming regularity in both private and public institutions.

Changes such as we are now witnessing in the shifting legal landscapes race far ahead of the pedestrian institution and this must raise some consideration of the “f” word: Funding. Institutions and funders, be they donors or buyers, might take a moment and anticipate where societal developments are headed. As long as we remain safely distanced from current political, social and legal discussions that are questioning the foundational assumptions of our colonial mythology, it is difficult to imagine how we can be anything but nostalgic backgrounders, memories or extras without lines.

Institutions and exhibits that accurately and honestly examine issues such as land may find themselves in lead roles as relevant and engaged players in a fast moving contemporary and evolutionary discourse.

### ***What advice would you give to those in the cultural profession who may be fearful of opening those discussions but do want to tackle these issues?***

These are not “First Nations” issues. These are not complex issues. These are issues of clear, persistent legislative and institutional violations of Canadian Constitutional and International Law. The real complexity is the extent to which we are avoiding the facts. What additional evidence is required to indicate a systemic and persistent assault on every single expression of Indigeneity within the lands coveted and claimed as Canada?

Cultural professionals have status, recognized skill-sets, an authority, a voice that, even if unwelcomed or challenged, is valued and respected as being appropriate to cultural conversations.

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### **Cultural professionals are neither marginalized nor uninformed. Cultural professionals have long had elevated positions to speak from.**

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Why should there be silence now? If reluctance arises out of awareness of the heavy prices paid by the assaulted and the cost of such injury on aggressors then when is the best moment to engage in the frank conversations that need to take place? Exactly when is the right moment if not now?

We are finally able to have that conversation; an opportunity that hasn’t existed for a long time. The cost of missing the moment will be significant. Engaging requires some honesty. Such engagement is not truly “reconciliation”. A friend reminded me years ago that “reconciliation” is a problem word because it implies we are returning to a time when we were together. It suggests that we once were whole but slipped away and now are ready to reconcile. Were Indigenous peoples and settler societies ever



together in common understanding or agreement? Even assuming some examples of common cause, they must be rare, brief opportunities that were thrown away. What is said in the word reconciliation is a desire to come together. What is missed is the newness of the opportunity. The freshness of the moment is not fully appreciated and we lose some of the amazing significance of the moment.

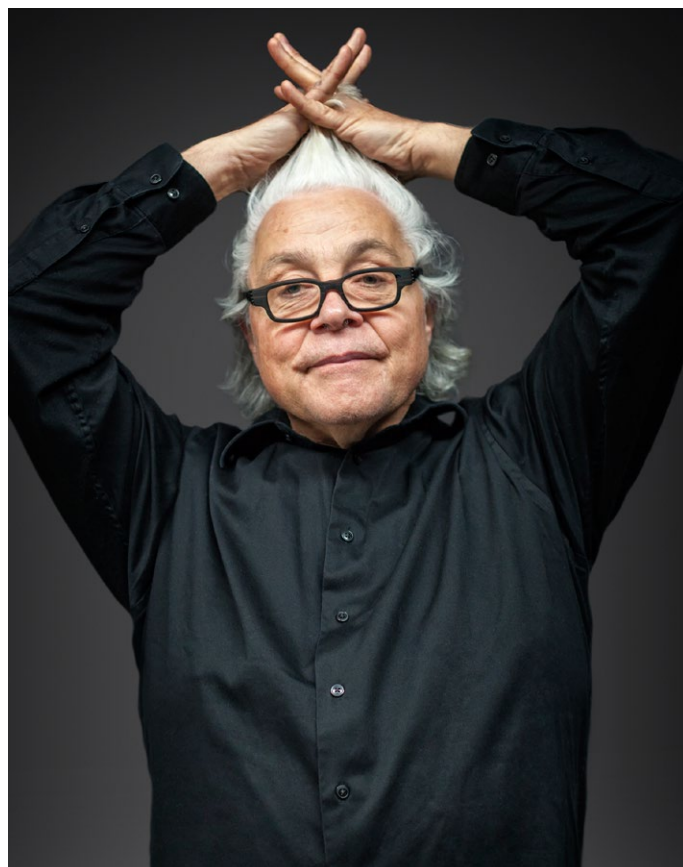
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**Anyone living today and especially for cultural professionals, are in a time when we can actually do it right for the first time.**

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A formalized and freely negotiated relationship has never existed here before. We can participate in a profoundly important opportunity and make contributions to a morally sound, legally consistent relationship with real living human societies. We must recognize the past and how much of it lingers around our feet as dark, toxic slurry but we must also step up and create our own new relationship. Cultural professionals can choose to be leaders, or followers but anything less than an active partic-

ipant does no good service. This is not the time to retreat, counting angels on pins and be disengaged from what may be Canada's most critical cultural test.



**Top Left and Right:** *Raven Exercises* by Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas

**Above:** Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas.  
Photo Credit: Farah Nosh



# BC MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The BC Museums Association creates a bright future for British Columbia's museum, gallery and related communities through networking, advocacy, innovation, and professional development. Membership is available to museums, galleries, heritage sites, and individuals in the province affiliated with or interested in BC's museums, galleries and heritage sites. For more info visit: [museumsassn.bc.ca](http://museumsassn.bc.ca)

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**Right:** Detail from the Haida Gwaii Museum.  
Photo Credit: Jason Shafto.

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