



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BC MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES THE CREATIVITY AND RESILIENCE
OF THE ARTS, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE SECTOR**

Awards given out for community engagement, exhibitions, and distinguished service.

VICTORIA, BC – The BC Museums Association (BCMA) handed out its Awards for Outstanding Achievement on Thursday, October 8, during its 49th annual Awards Showcase. This year’s virtual conference attracted a record number of museum professionals and industry representatives from across the province who came to explore innovative exhibitions, community collaboration, and exemplary service to the sector. The BCMA’s annual awards recognize institutions and individuals who exemplify excellence in the province’s museums, galleries and history community.

“This has been an unbelievably challenging year for BC’s museums, galleries, and cultural centres, but our members have faced COVID-19 with creativity, resilience, and an unwavering belief in the transformative power of museums,” says Ryan Hunt, BCMA’s Executive Director. “Congratulations to all of the 2020 recipients.”

The **Museum of Surrey** received the **Award of Merit, Excellence in Community Engagement** for their three-year engagement with the Punjabi community in Surrey, BC. The exhibit *Being Punjabi: Unfolding the Surrey Story* is a wonderful example of an exhibit curated in a collaborative manner, that brought community stories to a broader audience and generated a heartfelt interest in a unique and vibrant culture by foregrounding, prioritizing, and empowering the community as co-curators and programming leads “The Being Punjabi exhibit project was unique because it presented the unfiltered voices of community members, as gathered, rather than just taking into consideration feedback from community,” Colleen Sharpe, project leader and Curator of Exhibits, Museum of Surrey. “Being Punjabi: Unfolding the Surrey Story invites continued dialogue about what it means to be Punjabi in Surrey – past, present and future. The exhibit is a tribute to Punjabi community members who came forward to share their stories. Above all, it is an invitation to celebrate diversity in Surrey, and a call to challenge the assumptions we make about each other.”

Community contribution included The Punjabi Advisory Committee, Balbir Gurm, Ranbir Johal, Raj Lally, Moninder Lalli, Steven Purewal, and Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra; exhibit text writers: Steven Purewal, Moninder Lalli, Ranbir Johal, Sharanjit Sandhra, Balraj Kahlon, Balbir Kaur Gurm, Naveen Girm, Bob Mann, Charan Gill, Balkaran Singh, Kal Dosanjh, Raj Thandi, Saira Kanwal, Anita Lal, Fauzia Rafique; audio storyteller Lady B (Bali K Deo); and the many dozens of community members and artists who lent items for the exhibit and participated in video interviews.

Two Rivers Gallery and Independent Indigenous curator Rose M. Spahan received the **Award of Merit, Excellence in Exhibitions** for their exhibit, *Redress: Sacred Obligation - Indigenous Voices on Reconciliation*. “Redress was a very important exhibition that focused on residential schools and the impact they had on Indigenous people across Canada for well over a hundred years. Their impact is deeply felt to this day. Rose Spahan, and the Two Rivers Gallery team, including myself, are thrilled to receive this award in honour of the twenty-two artists whose work was incorporated into this exhibition and the countless Indigenous people for whom these stories resonate. Many in our community worked with this project and we are very grateful for their support,” says co-curator George Harris, Two Rivers Gallery. The exhibition featured work by Mike Alexander, (Anishnaabe); Kristy Auger, (nêhiyaw [Plains Cree]); Crystal Behn-Dettieh, (Dene/ Carrier); Margaret Briere, (Coast Salish); Liz Carter, (Kwakwaka’wakw); Lee Claremont, (Mohawk, Six Nations); Joane Cardinal-Schubert, (Blackfoot, Kainai); Waabi Makooohns- James Darin Corbiere, (Anishnaabe); Emily Dundas Oke (Cree/ Métis/ Scottish); TEMOSEN- Charles Elliot, (T’sartlip); Karen Erickson, (Métis/ Cree); Pat Gauthier

(Secwepmec [Shuswap]); Monique Hurteau, (Muskowekwan/ Cree/ Ojibway/ Métis); Carla Joseph (Métis/ Cree); Keith Kerrigan (Haida); lessLIE, (Coast Salish); Lou-ann Neel, (Kwakwaka'wakw); Carey Newman, (Kwakwaka'wakw/ Coast Salish/ English/ Irish/ Scottish); Jennifer Annais Pighin, (Lheidli T'enneh/ Wet'suwet'en/ French Canadian/ Italian); Lenard Paquette (Cree/ Métis); Patricia June Vickers, (Ts'msyen); and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, (Coast Salish/ Okanagan). The progressive and fundamentally artist-driven nature of exhibition development and engagement exemplifies the transformative potential of museums and galleries.

Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History, received an **Honorable Mention for Impact and Engagement** for their exhibition *A Mountain Biking Retrospective*. This exhibit responded to an unexplored yet vital part of the community's identity and contemporary cultural development. "Touchstones Nelson Museum, and the entire mountain bike community of Nelson and area, are thrilled to receive this recognition. Thank you! The list of individuals, trail builders, riders, local mountain bike stars, community groups, mountain bike associations throughout the Kootenays, artists, filmmakers, historians, and businesses that contributed to this exhibition is exceptional—it was truly built by those who created this history, and further form the mountain bike culture today. A special thank you to Darren Davidson, Deb MacKillop, Freeride Entertainment, Sacred Rides, NRG Enterprises, the Nelson Cyclin Club, and Pinkbike," says Astrid Heyerdahl, Curator of *A Mountain Biking Retrospective* and Executive Director of Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History. The exhibit was multi-faceted and strategically executed. This museum understood its community and stimulated museum interest by exploring an activity many in the community embraced wholeheartedly.

Individuals were also recognized for their extraordinary contributions.

Barbara Bell, Head Archivist at The Greater Vernon Museum and Archives, received a **Distinguished Service Award**. Bell was selected by the awards committee in recognition of her lifetime of service and tireless dedication to inspiring and engaging others. Her many hours spent volunteering and mentoring are remarkable and she has made a significant impact on a whole generation of museum workers.

Julie Fowler, Executive and Artistic Director of Island Mountain Arts, received a **Distinguished Service Award**. Fowler has made significant contributions in a wide range of arts & culture organisations across BC and has demonstrated incredible energy, commitment and hard work. The committee was impressed by the scope of her impact, not just on the festival she created but on all the artists and performers the festival has helped bring to prominence.

A full list of winners, honourable mentions and nominees is available [on our website](#).

About the BC Museums Association:

Founded in 1957, the British Columbia Museums Association (BCMA) creates a bright future for British Columbia's museum, gallery, and related heritage communities through networking, advocacy, innovation, and professional development. It delivers programs and services to the benefit of its members and the sector at large, acting as the cultural and heritage information hub for British Columbia while providing a unified voice for the institutions, trustees, professional staff and volunteers.

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