

UBC Appoints Dr. Susan Rowley as Director of Museum of Anthropology

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA) is delighted to announce that the University of British Columbia has appointed Dr. Susan Rowley to a three-year term as Director of MOA. Dr. Rowley has served as Acting Director since July 1, 2021, when Dr. Anthony Shelton completed his third term as Director.

Sue, as she is known to her colleagues and friends, is a Curator at MOA and an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology, two roles she has served in with passion and curiosity since joining the UBC community in 2001. Originally from Ottawa, Sue holds a PhD in archaeology from Cambridge University. Her research focuses on representation, repatriation, public archaeology, Arctic archaeology, oral history, material culture, and access to cultural heritage. In the past, Sue worked extensively with Inuit elders on historical research and with Inuit youth on archaeology projects. Through her work at MOA, she collaborates regularly with Musqueam and other Indigenous communities in British Columbia on exhibitions, training initiatives, and research projects.

“Musqueam has been working with Sue for many years through various initiatives, and I’m pleased to now welcome her in the role of MOA’s Director,” said Leona Sparrow, Musqueam liaison to MOA and UBC. “Sue is respected for her deeply held relationships and her collaborative style. She is a strong leader for MOA.”

Sue serves as the long-time Chair of MOA’s Repatriation Committee, which most recently facilitated a request for the return of a Haida mortuary pole in 2018. She has curated several major exhibitions at MOA, including *The Fabric of Our Land: Salish Weaving* (2017/2018) and the award-winning *čəsnaʔəm, the city before the city* with co-curator Jordan Wilson (Musqueam) (2015/2016).

In 2019, Sue was instrumental in supporting the development of the Indigenous Internship Program at MOA, a joint initiative with six Indigenous partners: the Musqueam Indian Band, the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre, the Haida Gwaii Museum, the U’mista Cultural Society, the Nlaka’pamux Nation, and the Coqualeetza Cultural Society. The Indigenous Internship Program provides training opportunities for Indigenous people already working in museums and cultural centres or intending to do this kind of work.

Sue also serves as Co-Academic Coordinator for Musqueam 101, an ongoing speaker series hosted by Musqueam in partnership with UBC. The program builds greater cross-cultural understanding of Musqueam’s rich cultural and historical legacy, and provides an opportunity for visiting scholars to engage with Musqueam community members and for community members to meet educators and participate in the academic culture of UBC.

During MOA’s Partnership of Peoples expansion project, completed in 2010, Sue served as one of the leads for the creation of the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN), an innovative, online research portal that provides access to museum and other public collections around the world, with a focus on First Nations heritage from the Northwest Coast and British Columbia. The RRN was co-developed with the Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council, the U’mista Cultural Society, and UBC’s Laboratory of Archaeology (LOA). As part of the Partnership of Peoples project, moreover, Sue oversaw the development of a suite of research labs for LOA within the Museum.

Sue is a dynamic teacher who, in addition to her curatorial work at MOA, mentors and supervises PhD and MA students. She teaches the popular Museum Practice and Curatorship course to

undergraduates—a course that is taught at MOA and provides practical hands-on learning in different areas of museum work. Her major service roles have included Director of LOA, Chair of the Anthropology Graduate Studies Committee, and Co-Head of the Department of Anthropology.

“Through her many contributions to MOA and the Department of Anthropology over the years, Dr. Rowley has demonstrated her strengths in a range of administrative and leadership roles, and she has garnered the trust and respect of her colleagues and members of the Indigenous communities with whom she has worked for many decades,” said Dr. Gage Averill, Dean of the Faculty of Arts. “I am confident that the combination of administrative experience, strong interpersonal and leadership skills, and deep understanding of and engagement with the issues facing the Museum will equip her to be successful in carrying out the responsibilities of the Directorship and in bringing MOA closer towards the fulfillment of the commitments it has made to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the University’s Indigenous Strategic Plan.”

Critically, Sue will lead MOA through a period of major transition as the Museum undertakes several significant endeavours in the immediate term: recovering visitorship and revenue following the COVID-19 pandemic, undergoing seismic upgrades of the Great Hall, and embarking on strategic planning to guide MOA into the future.

Sue was appointed at the conclusion of an international search, on the recommendation from the advisory search committee, which was comprised of community members from Musqueam, student and faculty representatives from the departments of Anthropology, First Nations and Indigenous Studies, Political Science, and History, as well as MOA staff representatives.

“I am honoured and humbled by this opportunity to further develop MOA’s history of working with Indigenous partners and originating communities around the world,” said Sue. “I look forward to working with the dedicated team at MOA as we review our policies and procedures and implement BC’s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act as well as UBC’s Indigenous Strategic Plan. I am also committed to developing and strengthening MOA’s relationships with the many peoples and communities engaged in the Museum’s initiatives.”