



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 1, 2021

**BC MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION 50th ANNIVERSARY AWARDS:
CELEBRATING INNOVATION, SOCIAL IMPACT, AND BRAVE VOICES**

VICTORIA, BC – Museum, gallery, heritage professionals and volunteers from every corner of British Columbia came together for the BC Museums Association's (BCMA) 50th anniversary Awards for Outstanding Achievement on October 28, 2021. This virtual event recognized institutions and individuals who embody excellence in the province's museums, galleries, and heritage sector, who dedicate their careers to making a difference in their communities, and who challenge us to never stop growing and evolving.

"The past two years have been unbelievably challenging for museums but looking at the nominees and winners gives me hope that the future of BC's heritage sector will be a bright one," says Ryan Hunt, BCMA's Executive Director. "Congratulations to all of the 2021 recipients."

Adrienne Silver and the team at Stó:lō Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training (SASET) received the **Award of Merit: Excellence in Social Action**. SASET makes it possible for museums to engage Indigenous youth in a transformative way and be the change through hiring practices. SASET creates positive social impact through the generous method of reciprocity in their work; not only do they provide funding, but they provide ongoing support to all parties and ensure that they build relationships with the organizations they fund.

The Reach Gallery Museum and contributors received the **Award of Merit: Excellence in Community Engagement** for *SEMÁ:TH XO:TSA: Great-Gramma's Lake* storybook. Key contributors include: Thetáx Chris Silver, Xémontélót Carrielynn Victor, Kris Foulds, and Laura Schneider. The Reach's Semá:th Xo:tša project, in partnership with Stó:lō collaborators, resulted in the publication of a children's book, exhibition and community programs about the drainage of Sumas Lake in 1924. The project renounces the celebratory settler narrative to focus on the enduring and profound impact drainage had on the lives and livelihood of the Stó:lō people.

University of Victoria and Partner Organizations received the **Award of Merit: Innovative Practice** for *Landscapes of Injustice*, a partnership of museums, community, and academics that sheds new light on the history of racism in Canada. Partner organizations include: Canadian Museum of Immigration, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, Nikkei National Museum, Royal BC Museum, University of Alberta, University of Winnipeg, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall, National Association of Japanese Canadians, Library and Archives Canada, and Ryerson University.

The Bateman Foundation received this year's **People's Choice Award** for their Wellness Program which

supported the mental wellbeing of their community by providing free therapeutic art programming. Facilitated by art therapist Kaitlin McManus, the programs were aimed at helping those experiencing anxiety and depression in the wake of COVID-19 by allowing participants to express themselves through mindful art making.

The following **Honourable Mentions** were also awarded by the BCMA Awards Committee:

The Pacific Museum of Earth for pivoting so successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic, expanding their reach, and becoming a role model to larger institutions.

Sncewips Heritage Museum for celebrating Indigenous culture and heritage through fun, fresh, and engaging online video content during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **Council of the Haida Nation, Haida Gwaii Museum, and School District 50** for their *iPads for Elders* program which helped equalize access to technology among the islands' senior citizens.

The **Museum of Anthropology & Contributing Artists** for *Playing with Fire: Ceramics of the Extraordinary*, an exhibition that brought attention to social, economic, political issues and challenges. Contributing artists include: Judy Chartrand, Gathie Falk, Ian Johnston, Glenn Lewis, Bill Rennie, Brendan Tang, Ying-Yueh Chuang, Jeremy Hatch, David Lambert, Alwyn O'Brien, and Debra Sloan.

Individuals were also recognized for their extraordinary contributions.

Colleen Palumbo, formerly of the Golden & District Historical Society, received a **Distinguished Service Award** which honours an individual who has made a unique and outstanding contribution on a regional, provincial, or national basis over an extended period of time. Colleen recently retired after 30 years of operating the Golden Museum and Archives. She nurtured the museum into a community-oriented, inclusive, accessible organization.

Sdahl K'awaas Lucy Bell, Haida Repatriation Committee, received the **Museum Stewardship Award** which recognizes an outstanding effort and contribution with a lasting impact to the sector. In her nomination, Bell was described as having "rocked the entire world of the GLAM sector on the West Coast [causing] a ripple effect to enact meaningful change and motivate others to be enactors of change".

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.

Contact:

Ryan Hunt, Executive Director, BCMA

Tel: (250) 356-5700; executivedirector@museum.bc.ca