

**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**May 3, 2024**

***Des Pardes* Wins Highest Honours at Heritage BC Awards**

Abbotsford, BC - *Des Pardes*, an exhibition on view at The Reach Gallery Museum until June 15, has taken home an **Outstanding Award in the Education, Communications, and Awareness category at the Heritage BC Awards** hosted in Nelson, BC on May 2.

Developed by The Reach Gallery Museum, *Des Pardes* is a community-engaged project that focuses on the history and contributions of Abbotsford's significant and diverse South Asian Canadian communities. Over three years, hundreds of community members contributed ideas, knowledge, and stories, as well as historical objects and archival documents, to achieve the goals of the project. *Des Pardes* culminates in a major community-based exhibition, a robust suite of educational programs, and increased digitized access to heritage.

The exhibition is a large-scale multi-sensory experience that uses historical photographs, oral histories, contemporary interviews, family heirlooms, and works of contemporary art to illustrate themes like migration, family, and oppression & opposition. Interpretive texts in the resulting exhibition are presented in four languages: English, Punjabi, Urdu, and Hindi.

The project enriches the representation of South Asian Canadian community history while simultaneously making primary resources digitally accessible to the public. This was accomplished by collecting over 100 oral histories and creating digitized archival resources that are showcased on touchscreen kiosks in the exhibition. These resources will further be incorporated into a legacy website at the conclusion of the exhibition in the coming months.

"*Des Pardes* shows the importance of investing in contributors and collaborators to create impactful community-oriented programs", says Britney Dack, Chair of Heritage BC. "Through innovative storytelling in multiple languages, and in leading the way with community engagement, the project's impacts go well beyond the local, to a national level."

According to Dack, "The quality of nominations that we received this year made for a difficult decision with our panel of judges. The quality and breadth of heritage projects that are being developed in communities big and small across British Columbia is impressive. It demonstrates how important it is to dig deep to learn about the heritage that makes our communities what they are today, and the value in sharing and preserving what we learn. It is an exciting time to be recognizing achievements in heritage."

The run of the award-winning exhibition at The Reach has been extended, by popular demand, until June 15. Admission to The Reach is by donation and everyone is welcome.

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Thumbnail images (high resolution versions attached separately):



A visitor to The Reach enjoys one of several thematic “Community Voices” videos featured in the *Des Pardes* exhibition. Photo by Dale Klippenstein.



Curatorial Assistant Gureena Saran speaking at the opening of *Des Pardes*. Photo by Dale Klippenstein.



*Des Pardes* includes voices, stories, and ideas, drawn from a three-year community-engaged exhibition development process. Photo by Dale Klippenstein.



Digitized community collections are shared on touchscreen kiosks throughout the *Des Pardes* exhibition. Photo by Dale Klippenstein.



*Des Pardes* has been well received by educators, engaging over 1,000 students to date in school tours and in-classroom activities.