



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MOA Reopens to the Public Following Successful Completion of Seismic Upgrades of Iconic Great Hall

After 18-month closure, MOA welcomes visitors back to experience revitalized Pacific Northwest Galleries and two new feature exhibitions

VANCOUVER, BC — The Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at UBC will reopen its doors to the public on **June 13, 2024 at 5pm**, following an 18-month closure that saw the successful completion of cutting-edge seismic upgrades to its Great Hall, coupled with the revitalization and reinterpretation of displays of Northwest Coast Indigenous carvings, poles, weavings and other works from the past and present. Along with the Museum’s reopening, MOA will present two exhibitions sharing Indigenous perspectives on colonial history: ***To Be Seen, To Be Heard: First Nations in Public Spaces, 1900–1965*** (world premiere), and ***in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*** (Western Canada premiere) by famed Māori artist, Lisa Reihana. MOA’s reopening this summer coincides with the 75th anniversary of the Museum’s opening to the public.

“We’ve waited so long to welcome back visitors from around the world to MOA this summer,” says Susan Rowley, MOA Director. “Over the past 18 months, MOA’s Great Hall has experienced monumental changes—some visible, some not, but all for a stronger future. It has been completely rebuilt from the ground up, incorporating innovative seismic technology into its foundations while restoring architect Arthur Erickson’s original 1976 design. Importantly, the displays in the Great Hall and other other gallery spaces have been revitalized and reinterpreted, in collaboration with First Nations communities and families whose objects and belongings are housed at the Museum. The completion of the seismic upgrades ensures the preservation and safety of this cultural heritage for future generations.”

Recognized as the first museum in Canada retrofitted with base isolation technology, MOA’s seismic upgrades are designed to protect the collections in the event of a major earthquake. Twenty-five base isolators have been installed under each of the Great Hall’s concrete columns to absorb the impact of seismic activity, separating the Great Hall from the ground and from the adjoining museum structure. Additionally, upgrades to the lighting, skylights, roofing, window coverings, carpeting and fire protection will further protect the collection.

MOA’s Great Hall was first identified by UBC as a high priority for seismic upgrades in 2017, as part of the university’s ongoing seismic planning. It was determined that a complete rebuild was the best approach to upgrading the resiliency of the space without compromising its architectural heritage. Budgeted at \$40 million, the project was funded by the provincial government, Canadian Heritage and UBC. Construction began in 2021, and in January 2023, the Museum was temporarily closed to accelerate the completion of the project.

Nick Milkovich Architects Inc. was selected as the architectural firm for the Great Hall’s renewal. As principal architect, Milkovich offered the project unique experience, having made the Museum’s original building

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models as an apprentice to Arthur Erickson in the 1970s. Milkovich's intimate knowledge of the design ensured the iconic structure was rebuilt in Erickson's original vision.

On the evening of June 13, 2024, starting at 5pm, visitors will be welcomed to a revitalized museum with updated interpretations and new displays, including an 8.7-metre canoe, carved by Stz'uminus artist Qap'u'luq—John Marston.

The Museum will also reopen with two exhibitions, both showcasing Indigenous perspectives of historical periods, too often told and represented through a colonial lens. In the Audain Gallery, MOA presents ***To Be Seen, To Be Heard: First Nations in Public Spaces, 1900–1965***, co-curated by Karen Duffek, MOA Curator, Contemporary Visual Arts + Pacific Northwest, and Dr. Marcia Crosby (Ts'mysen/Haida), art historian and scholar. An immersive, multimedia exhibition, *To Be Seen, To Be Heard* explores how, during the period of potlatch prohibition and other forms of erasure in Canada, First Nations people in British Columbia represented themselves as Indigenous in urban public spaces. Looking back through rich archival material reveals the diverse ways that First Nations worked to be seen and heard striving to have their rights recognized—rights to their lands, their laws and their future.

In the O'Brian Gallery, MOA presents Māori artist Lisa Reihana's ***in Pursuit of Venus [infected]***, a 32-minute-long, panoramic video projection designed to create an immersive cinematic experience. A digitally animated interpretation of the French Neoclassical scenic wallpaper *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*—which portrays harmonious encounters between Europeans and Polynesians amidst a Tahitian landscape—*in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* depicts a decidedly darker narrative to expose the oppressive and often violent exchanges absent from the utopian colonial portrayal, challenging historical and contemporary stereotypes. This work seeks to disrupt notions of beauty, authenticity, history and myth.

MOA's reopening weekend will include a host of special events and activities. The Museum opens its doors at 5pm on Thursday, June 13 with free admission all evening. Friday, June 14 coincides with the 100th anniversary of architect Arthur Erickson's birth, and MOA is celebrating with half-priced admission and special programming to mark the occasion. On Saturday, June 15 and Sunday, June 16, visitors will enjoy half-priced admission, as well as dance and musical performances, hands-on workshops, staff tours and family-friendly activities.

The reopening weekend's activities will kick off a year of special programming to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Museum to the public in the UBC Main Library, under the direction of Harry and Audrey Hawthorn in 1949.

For admission details and exhibition information, visit: moa.ubc.ca

The Great Hall seismic upgrades and renewal project is funded in part by BC's Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and the Government of Canada.

About MOA (moa.ubc.ca)

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) is world-renowned for its collections, research, teaching, public programs and community connections. Its mission is to inspire an understanding of and respect for world arts and cultures. Today, Canada's largest teaching museum is located in a spectacular Arthur Erickson-designed building overlooking mountains and sea. MOA's

collections consist of more than 50,000 cultural objects and artworks created in Asia, Africa, Oceania, Europe and the Americas — with a focus on the Pacific Northwest. MOA's Multiversity Galleries: Ways of Knowing provide public access to many of these works. The Audain Gallery and the O'Brian Gallery, MOA's feature exhibition spaces, showcase travelling exhibitions, as well as those developed in-house.

LISTING INFORMATION

MOA presents *To Be seen, To Be Heard: First Nations in Public Spaces, 1900–1965* and *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*

Dates:

To Be Seen, To Be Heard: First Nations in Public Spaces, 1900–1965
June 13, 2024 to March 30, 2025

in Pursuit of Venus [infected]
June 13, 2024 to January 5, 2025

Address:

Museum of Anthropology
University of British Columbia
6393 NW Marine Drive, Vancouver, BC

Website:

moa.ubc.ca

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For further media information, contact

Laura Murray | 604.418.2998 | lmurray@mpmgarts.com
Angela Poon | 604.569.5343 | apoon@mpmgarts.com

MURRAY PATERSON
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