

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Bill Reid Gallery Premieres First-Ever Retrospective of
Esteemed Haida Artist & Mentor in
– Kihl ‘Yahda Christian White: Master Haida Artist –**

Multidisciplinary exhibition to showcase White’s extensive body of work inspired by the traditional stories from Haida Gwaii, created over the span of his 50-year career

VANCOUVER, BC — Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art presents the Vancouver premiere of the retrospective exhibition ***Kihl ‘Yahda Christian White: Master Haida Artist*** from **February 1, 2025 – February 1, 2026**. The exhibition is an expansive examination of the multidisciplinary Haida artist – whose work ranges from intricate argillite carvings and monumental sculptures to ocean going cedar canoes and gold and silver jewelry – as well as his lifelong commitment to the preservation and celebration of Haida stories, songs, and dances. In addition to a comprehensive collection of White’s artworks from the past half century, the exhibition will feature numerous carved works created in collaboration with eight key apprentices, representing the next generation of contemporary Haida artists.

“As a master Haida carver, cultural ambassador, and mentor, Christian White has made an indelible impact on his community and beyond over the last 50 years, yet this is the first time his artworks have been featured as part of a major retrospective exhibition,” says Bill Reid Gallery curator **Aliya Boubard**. “We are thrilled to bring this highly anticipated showcase to life this winter, through the guest curation of **Sdahl K’awaas Lucy Bell**, member of the Tsiits Gitanee Haida Eagle clan, along with her daughter **Gudangee Xahl Kil Amelia Rea**, who is also Christian’s niece.”

The retrospective will showcase more than 40 artworks by White in a variety of mediums, including carvings, regalia, prints, as well as videos of performances from White and the Tluu Xaada Naay Dance Group. A member of the Yahgulaanas Haida Raven Clan and son to the late Chief Edensu, Morris White, Christian White and his family have been significant forces in keeping the Haida culture, art, and language alive, including the art of pole carving and canoe building within Old Massett. Now 62 years old, White began carving argillite with inlays at 14 and has been a full-time artist since the age of 17.

Many of White’s works are inspired by traditional stories, which he learned in Xaad Kil through Haida language classes, books, recordings, and storytellers. Some highlights of his works on display in this exhibition include *Raven Copper Shield* (1976), one of White’s earliest carved copper works at age 14; *Raven Transformation* (2022), a large transformational mask that opens up to reveal a series of intricate inner masks; and *House Box* (2024), the latest in a series of stunning bentwood boxes that will be featured in the exhibition.

As White has dedicated much of his career to mentoring others, the exhibition will also feature monumental works, in collaboration with eight apprentices, including **Corey Bulpitt, Allan Weir, Skil Jaadee White, Danielle Louise Allard, Daisy White, Bryce Williams, Vernon White, and Neil Goertzen**.

The exhibition will also spotlight White’s role as a founding member of the Haida Repatriation Committee for which he has traveled extensively to help bring home the remains of more than 500

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Haida Ancestors, where they are laid to rest with honour in their homeland of Haida Gwaii. White also worked with his apprentices to create bentwood chests for the repatriated ancestors to be honoured and buried. The committee has also engaged with some of the 12,000 Haida Belongings held in museums worldwide, bringing inspiration and knowledge back to their community.

Guest curator Sdahl K'awaas Lucy Bell is currently completing her PhD at Simon Fraser University, with a focus on Haida museology as an act of *tla yahda* (making things right), aiming to honour Haida culture at home and within museums and galleries. Bell has co-curated the *Raven Travelling* exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery and gallery refreshes at the Royal BC Museum, and is a founding member of the Haida Repatriation Committee. Her dedication to repatriation and cultural advocacy have awarded her numerous accolades, including the BC Museums Association Service Award, the BC Community Achievement Award, and the BC Reconciliation Award. Co-curated by Gudangee Xahl Kil Amelia Rea, this is the first exhibition that Bell and Rea have worked on together.

A series of public programs featuring White and his apprentices will support the exhibition during its year-long run, including an artist talk, a panel discussion, and art demonstrations. A full list of events will be made available at a later date at billreidgallery.ca

About Bill Reid Gallery (billreidgallery.ca)

The Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art is a public gallery nestled in the heart of downtown Vancouver. It was named after acclaimed Haida artist Bill Reid (1920–1998), a master goldsmith, carver, sculptor, writer, broadcaster, and spokesman.

Since opening in May 2008, the Bill Reid Gallery has remained the only public gallery in Canada devoted to contemporary Indigenous art of the Northwest Coast and is home to the Simon Fraser University Bill Reid Art Collection, as well as special exhibitions of contemporary Indigenous art of the Northwest Coast of North America. Through his art, Bill Reid continues to inspire emerging and established contemporary Indigenous artists. His legacies include infusing the art traditions of the Haida with modern forms of expression, influencing the next generation of artists, and building lasting bridges between First Nations and other peoples.

The Bill Reid Gallery offers public programs including artist talks and artist-led workshops which provide a greater awareness and appreciation of Indigenous values and cultures. Find public programs at billreidgallery.ca.

The Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art is an initiative of the Bill Reid Foundation. Established in 1999 as a non-profit charitable organization, the Foundation's mission is to preserve the art and perpetuate the legacies of Bill Reid.

LISTING INFORMATION

**Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art presents
*Kihl 'Yahda Christian White: Master Haida Artist***

Dates:

February 1, 2025 – February 1, 2026

Winter Hours:

Tues to Sat, 10am to 5pm

Address:

Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art
639 Hornby St
Vancouver, BC

Website:

billreidgallery.ca

For further media information, contact

Angela Poon | C. 604.569.5343

apoon@mpmgarts.com

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