

Vancouver Art Gallery Receives Historic \$100 Million Gift from Audain Foundation to Support New Vision and Building

November 4, 2021, VANCOUVER, BC - Today, the Vancouver Art Gallery is pleased to announce it will be the recipient of a \$100 million transformational gift from the Audain Foundation, to support the creation of a new building in downtown Vancouver. This gift comes at a time when the Vancouver Art Gallery celebrates its 90th anniversary. This is the largest single cash gift to an art gallery in Canadian history.

Michael Audain, Chairman of the Audain Foundation, states, "Important art has been created on this coast for thousands of years, while today Vancouver's visual artists are recognized for their accomplishments around the world. Yoshi and I are happy to help build a new Vancouver Art Gallery because we love British Columbia and our artists. We hope the splendid new building will work well to exhibit the work of our leading artists as well as introduce youngsters to the wonders of art. Vancouver has been good to our family, so we are thrilled to have this opportunity to join the City of Vancouver, the BC Government, the Chan family, and many other generous donors in making this important project a reality."



Rendering of the exterior of the new Vancouver Art Gallery building © Herzog & de Meuron.

The new Vancouver Art Gallery at the Chan Centre for the Visual Arts will be a multi-functional art centre and community space – a revitalized project that embraces change. The new Gallery will provide increased space that will support artists and the region's cultural sector in British Columbia. The project is expected to create an estimated 3,000 construction jobs and 1,000 permanent jobs in the tourism sector.

The building is being designed by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron together with Vancouver architects Perkins & Will, in consultation with Coast Salish artists. This consultation is reflected in the building's design and its use of sustainable practices. The new Gallery will be the first Passive House art gallery in North America, a voluntary standard for energy efficiency which significantly reduces the building's ecological footprint. With this new facility, the Vancouver Art Gallery demonstrates its commitment to environmental sustainability and proudly acknowledges its location on the ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

“The new Vancouver Art Gallery – from its conception and design – will reflect a Coast Salish world view,” says Vancouver Art Gallery Elder-in-residence and art and design consultant Skwetsimeltxw Willard ‘Buddy’ Joseph. The façade design was developed during a series of collaborative workshops between the architectural team, the Gallery, and the artists representing the three host Nations. Local Indigenous artists Debra Sparrow, Chepximiya Siyam’ Janice George, Skwetsimeltxw Willard ‘Buddy’ Joseph, and Angela George have been engaged as art and design consultants on the project since March 2021. “The rich exterior expression is much more than a design; it represents spiritual energy and protection,” says Joseph.

“We are very grateful for this gift from the Audain Foundation which brings us significantly closer to reaching our goal,” says Anthony Kiendl, CEO and Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. “Our objective is to raise an additional \$160 million from the private and public sectors — and we hope this historic donation will encourage others in our community and across the country to support our vision. With the generosity of our donors, the creativity of artists, and the support of our communities, we are transforming the art gallery to transform the world,” states Kiendl who joined the Gallery one year ago. “This project will provide opportunities for learning and inspiration for millions of visitors to the Gallery. Art galleries foster society's capacity to solve problems by engaging the visitors' ability to think creatively and see the world in different ways. We are building capacity for future generations to be resilient, creative, and healthy.”

“History was made in B.C. today with Michael Audain's generous donation. This is an incredible milestone not only for the gallery but also the arts community,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. “Our government will continue to work with the Vancouver Art Gallery and other partners on this exciting new chapter to re-imagine this legacy project.”

“The Audain Foundation's stunning \$100 million gift is a testament to just how transformational a new Vancouver Art Gallery can be for art in Canada,” said Kennedy Stewart, Mayor of Vancouver. “Artists and art lovers around the world are now on notice about Vancouver's future place as a global destination for exhibitions that inspire, challenge, and delight.”

The Audain Foundation gift follows a visionary gift of \$40 million by the Chan Family Foundation to establish the Chan Centre for the Visual Arts, and an initial investment of \$50 million by the Province of British Columbia. The City of Vancouver's pledge to designate a city-owned site is valued at over \$100 million. In addition, \$50 million has been pledged to date by individual donors and foundations.

The Vancouver Art Gallery at the Chan Centre for the Visual Arts will be located between Cambie and Beatty streets, with a front entrance on Georgia Street, in downtown Vancouver. It will include over 80,000 square feet of exhibition space, more than double the existing space. In addition, there will be visible art storage, a theatre, library and research centre, artist studios, accommodation for visiting artists, and a visual arts preschool and daycare, situated around a 40,000 square foot courtyard. The building will also house the Institute of Asian Art, a new Centre for Art and Communication, and a multi-purpose Indigenous Community House.

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Media contact:

Daniel St. Germaine | daniel@acteam.ca | 647-526-2696

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About the Audain Foundation

The Audain Foundation is a visual arts funding organization founded by Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa. Michael Audain, Chairman of Polygon Homes Ltd. is an ardent Vancouver art collector. The Audain Foundation has an extensive history of supporting the visual arts at public galleries and universities across Canada, including building the Audain Art Museum in Whistler, BC. Michael Audain also serves as Chair of the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation with offices in Montreal and Vancouver.

About the Vancouver Art Gallery

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs, and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the world. Special attention is given to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists, as well as to those of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art founded in 2014. The Gallery's exhibitions also explore the impact of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design, and architecture.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a charitable not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is situated on the ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and is respectful of the Indigenous stewards of the land it occupies, whose rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Vancouver and the work of the Gallery.

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