

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Bill Reid Gallery Marks 10th Anniversary with \$1.5 Million Renovation

First-ever overhaul maximizes exhibition space and programming options in promoting reconciliation through the unique art of Northwest Coast First Nations

VANCOUVER, BC – Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art today announced it will undergo a **\$1.5 million renovation** to repurpose its current space at 639 Hornby Street, allowing the gallery to expand its exhibition offerings and increase its artistic and educational programming. The renovation is set to commence in December of this year with a completion date in time for a soft launch in April 2018, followed by a formal opening on June 14, 2018 when the Gallery will host its landmark 10th Anniversary Gala.

This first major renovation to the decade-old museum, named for one of BC's most renowned artists, includes a new 640-square-foot exhibition gallery and a 650-square-foot dedicated program space that will replace offices on the mezzanine level. The lobby will be redesigned to enhance the visitor experience and a covering for the gallery's 250-square-foot terrace will be constructed to extend the visitor experience. A significant upgrade to the gallery's existing lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning system is also planned to improve light levels, temperature and humidity controls needed for the display of special works.

"The general public has expressed a desire to connect with Indigenous peoples in order to actively participate in the process of reconciliation," said Alexandra Montgomery, Director and CEO of the Bill Reid Gallery. "An expanded exhibition and program schedule will better support the reconciliation process by increasing awareness of Indigenous art and culture, and providing the opportunity to facilitate conversations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples."

Master goldsmith, carver, and sculptor Bill Reid (1920-1998) was among those credited with renewing public interest in Northwest Coast art and inspiring new generations of Indigenous artists to build on its traditions. He once described the art of Northwest Coast First Nations as "an absolutely unique product, one of the crowning achievements of the whole human experience." With today's announcement, his namesake Gallery will be better equipped to engage, and educate greater numbers of visitors about the significant history behind the art, while increasing opportunities for Indigenous artists to share their work on a public stage.

Planning for the Gallery's makeover has been in the works since 2014, and was made possible by the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage's Canada Cultural Spaces Fund and the City of Vancouver's Cultural Infrastructure Program. The project is also supported by the Province of British Columbia through its "Canada 150: Celebrating BC Communities and their Contributions to Canada" grant program and several generous private donors. It will be managed by Vancouver-based Merrick Architecture who are the original designers of this exquisite purpose-built gallery.

"We are deeply grateful for the generous contributions by Canadian Heritage, the City of Vancouver, the Province and several donors for making this pivotal project a reality," said Montgomery. "With the space the renovation will provide, we have the ability to present up to three

additional focus exhibitions to run in conjunction with our two feature exhibitions as part of our annual programming. This will offer Northwest Coast First Nations artists greater opportunities to have their works displayed while allowing the Gallery to expand our work with emerging artists and curators, expand and enrich our student programs, and provide visitors with more ways to encounter and celebrate our region's rich and diverse Indigenous cultures."

"Our government understands that investments in arts and heritage help build strong and vibrant communities. Funding for these important infrastructure upgrades demonstrates our ongoing commitment to developing and improving access to cultural institutions for all Canadians. We are pleased to support the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art as it continues to protect, preserve and promote iconic works by Bill Reid and other remarkable Canadian artists," said The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage.

"The Bill Reid Gallery renovation is a great boost to Indigenous art and culture in our city and will go a long way in preserving Bill Reid's rich legacy in British Columbia and beyond," says Gregor Robertson, Mayor of Vancouver. "I'm pleased that—through the City's Cultural Infrastructure Program—the expanded space will make Indigenous art more accessible to Vancouverites and occupy an important place in recognizing and advancing reconciliation."

"Bill Reid was great ambassador for our people. He helped introduce the world to Northwest Coast art, and showed us that Indigenous art - the work of our ancestors - could stand with great art from other nations and traditions," said James Hart, artist and longstanding Board Member, Bill Reid Gallery. "The Bill Reid Gallery provides a significant opportunity to experience Bill Reid's work housed as a collection and all in one place – his jewelry, prints and monumental sculpture – showcasing the scope of his craft and how far he was ahead of his time. The expansion of the Gallery is exciting. It makes room for a greater number of Northwest Coast artists here in BC, while honouring the rich legacy of Bill Reid."

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Supported by the Province of British Columbia through the British Columbia | Canada 150:
Celebrating BC Communities and their Contributions to Canada grant program.

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 is named after acclaimed Haida artist Bill Reid (1920 – 1998), a master goldsmith, carver, sculptor, writer, broadcaster, and spokesman.

Since opening its doors 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 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

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 numerous educational programs for students of all ages, providing greater awareness and appreciation of Indigenous values and cultures, coupled with an understanding of how ancient knowledge can inform and impact their lives today.

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 and to celebrate the diverse cultures of the Northwest Coast through an active exhibition and program schedule.

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