

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Bill Reid Gallery Honours Indigenous Resilience and Beauty,
Confronts Legacy of Colonial Atrocities in Canadian Premiere
–Sho Sho Esquiro: Doctrine of Discovery–**

***Acclaimed artist addresses devastating colonial practices in first-ever solo exhibition
featuring collection of striking gowns, paintings, and family archives***

VANCOUVER, BC — Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art presents the Canadian premiere exhibition of ***Sho Sho Esquiro: Doctrine of Discovery*** from **September 22, 2021–June 5, 2022**. The solo exhibition by award-winning designer, artist, and activist **Sho Sho Esquiro** showcases meticulously crafted couture gowns, raw textiles, paintings and photographs to celebrate the beauty, strength and resilience of First Nations communities in the face of historical and ongoing trauma. Curated by **Mirande Belarde-Lewis**, *Sho Sho Esquiro: Doctrine of Discovery* inspires conversations around genocidal colonial practices, confronts the theft and murder of Indigenous women and children, and honours activists on the front lines.

“This powerful and vital exhibition of contemporary fashion sheds an urgent light on the devastating impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery, an international law that falsely gave European settlers dominion over the lands and Indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere,” says Belarde-Lewis. “Through Esquiro’s artful storytelling using materials from her Yukon homelands, patrons are asked to confront challenging truths about Canadian history that still have catastrophic consequences today. Given the ongoing recovery of Indigenous children at the sites of former residential ‘schools’ coupled with the ongoing fight against corporate extraction of natural resources, *Sho Sho Esquiro: Doctrine of Discovery* shares a critical perspective on the lived experiences of First Nations communities.”

The exhibition features a striking collection of the artist’s contemporary gowns and outfits, crafted using trade cloths, furs, leathers, hides, beads and shells sourced directly from the Yukon. Esquiro’s gowns have been shown at New York Fashion Week and she represented Canada at Jessica Mihn Anh’s Fashion Phenomenon atop the Eiffel Tower. The exhibition depicts her deeply personal connection to the beauty of the Yukon’s physical landscape, as well as the intricate and sustainable textile practices of Esquiro’s ancestors. Trade cloth and furs serve as the basis and inspiration for Esquiro’s remarkably detailed gowns and offer further commentary on the dwindling access to natural and land-based materials for her clothing, due to extractive industrial practices.

The exhibition is enhanced through several multimedia elements, including four paintings honouring family and community members who are residential school survivors and victims; a collection of personally curated historical photographs from her own family archives, depicting the customs and cultural practices of her ancestors; as well as video installations showcasing various fashion shows and interviews with the artist.

A series of ancillary events will support *Sho Sho Esquiro: Doctrine of Discovery*, including the Bill Reid Gallery’s exhibition opening on September 21 at 6pm, which will take place on Facebook Live as well as in-person for a limited number of registered attendees. Throughout the exhibition run, several curatorial tours will be offered; as well as workshops related to clothing, weaving, and textiles; and an artist talk. A 60-page, full-colour catalogue with curator and guest essays will be published in mid-November. Visit billreidgallery.ca for a full list of events and for registration details.

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Profoundly inspired by her Canadian Yukon upbringing, artist **Sho Sho Esquiro (Kaska Dena/Scottish/Cree)** combines the inspiration of traditional Indigenous textiles and modern urban culture to create art through the medium of fashion. She devotes hundreds of hours into the creation of each stunning garment, in reflection of Indigenous teachings to treat all materials sourced from the earth with respect. Her award-winning collections have been shown in Canada, New York, Paris, and Santa Fe, and are sought after by museums across North America.

Mirande Belarde-Lewis (Zuni/Tlingit) is the Joseph & Jill McKinstry Endowed Faculty Fellow in Native North American Indigenous Knowledge and an assistant professor at the Information School, at the University of Washington. Her work highlights and celebrates Native artists, their processes, and their exquisite works. As an independent curator, she has worked with tribal, city, state and federal museums to create Native-focused educational programming, publications, and art exhibitions.

Bill Reid Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the following exhibition partners:

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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 *Sho Sho Esquiro: Doctrine of Discovery*

Dates:	September 22, 2021 – June 5, 2022
Hours:	Wednesdays through Sundays from 11am to 5pm
Address:	Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art 639 Hornby St Vancouver, BC
Website:	billreidgallery.ca

For further media information, contact

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