

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Vancouver Art Gallery presents

***Guud San Glans Robert Davidson: A Line That Bends But Does Not Break***

***A monumental exhibition of Guud San Glans Robert Davidson's graphic work spanning his career to date.***



**November 25, 2022, VANCOUVER, BC** // *Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the Musqueam (x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əjəm), Squamish (Sk̓wxwú7mesh Úxwumixw) and Tseil-Waututh (səlilwataʔ) Nations.*

The Vancouver Art Gallery presents [Guud san glans Robert Davidson: A Line That Bends But Does Not Break](#) from November 26, 2022 to April 16, 2023, an exhibition of Robert Davidson's renowned prints and paintings spanning his decades-long career. The exhibition draws on the Vancouver Art Gallery's extensive collection of Davidson's work, supplemented by paintings from private collections, showcasing his profound knowledge of Haida art and his ability to revive, preserve and innovate brilliantly within the Haida tradition.

"We are pleased to be presenting the work of Robert Davidson this season," said Anthony Kiendl, CEO & Director of Vancouver Art Gallery. "Davidson's vision and creativity exceed the borders of convention. This important solo exhibition explores Robert's unique perspective with a focus on his two-dimensional art on paper and canvas."

Since the 1960s, Guud san glans Robert Davidson has been instrumental in the renaissance of Haida art and culture and has long been appreciated as one of the most inventive artists working within Haida artistic traditions.

Guud san glans Robert Davidson: A Line That Bends But Does Not Break welcomes viewers into the exhibition through an in-depth introduction to the visual conventions of Haida art. Audiences are greeted with a rich selection of prints and drawings, going back to Davidson's earliest graphic works, gradually revealing the artist's willingness to extend these conventions in thoughtful ways. From there, the visitor encounters a room filled with prints and paintings created exclusively in black and red, drawing attention to the dominant role of these two colours in Haida graphics. The exhibition continues to unfold into galleries that demonstrate the full range of Davidson's experimentation with form in two-dimensional works, harnessing the Haida visual language with the literacy, deftness and sensitivity of a poet.

Throughout the exhibition, the visitor is guided by Davidson's own voice and image through a series of video and audio stations. This personal accompaniment presents guests with the opportunity to form a deeper connection with Davidson's work as well as Haida visual culture and language while offering enhanced modes of accessibility.

The exhibition title includes Davidson's Haida name, Guud san glans, meaning Eagle of the Dawn. "A Line That Bends But Does Not Break" suggests that Davidson is so at home within the stylistic conventions of traditional Haida art that he is able to innovate, or "bend," Haida visual conventions without breaking with them. The title also implies that, although these traditions were placed under considerable stress during historical state efforts to eradicate Haida and other Indigenous cultures, these traditions have proven resilient and have been revived through the work of artists like Davidson. Each work can be considered a masterclass in the Haida language of forms and acts as powerful evidence of the richness, resilience and vitality of Haida culture.

#### FEATURED PUBLICATION

Robert Davidson has a long history with the Vancouver Art Gallery, from inclusion in our first major survey of Northwest Coast art in 1967, Arts of the Raven, to a major mid-career survey, Eagle of the Dawn, in 1993. The Vancouver Art Gallery is proud to be co-publisher of a new book on Davidson's graphics to be released this fall, Echoes of the Supernatural: The Graphic Art of Robert Davidson. This project helped to inspire us to revisit our extensive collection of Davidson's graphic works

For further information, please visit [vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://vanartgallery.bc.ca)

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*Image Credit:* Robert Davidson, *T-Silli-AA-Lis, Raven Finned Killer Whale*, 1983, screenprint on paper, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David Young

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**ABOUT GUUD SAN GLANS ROBERT DAVIDSON**

For more than fifty years, Robert Davidson has worked as an artist, amassing an internationally acclaimed body of work. He is a leading figure in the renaissance of Haida art and culture. Davidson's passion for reviving and perpetuating a variety of forms of Haida cultural expression, including song, dance and ceremony, has fueled his remarkable output throughout the years.

Davidson was born in 1946 to a particularly notable family of artists. He began carving at the age of thirteen, as a response to the erasure of Haida cultural heritage from his hometown. He has been responsible for carving and raising the first totem pole in his hometown of Masset, Haida Gwaii. In 1965, Davidson moved to Vancouver to complete his education at Point Grey Secondary School. In 1966, Davidson was mentored by master carver, Bill Reid, for eighteen months before continuing his education surrounding Haida art and culture through anthropologist, Wilson Duff, and artist, Bill Holm. In 1967, Davidson enrolled in the Vancouver School of Art (the predecessor to Emily Carr University of Art + Design), a place he credits for developing his drawing. Davidson has received many honours for his accomplishments, including an Indspire Award (formerly the National Aboriginal Achievement Award) in art and culture, Order of British Columbia, Order of Canada, Governor General's Award in Visual Arts, Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts and numerous honorary degrees from universities in Canada and the United States. His work is found in several private and public collections, including the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Vancouver Art Gallery; Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, Quebec; and Southwest Museum of the American Indian, Los Angeles

**ABOUT VANCOUVER ART GALLERY ([www.vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca))**

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's leading and 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, and 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 x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətəʔ (Tseil-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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