

The Vancouver Art Gallery Launches Three Curatorial Residencies *Welcoming additional perspectives to the Gallery*



March 21, 2024, VANCOUVER, BC // Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is pleased to announce the appointment of three Vancouver-based Curators in Residence: **Pantea Haghighi, Makiko Hara and Nya Lewis**. Through wide-ranging projects spanning exhibitions, performances, research and publications, Haghighi, Hara and Lewis will bring an exciting breadth of experience and expertise while offering new voices and perspectives to the Gallery's Curatorial Department. Their residencies will commence immediately and run through 2025.

"These important residencies exemplify the Gallery as a site for education, research and thought leadership," says **Anthony Kiendl, CEO & Executive Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery**. "We are pleased to welcome Pantea, Makiko and Nya, whose curiosity and insight will enrich the Gallery in an exciting period of growth and transformation."

"I am thrilled to welcome three accomplished curators to the Vancouver Art Gallery. Their residencies support one of our core missions—which is to produce knowledge about art and to give platform to the vital knowledge that artists produce. I am looking forward to learning from my new colleagues and widening the scope of exhibitions, programming and scholarship we offer our audiences," says **Eva Respini, Deputy Director & Director of Curatorial Programs**.

As an independent curator and doctoral student at Simon Fraser University, **Pantea Haghighi** focuses her research on modernism in architecture and the visual arts in relation to the politics of language. Haghighi utilizes her experience collaborating with individuals from various cultural backgrounds to strengthen the Gallery's mission to connect people, bring communities together and create spaces that invite discussion and the exchange of ideas. Haghighi recently guest curated *Parviz Tanavoli: Poets, Locks, Cages*, a groundbreaking exhibition of works by the Iranian-born, Vancouver-based artist, presented in 2023. During her residency, Haghighi will continue her research on the emergence and development of modernism in Iran in the period between 1948 and 1978, while deepening the Gallery's knowledge of artists from this region.

Makiko Hara has over three decades of experience in international contemporary art as an independent curator, producer, lecturer, performance artist and writer. Since relocating from Tokyo to Vancouver in 2007, she has continually

challenged notions of cross-Pacific identity through an array of experimental curatorial practices. From 2007 to 2013, Hara was the Chief Curator of Centre A: Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. In 2021, Hara received the Alvin Balkind Curator's Prize from the Shadbolt Foundation. Hara recently guest curated *Offsite: Pedro Reyes* and *Lani Maestro* at the Gallery's public outdoor art space, Offsite, and has worked on numerous art projects around the city. Hara's focus at the Gallery will be curating performance events and public art projects that bring a new layer of depth and understanding to the Gallery's exhibitions and programs.

Nya Lewis currently serves as the Director of Artspeak gallery, Interim Artistic Director of the Vancouver Queer Film festival, and a Research Assistant at the Center for the Study of Black Canadian diaspora. In 2020, Lewis guest curated *Where do we go from here?*, an exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery that developed as an opportunity to consider the Gallery's own collecting and exhibition history. Lewis' hybrid practice is rooted in the culmination of centuries of resistance, love, questions, actions and study concerning Black Atlantic/Pacific cultural production. Throughout the residency, the Gallery will support Lewis' research towards a major publication dedicated to Black cultural production in British Columbia. Working across the disciplines of artmaking, programming, research, curating and writing, Lewis' work is multivalent in form and expression but is always driven by the reimagining and reclaiming of community.

The knowledge and expertise created throughout the program are a critical element that contributes to the Gallery's growth and reimagining of what an art museum in the 21st century can be. The Gallery recently started construction on a new purpose-built art facility to open in 2028. The new building is anticipated to greatly expand and diversify the programs and exhibitions that the Gallery is able to present.

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Pictured left to right: Pantea Haghighi, Makiko Hara and Nya Lewis. Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery

ABOUT 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 celebrated exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship 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), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (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 to the work of the Gallery.

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