

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## The Audain Foundation Funds the Appointment of Two Vancouver Art Gallery Curators Dedicated to Indigenous Art and Art from British Columbia



*May 15, 2025, VANCOUVER, BC // Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətaɫ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.*

The Vancouver Art Gallery is thrilled to announce the appointment of two curatorial positions that underscore the Gallery's ongoing commitment to British Columbian and Indigenous art: **Dr. Adrienne Fast** as Audain Associate Curator of BC Art and **Dr. Camille Georgeson-Usher** as Audain Senior Curatorial Advisor on Indigenous Art. These roles ensure that vital expertise in Indigenous and British Columbian art is embedded in the Gallery's curatorial vision, shaping ambitious exhibitions and guiding strategic acquisitions for the permanent collection.

These appointments have been made possible through the support of the Audain Foundation, whose longstanding relationship with the Vancouver Art Gallery has been instrumental in advancing the study and presentation of art from British Columbia. The Gallery's Audain Curator of British Columbia Art position—established through this partnership—has now evolved into the two roles announced today, reflecting the Foundation's ongoing commitment to supporting the Gallery's vision.

"We are profoundly grateful to the Audain Foundation for their unwavering support of our mission and their extraordinary dedication to the visual arts in British Columbia," says **Eva Respini**, Interim Co-CEO at the Vancouver Art Gallery. "The Vancouver Art Gallery is committed to representing and advancing the diverse artistic voices of British Columbia and Canada, with a particular emphasis on Indigenous perspectives and practices. These two

new curatorial appointments mark a vital next chapter in our journey, allowing us to deepen our impact and broaden our engagement with artists and communities across the province.”

**Dr. Adrienne Fast** is a seasoned curator with a long-standing dedication to elevating the voices of artists from British Columbia. She holds a PhD in Art History and Theory from the University of British Columbia (2015) and an MA in Art History and Archaeology from SOAS, University of London (2000). Her curatorial experience spans historical First Nations art from the Northwest Coast, experimental installation and performance art from Vancouver’s vibrant 1960s–70s scene, and contemporary performance photography.

Dr. Fast returns to the Vancouver Art Gallery with a strong foundation, having previously held the positions of Assistant Curator – Acquisitions (2015–16) and Curatorial Assistant (2005–07). Her work in regional galleries, including the Kamloops Art Gallery, The Reach Gallery Museum in Abbotsford and most recently at Evergreen Cultural Centre in Coquitlam, has equipped her with a broad and inclusive view of the province’s cultural landscape.

Joining Dr. Fast is **Dr. Camille Georgeson-Usher**, a respected scholar, curator and writer of Coast Salish and Sahtu Dene heritage. She is currently Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Indigenous Art in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory at UBC. Dr. Georgeson-Usher brings a powerful combination of academic insight, curatorial expertise and community leadership to the Gallery.

She holds an MA in Art History from Concordia University and a PhD in Cultural Studies from Queen’s University. Her research explores collective movement through space, everyday intimacies and how public art fosters gathering and connection. As former Executive Director of the Indigenous Curatorial Collective and current Co-Chair of the Toronto Biennial of Art, she brings deep experience in Indigenous artistic and curatorial practice, community engagement and governance.

**Dr. Richard Hill**, Smith Jarislowsky Senior Curator of Canadian Art at the Vancouver Art Gallery, reflects on the appointments: “We are tremendously excited to welcome two excellent candidates whose specializations are central to our mission at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Dr. Fast and Dr. Georgeson-Usher’s deep expertise, research-driven practices and strong connections to local and Indigenous art communities will greatly enhance our ability to present innovative, resonant and critically engaged exhibitions, programs and research.”

The Vancouver Art Gallery remains committed to presenting a wide-ranging and inclusive vision of historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the globe. With a strong focus on the work of Indigenous artists and those from the Asia Pacific region—supported by the Centre for Global Asias (formerly the Institute of Asian Art), established in 2014—the Gallery continues to foreground diverse voices and perspectives. Current exhibitions include *Postcards from the Heart: Selections from the Brigitte and Henning Freybe Collection*, featuring promised acquisitions by leading BC artists alongside major figures from the international contemporary art world. Visitors can also experience a landmark presentation of works by Jean Paul Riopelle (1923–2002), as well as a newly opened exhibition devoted to Emily Carr (1871–1945), a significant figure in British Columbia’s artistic legacy. This spring, the Gallery will unveil two major exhibitions that highlight the significance of ceramics across time and place—*Written in Clay: From the John David Lawrence Collection* traces the evolution of BC’s studio pottery movement, and *Otani Workshop: Monsters in My Head* highlights contemporary ceramic innovation from Japan.

## **ABOUT THE AUDAIN FOUNDATION**

Founded by Michael Audain, the Audain Foundation was established in 1997. The Foundation is committed to the development of British Columbian artists, with the objective of fostering greater appreciation of the visual arts, in British Columbia and beyond. The Foundation supports organizations, through grants, awards, scholarships, chairs and fellowships, endowment and capital projects, striving to enable environments where artists can create and thrive, while ensuring visual art is broadly accessible to the public. In recent years, the Audain Foundation has also expanded its scope through a commitment to protecting and conserving wildlife in British Columbia's land and surrounding waters, with the objective of safeguarding a future with healthy ecosystems.

The Audain Foundation has been instrumental in founding Whistler's Audain Art Museum, the Audain Art Museum Foundation, the Grizzly Bear Foundation and the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation, which all operate independently under the Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act.

## **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 celebrated 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 Centre for Global Asias (formerly 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 Gallery's new Art of Wellbeing lab furthers its commitment to community by promoting the role of art in fostering health and wellbeing. Developed in collaboration with healthcare professionals, researchers and Indigenous Elders, the lab creates opportunities for individuals to engage with art in ways that support mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

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 xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (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.