

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The potential of extended reality technology is being introduced to Museums and Education Centre's through an innovative partnership between MOV and SFU

'Between Worlds,' an immersive XR experience, is designed to give young learners a unique and personal view into the world of the ancient Greeks

VANCOUVER, BC – The Museum of Vancouver (MOV) has recently partnered with the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Centre for Hellenic Studies at Simon Fraser University to explore the potential of Extended Reality as a tool for enhanced educational programming and opportunities. Known as *Between Worlds - A Greek Civilization XR Experience*, this pilot project uses a repertoire of spatial interface technologies in order to implement an experimental XR digital hub that can support experiential cultural interaction and feedback within immersive virtual spaces.

"With technology evolving at such a quick rate it's really important for us to find things that compliment and augment what we already do," says Mauro Vescera, CEO at MOV, "This partnership is a great opportunity to explore XR with respect to education by connecting our artefacts and objects to real stories. It's also a way for the organization and museums in general to explore, investigate, and identify future opportunities to integrate this type of technology into our activities."

On Tuesday November 26, 2019 MOV will host, *Rebooting Greek Language*, a launch event with the SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies at SFU. During the event, attendees are invited to preview a new augmented and virtual reality experience featured in MOV. *Between Worlds – A Greek Civilization XR Experience* showcases technology and content developed within the ambit of *Rebooting Greek Language*, made possible through the generous funding of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. The exhibit includes content that aligns with British Columbia's new Grade 7 social studies curriculum.

"The main goal here is to allow the technology to be a tool to tell the story and enhance the experience – not to be the focus of attention," says Dr. Nick Hedley, Professor of Spatial interface Research and Geovisualization and Technical Lead of *Between Worlds*, "the project, much like its title, aims to allow students to easily step between the worlds of the present day and ancient Greece. Participants will be able to view a static museum artefact or object and bring it to life with a contextual narrative that will engage them on a much deeper level. The experiences we have developed, challenge us to reconsider what is possible in museum spaces. Instead of moving through a room full of inert artifacts, the entire exhibit itself is a spatial interface. This collection of XR experiences combine science, (digital) cultural heritage, data visualization, interface technology and historical narratives, in provocative ways. They provide visitors with portals between physical and virtual worlds, connecting present and past,"

These experiences span a range of geographic scales and contexts including: looking through a doorway in museum space, to experience the daily domestic life of an ancient Greek home in

virtual space, witnessing a famous Greek naval battle from the perspective the deck of a warship, a journey deep into the underworld, rebuilding a ruined Tholos, and participating in ancient rituals. Physical objects and historical artefacts will be the starting point of these engagements, while the story arch and narratives that accompany them bring an elevated historical meaning to the student's learning outcomes.

"At the SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies at SFU, we are always looking at new and exciting ways to teach Greek Language and Culture," says Costa Dedegikas, Rebooting the Greek Language project coordinator and , "You can't ignore the power and potential of Extended Reality (XR) to capture the imagination of young learners especially for Greek Culture which offers such a recognizable and rich visual history. Greece's cultural heritage has been at the forefront of popular culture articulated using digital technology in movies and video games. We are excited about combining emerging technologies with methods developed in research; and to build compelling learning experiences that are historically accurate, socially relevant, culturally aware – and engaging for young learners."

The pilot project's main goal is to collect survey data from student participants to gauge the engagement and learning experience. If successful, the project will then have the opportunity to be replicated and re-calibrated to showcase other cultures and histories to areas of BC and Canada where accessibility is an issue and concern.

[About Museum of Vancouver \(museumofvancouver.ca\)](http://museumofvancouver.ca)

The Museum of Vancouver connects Vancouverites to each other and connects Vancouver to the world. The museum's programs, exhibitions, and collections bring people together and inspire conversation about the future. The museum, an enthusiastic civic advocate, is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring a socially connected, civically engaged city.

[About SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies at SFU \(sfu.ca/hellenic-studies/snf-centre-for-hellenic-studies\)](http://sfu.ca/hellenic-studies/snf-centre-for-hellenic-studies)

The SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies was established in 2011 at Simon Fraser University through a multimillion-dollar grant by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Situated atop Burnaby Mountain, just east of downtown Vancouver, the Centre is a major site for Hellenic Studies in North America and is committed to the advocacy and study of Hellenism. The SNF New Media Lab, through the creation of the intelligent language tutor, has forged new methods for language learning and language preservation.

[About Stavros Niarchos Foundation \(snf.org\)](http://snf.org)

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is one of the world's leading private, international philanthropic organizations, making grants to nonprofit organizations in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. Since 1996, the Foundation has committed more than \$2.8 billion, through more than 4,500 grants to nonprofit organizations in 124 nations around the world.

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For further information or to book interviews with participating designers, please contact Lorenzo Schober at lschober@museumofvancouver.ca or 604-730-5309.