



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 2, 2021

That Which Sustains Us explores how Culture has shaped our relationships to Forests and the Natural Environment in Vancouver

MOV's newest long-term exhibition opens to the public on June 3, 2021

VANCOUVER, BC – On June 3, 2021, the upcoming long-term exhibition ***That Which Sustains Us*** opens to the public at the **Museum of Vancouver (MOV)**. Situated within the Vancouver Stories galleries, ***That Which Sustains Us*** will tell the story of Vancouver's forests and natural environments through a unique and non-linear narrative. The curatorial collective behind the project included Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh Nation cultural experts, environmental historians, and forestry researchers, facilitated by Sharon Fortney, MOV's Curator of Indigenous Collections and Engagement. The City of Vancouver's Green Infrastructure team also supported the project with expertise on Climate change and strategies for improving water quality and increasing biodiversity within our city.

"This exhibition is a departure. It disrupts the traditional linear narrative of MOV's Vancouver Stories Galleries which currently follow a timeline approach to telling history. Instead, we are deconstructing colonial narratives by employing a thematic approach to history that is not only about our past, but our present, and the future. We move beyond the colonial violence of land clearing and urbanization, to explore our current climate emergency, and examine ways we can increase biodiversity and return nature to our city. This exhibition will be the first in a series of exhibitions that will relaunch MOV's Vancouver Stories galleries in a new direction." -- Dr. Sharon Fortney, MOV Curator of Indigenous Collections and Engagement

By exploring different knowledge traditions in the Vancouver area and how they intersect, the exhibition examines the life of forests through the interconnected lenses of Land and Water, Food, Movement, Economy, Home, and Story. By posing questions that relate to arboreal intelligence, the relationship between trees and water quality, and self-reflection, alongside stories of industrial violence and land stewardship, ***That Which Sustains Us*** weaves together these related threads to challenge visitors to consider how they can contribute to regreening our city.

"Our lands and waters continue to support our cultural and economic practices while serving as a source of knowledge and memory, encoded with our teachings and laws." – Excerpt from **Musqueam Nation** Introduction

"Squamish culture is rich and resilient. We continue to practice our customs and traditions, which are strongly interconnected with our traditional territory. Our rich heritage continues to thrive in relationship to the resources of our lands and waterways." -- Excerpt from **Squamish Nation** Introduction

"Many generations have lived and thrived in this area, due in no small part to an abundance of resources. So, we have a sacred trust, a responsibility to care for and restore our traditional territory to its former state." – Excerpt from **Tseil-Waututh Nation** Introduction

Design plays a central role in conveying these abstract and non-linear narratives about the natural environment. Chad Manley of CMLBA and Daniel Irving of Principal Architecture are the design team behind this innovative exhibition. Using a diversity of wood and paper elements they challenge visitors to consider the importance of forest resources in all areas of daily life. In keeping with MOV's focus on the Green Economy, the MOV Fabrication Team, led by Josh Doherty, used recycled and reclaimed products were used whenever possible.

That Which Sustains Us also features local artists, outdoor educators, and scientists. Short films, created for the project, delve into the revival of ancient forest traditions like using tree bark tannins for creating fish skin leather and the foraging of mushroom and other plants to create natural dyes for weaving. "I am honored and excited to be featured in a short documentary about my work with fish leather in this important and impactful exhibition project," says Janey Chang,

The museum is open to the public with new measures in place to ensure the health and safety of its visitors and staff. Visitors to ***That Which Sustains Us*** will have the opportunity to interact with these concepts, learn from diverse set of knowledge holders from a variety of local cultures, and discover how our daily lives are shaped by the natural world in countless ways.

Quotes:

Kennedy Stewart, mayor, City of Vancouver –

"We are delighted to contribute to the Museum of Vancouver's latest exhibit. Through settlement and development patterns over the past one hundred plus years, the natural systems that have sustained and connected communities on these lands for thousands of years have been disrupted in many ways. Through the Rain City Strategy and green rainwater infrastructure, the City of Vancouver is striving to improve and protect water quality, enhance resilience and help restore healthy ecosystems. This exhibit is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to grow our understanding of Indigenous knowledge, expertise and cultural values about 'that which sustains us' and energize our thinking and actions to help strengthen our relationships with water and nature."

Chad Manley of CMLBA and Daniel Irvine of Principle Architecture -

"It could be said that while we reach into the forest, the forest also reaches into us, and depending on your history, identity, and culture, the ancestral and contemporary rainforest of the Vancouver region has shaped life here in remarkable ways. The design of the exhibition attempts to convey at least a small part of this complexity found between the human and non-human worlds. Rather than relying on static images of forests, the design invites visitors to move through a sensory landscape of abstract vessels, cultural artifacts, and moving sounds, all of which are indebted to forests and speak to the evolving culture of ecology within the region."

Mauro Vescera, CEO, Museum of Vancouver –

"That Which Sustains Us will be a long-term exhibition that will explore the convergence of different knowledge traditions in the Vancouver area through an examination of people's interactions with their natural environment. We are honored to present an exhibition that connects these narratives and underlines the idea that culture ultimately shapes how people choose to interact with the natural world. It also creates a conversation point that seeks to connect Vancouver's Greenest City goals with its Reconciliation, Redress and Decolonization objectives."

Learn More:

For more information on the exhibition, visit: museumofvancouver.ca

Watch the live-streamed opening ceremony: <https://youtu.be/wSpzh5Pc6u8>

Watch a series of videos included in the exhibition:
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCxECbWflh4dUp3wzoDHWtIAI4Z_QLyjt

About Museum of Vancouver

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.

Exhibition Funders: Port of Vancouver, Real Estate Foundation of BC, and the Vancouver Foundation

Institutional Partners: City of Vancouver, BC Arts Council, and the Province of British Columbia

Partners in Redress and Decolonization: xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations

Listing Information

That Which Sustains Us

Dates:

Opening June 3, 2021

Location:

Museum of Vancouver: 1100 Chestnut Street, Vancouver, BC

Website:

museumofvancouver.ca/that-which-sustains-us

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