



Mouse Woman, Luke J. Parnell

The Beat

*A monthly newsletter about the art of
First Nations on Canada's West Coast*

We respectfully acknowledge the Coast Salish peoples, on whose traditional unceded territories we live and work, and all the First Nations of the Pacific coast.

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This is the 104th issue of The Beat, a free, independent newsletter that brings you up-to-date on the art, artists and art events of the First Nations on Canada's Pacific Coast.



Susan Point at the Vancouver Art Gallery
Photo: Ann Cameron

The **Vancouver Art Gallery** has opened a large and exceptional exhibition of the work of Musqueam artist **Susan Point**. The show focuses on the theme of the drop spindle whorl, one of the traditional implements in preparing wool for Salish weaving, and offers the visitor a wide and deep look at the creativity of a prolific and brilliant artist. The range of media and brilliant creativity of her vision are extraordinary. The exhibition closes on May 28, 2017.

A fully illustrated 160-page catalogue, co-published by Black Dog Publishing and the Vancouver Art Gallery, accompanies the exhibition.

<https://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca>

An interesting teachers' guide is online at

https://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/pdfs/SG_SusanPoint.pdf



Marianne Nicolson, *The Sun is Setting on the British Empire*, 2016
at the Belkin Gallery, UBC, Vancouver
Photo: Ann Cameron

A powerful new work by **Marianne Nicolson** has appeared on the east-facing wall of UBC's **Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery** in connection with the exhibition *To refuse/To wait/To sleep*. Nicolson states that the piece "reworks the elements of the British Columbia flag, restoring the original position of the sun above the Union Jack, thereby symbolically altering the economic and political relationships it signifies."

On March 25 at 1 pm, Nicolson will be at the Belkin for an artist talk. She will discuss her art practice as it engages with Indigenous histories and politics, and relating oral traditions to methodologies of archival research. Two Nicolson works, *Tunics of the Changing Tide*, 2007, are hanging in the Walter C. Koerner Library on the UBC Main Mall. The exhibition is at UBC until April 9, 2017.

<http://belkin.ubc.ca/events/marianne-nicolson-artist-talk>



James Hart, Reconciliation Pole

At 1 pm on April 1, 2017, also at the University of British Columbia, the raising of the magnificent **Reconciliation Pole** by Haida Master **James Hart** will take place in the Main Mall. (See **The Beat October 2016**.) The public is invited to the raising (expected to take up to 1 ½ hours), the ceremony and the Salmon Barbeque afterwards.

<http://belkin.ubc.ca/events/james-hart-pole-event>



Brian Jungen, *Shapeshifter*, 2000
National Gallery of Canada

The **National Gallery of Canada** in Ottawa is re-installing its galleries of the history of Canadian art to provide a better and more inclusive look at our nation's culture. The new galleries will open on June 15th 2017, for the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

In the meantime there is a special display in the Upper Contemporary Gallery of the NGC where **Brian Jungen's** *Shapeshifter* of 2000 and *Vienna* of 2003 are currently on view together. Although both works are part of the permanent national collection, their size, 6.6 metres and 8.5 metres respectively has meant that they are rarely displayed side by side.

For more, see <http://www.gallery.ca/2017/en/>



Emily Carr University of Art + Design has an active Aboriginal Program. Its Annual Aboriginal Student Exhibition, *Re-Forming* will open on Friday March 24, 2017, with a reception from 4:30 to 6:30 pm in the Concourse Gallery. The curators state: "We want to highlight how Indigenous people are engaging with the reformation of culture, languages, politics and creative aesthetic.

For more see <http://aboriginal.ecuad.ca/>

A recent publication by Richard William Hill, Emily Carr's Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Studies, in *Canadian Art* magazine has eight important texts that "put things in perspective" for contemporary First Nations art. You can find it at <http://canadianart.ca/features/8-texts-on-indigenous-art/>



Robert Davidson, *Xyaalang (Dancing)*, 2013

The **Art Gallery of Hamilton** has opened an exhibition circulated by the **McCord Museum in Montreal**, placing the contemporary work of the well-known Haida artist **Robert Davidson** in the context of the great Haida tradition. The McCord Museum worked with Davidson to guide the selection of historic artworks and discuss their significance. All the historical objects in this exhibition are from the collection of the McCord Museum, with Davidson's insights woven into the exhibition commentary.

The show, *Expanding the Circle: Robert Davidson and the Ancient Language of Haida Art*, closes on May 28, 2017.

See <http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com>



Patrick Amos, *Bird Rattle*, 1980's
Trustees of the British Museum

A new exhibition will open in March at the British Museum in London, England. *Where the Thunderbird Lives: Cultural Resistance on the Northwest Coast of North America*. It is the British Museum's first exhibition focusing on the Pacific Northwest Coast. The exhibition commemorates the tradition of the Thunderbird. One side of the exhibition will display themes of strength showcasing 2,500 year old stone tools and early historic weapons. The other side will feature contemporary art and regalia from the Northwest Coast collections as testament to the innovative practices and economic adaptation of these thriving communities following the arrival of Europeans in the 18th Century. The exhibition continues until August 27, 2017.

http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/exhibitions/where_the_thunderbird_lives.aspx



Haida Gwaii Museum, Haida Heritage Centre, Skidegate

The **Haida Gwaii Museum** has put its archives online. A rich collection of photographs of objects, people, the villages and natural history artifacts are available at <http://haidagwaii.emuseum.com/collections>



Jody Broomfield, *Welcome Pole*, 2016
Photo: Simon Fraser University Student Central

Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, in Greater Vancouver, plans to continue its program of Reconciliation and installing First Nations cultural objects on its campus. Most recently, on the Burnaby campus, a 25-foot pole was raised of a Coast Salish welcoming figure in traditional regalia above an eagle. Squamish artist **Jody Broomfield** directed the carving team. In September SFU plans to unveil a pole created by a Musqueam artist at its downtown campus. A project for the Surrey campus is underway.
<https://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2017/03/sfu-honours-local-first-nations-territories-with-hand-carved-welcome-figure.html>



The Bill Reid Gallery, *Raven's Feast* 2016
Photo: Ann Cameron

Vancouver's **Bill Reid Gallery's** annual fundraising event, *Raven's Feast*, will be held on Tuesday, May 2, 2017, at the Gallery. The evening includes a fine dinner, and an auction of a select collection of contemporary indigenous art.

For tickets, see <http://www.billreidgallery.ca/Fundraising/RavensFeast.php>
Or telephone the Gallery at 604.682.3455.



Ellen Neel in the 1950's

Until April 1, 2017, an exhibition at the **Legacy Gallery Downtown** in Victoria honours a pioneer female First Nations artist with **Ellen Neel: The First Woman Totem Pole Carver**. Neel (1916-1966), learned to carve from her grandfather Charlie James, and both created poles for Stanley Park, a very early acknowledgement of First Nations culture by the City of Vancouver. The exhibition includes work by contemporary members of Ellen Neel's family.

The exhibitions of Susan Point and Ellen Neel are reviewed at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/art-and-architecture/female-first-nations-artists-carve-their-way-into-the-spotlight/article34070291/>

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