

2026 ICOM Comms Awards Cover Sheet

Category: Best Integrated Communications

Entry Title: Communicating Seismic Shifts at the Museum of Anthropology: Great Hall Seismic Upgrades

Organization: Museum of Anthropology at UBC (Vancouver, Canada)

Submitted by: Bonnie Sun, Senior Marketing and Communications Manager, Museum of Anthropology at UBC

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia faced one of the most complex infrastructure challenges in its history: the seismic upgrading and reconstruction of its iconic Great Hall, a landmark of Canadian architecture and home to irreplaceable Indigenous cultural heritage. This multiyear, \$40-million Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project required a multifaceted communications strategy to engage diverse audiences—from Indigenous communities and global tourists to heritage advocates and the UBC campus—while navigating evolving timelines, a full museum closure, and ongoing public interest.

The complex communication campaign of this infrastructure project was led by MOA's two in-house communications staff (Bonnie Sun, Senior Marketing and Communications Manager; Kristi Fuoco, Marketing and Communications Coordinator) with peripheral support from several university communicators from other University of British Columbia departments (Infrastructure Development; Campus and Community Planning; Faculty of Arts; and Media Relations). Alex Russell (Principal, Russell Communications) was an external consultant engaged early on to help develop the critical, initial communications plan.

With a modest communications budget and limited staff resources, MOA developed and executed an integrated communications campaign that transformed a disruptive construction project into a compelling public narrative. Through clear, consistent messaging, creative storytelling, and strategic use of owned, partnered, earned, and paid media, MOA maintained public engagement, managed visitor expectations, and reinforced trust with Indigenous partners. Despite an 18-month closure, MOA grew its digital engagement, maintained high public sentiment, and welcomed a record-breaking crowd for its grand reopening in June 2024 and subsequent season, which coincided with its 75th anniversary.

This campaign exemplifies excellence in integrated communications—anchored in research, guided by evolving strategy, and delivered through innovative content. The success of this project has elevated MOA's profile nationally and internationally, strengthened key relationships, and laid the groundwork for continued growth and cultural stewardship.

2026 ICOM Comms Awards

“Communicating Seismic Shifts at the Museum of Anthropology: Great Hall Seismic Upgrades”

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of situation and need

In 2017, the University of British Columbia (UBC) identified the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) to be at high seismic risk. Built in 1976 by Canada’s preeminent architect, Arthur Erickson, MOA’s iconic Great Hall is considered an architectural masterpiece. Inside the museum, MOA’s collections of 50,000 artworks and objects represent tangible and intangible cultural heritage; the world-renowned collection of totem poles and massive carvings in the Great Hall express First Nations cultures and knowledge. MOA is Canada’s largest teaching museum and an important research facility, especially for Indigenous cultural research. It is also a world-class tourist attraction that welcomes 200,000 visitors annually.

For these reasons, UBC deemed the Museum of Anthropology its highest priority to receive seismic upgrades: the \$40-million “Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project” which was underway in earnest starting in 2021. Technical studies revealed that preserving the Great Hall’s heritage architecture required a complete demolition and reconstruction, installing 26 base isolators beneath the foundation. MOA is the second building in Canada to utilize this cutting-edge base isolation technology.

MOA is a culturally significant, public institution; as such many different audiences were deeply invested in the progression and outcomes of the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project. To determine the specific interests of each of the target audiences, we conducted community outreach through one-on-one and small group meetings (Indigenous community members, donors, funders), electronic surveys (museum members), and industry research (communications white papers and articles about infrastructure projects by cultural institutions around the world).

When the initial communications plan was launched in 2021, the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project was expected to be completed in nine months and MOA would remain open to the public. Soon after, the project’s estimated timelines and scope swelled, and ultimately, the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades would take more than five years to complete, and the whole museum would have to close completely to the public in January 2023 for 18 months. What began as moderate campaign of fixed-length became an open-ended campaign with shifting outcomes and multiple phases. Accordingly, the communications plan became a living document that was revised continuously through April 2025. Situational analysis and research were therefore conducted regularly for the project’s duration, to evaluate the shifting needs of the target audiences.

Goals and objectives

The initial 2021 communications plan was time-limited with fixed objectives, but it became a multiyear campaign with evolving objectives, dependent on the phases of the infrastructure project.

1. Build understanding about the Great Hall Seismic Upgrade Project purpose and rationale;
2. Provide clarity about the project planning, scope, impact, and timeline;
3. Maintain MOA’s positive institutional reputation;
4. Generate interest and maintain engagement with MOA’s ongoing activities despite disruptions:
 - Phase 1: Raise awareness that the museum will be open, except the Great Hall (Sep 2019–Dec 2022);
 - Phase 2: Raise awareness that the entire museum will be temporarily closed (Jan 2023–Jun 2024);
 - Phase 3: Raise awareness of project completion and encourage visitors to return upon museum reopening (Jun 2024–Apr 2025).

Target audiences

Given the cultural and historical significance of MOA, many important and disparate groups and individuals were directly impacted and had invested in the project’s progress. Distinct communication goals were established for each of these target audiences:

1. Indigenous communities with vested interests in MOA’s actions;
2. MOA’s 200,000 annual domestic and international visitors;
3. MOA’s members, donors, and funders;
4. UBC’s 80,000 students, staff, and faculty;
5. Heritage/architecture advocates and aficionados worldwide.

COMMUNICATIONS: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy in support of research and analysis

- Strategy 1: Communicate project purpose (mitigating seismic risk of MOA's Great Hall) as essential to preserving architectural heritage, Indigenous collections, and visitor safety.
 - Emphasize that, once complete, the rebuilt Great Hall will retain Erickson's original architectural design while incorporating cutting-edge base isolation technology.
- Strategy 2: Develop clear, compelling content to explain the project's scope, process, timeline, and impact.
 - Disseminate consistent messaging through MOA's owned, partnered, earned, and paid media channels.
- Strategy 3: Highlight unique aspects of the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades to sustain engagement.
 - Develop captivating content themes: seismic engineering, conservation, architecture, Indigenous art and heritage, and reconciliation/repatriation efforts.
- Strategy 4: Implement a three-phase communications approach aligned with project milestones to ensure visitors are well-informed and can plan their visits accordingly.

Innovative and creative plan

To create understanding, buy-in, and enthusiasm for the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project, while communicating how the project would impact visitors' plans, MOA needed to tell compelling and clear stories that brought all aspects of this complex project to life. Particularly during the 18-month closure (Jan 2023–Jun 2024), the plan needed to demonstrate the museum's ongoing relevance and maintain public interest, despite being inaccessible.

To achieve this, MOA developed engaging content and stories about the many facets of the project. Architecture stories explored Erickson's legacy and preservation of his vision. Science and engineering hooks included base isolation technology and innovations in earthquake mitigation. Construction and building stories followed along project milestones, and provided behind-the-scenes looks. Conservation content illustrated the careful preparation and storage of totem poles and massive carvings, partnerships with First Nations families and communities, Indigenous protocols, and mount making. Indigenous knowledge underpinning the project explored generations of earthquake understanding passed down through thousands of years of oral histories. Content about Indigenous art brought new depths of understanding to the world-class collection and reminded visitors of fan favourites at time when the museum was inaccessible. Reconciliation angles highlighted MOA's work with the Indigenous Advisory Council and First Nations families throughout the seismic upgrades and the repatriation of belongings back to communities of origin.

These stories took many forms, including blog posts, short- and long-form video, photographs, interviews, social media posts, articles, architectural and construction drawings, and archival material. Content was developed and shared to mirror the three phases of the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project to amplify public understanding of what was happening and how visitors would be impacted. For example, conservation content about lowering the totem poles from the Great Hall in Phase 1 was accompanied by invitations for visitors to come watch the remarkable undertaking. By making the seismic project a subject of public curiosity rather than a disruption, MOA sustained interest and reinforced its role as a leader in cultural stewardship.

Communication tools in support of strategy

With a small budget and global audiences to reach, MOA maximized owned media channels. On the MOA website, the project webpage shared the project overview, timeline, FAQs, a live cam and photographs of the progress. Blog posts and *MOA Magazine* articles provided different perspectives of the project. MOA's social media and e-newsletters were key in distributing timely and interesting content.

Partnered media—by activating collaborations with domestic and international destination marketing organizations, and other global tourism networks—extended MOA's reach, ensuring potential visitors in all parts of the world were informed about the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project and how it would impact their travel plans, before they arrived on site.

With limited budget, paid efforts were only made in the project's Phase 3, to promote the museum's reopening in June 2024. MOA engaged a Vancouver-based press relations agency (MPMG) to generate press in art, science, news, local interest, and trade publications. In tandem with earned media, paid media was deployed to promote the museum's reopening. Phase 3 included advertising in arts and news publications to reach local audiences. Additionally, out-of-home/outdoor advertising was purchased to capture the attention of tourists in Vancouver. Digital advertising provided widespread, targeted visibility, with measurable and effective results.

Human and financial resources management

The communications budget (\$90,000 cash) was miniscule compared to the \$40 million infrastructure budget. Most of the cash budget was allocated in Phase 3 to promote project completion and the museum reopening. A graphic designer and a publicist were contracted to prioritize reopening advertising and press coverage. For over five years, the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project was the focus for MOA's two staff communicators, developing, managing and implementing the communication plan throughout all three phases.

Results and Evaluation

Measurement and evaluation techniques

Public sentiment was tracked through anecdotal data collected through visitor networks: museum frontline staff and volunteers, Destination Vancouver ambassadors, hotel concierges, Vancouver Attractions Group partners, and other tourism professionals. Engagement in MOA's digital platforms was monitored using Metricool, MailerLite and social media native analytics tools. Press stories were verified for key messages and sentiment by the press relations agency, using Meltwater.

Goals and objectives met

MOA successfully built widespread understanding and appreciation for the project. Positive public sentiment was sustained throughout the multiyear project. Engagement levels with MOA's social media (12% increased followers across four platforms) and e-newsletters (51% open rate) remained steady, even during the temporary closure, when a decline in engagement was anticipated. In fact, the e-newsletter open rates during the closure (49.65%) increased by 10% compared to pre-closure levels.

Visitor frustration was successfully mitigated, with average of 10 people arriving weekly to the museum unaware of the temporary closure, compared to the weekly average of 3,600 visitors who come to the museum in a typical, non-construction period. 3,200 visitors attended the reopening celebration on the evening of June 13, 2024—a new event record. The previous record was 2,000 in 2016. Post-reopening, MOA continues to see the highest attendance figures in its history, with 34% increase in 2024 and 25% increase in 2025 (compared to the same six-month period in 2022, the last year before the temporary closure).

Impact of the communications campaign

The communications campaign strengthened MOA's reputation, ensuring a successful reopening and setting a strong foundation for future growth. Against broader 2024 tourism and cultural industry trends predicting negligible audience growth due to the global factors (such as the economy, post-Covid recovery), MOA continues to exceed projections, positioning itself for continued success and forecasting positive growth for the 2025–2027 seasons.

Crucially, the positive campaign results reinforce MOA's reputation and relationships with Indigenous communities, who continue to entrust and collaborate with the museum to safekeep and steward cultural heritage. At the conclusion of the Great Hall Seismic Upgrades Project and communications campaign, MOA is better positioned to achieve its mission to partner with Indigenous, local and global communities to promote culturally diverse ways of knowing the world.

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“Communicating Seismic Shifts at the Museum of Anthropology: Great Hall Seismic Upgrades” Support Material

Owned Media (Organic Content)

1. Project webpage: [Great Hall Seismic Upgrades + Renewal](#) (PDF copy pp. 1–7)
2. Blog post: [Building Resilience Around MOA's Irreplaceable Collection](#)
3. Blog post: [Protecting Material + Cultural Heritage](#)
4. Sample social media posts + engagement (PDF samples pp. 8–15)
 - [So it begins!](#) (Jan 2022)
 - [Demolition time](#) (Oct 2022)
 - [Safely moving objects and belongings](#) (Mar 2023)
 - [April's Fool!](#) (Apr 2023)
 - [Watch this timelapse](#) (Mar 2024)
 - [Exciting times at MOA](#) (Apr 2024)
 - [Raven is awake!](#) (Jun 2024)
 - [What a night!](#) (Jun 2024)
 - [Reopening night highlights](#) (Jun 2024)
 - [What a difference a year makes](#) (Jan 2025)
5. Sample e-newsletters (PDF samples pp. 16–27)
 - [In the Home Stretch](#) (Mar 2024)
 - [Countdown With Us](#) (May 2024)

Earned media (Press)

- PDF samples pp. 28–47
- [Vancouver's Museum of Anthropology reopens after 18-month seismic upgrade](#) (CBC, Jun 2024)
- [Seismic shifts: Museum of Anthropology reopens with stronger foundations](#) (Georgia Straight, Jun 2024)
- [MOA reopens to the public following successful completion of seismic upgrades of iconic Great Hall](#) (ArtDaily, Jun 2024)
- [To Save the Iconic Museum of Anthropology He Had to Destroy It](#) (The Tyee, Jun 2024)
- [Experiencing First Nations Culture in Vancouver, British Columbia](#) (Northwest Travel + Life, Feb 2025)

Paid media (Advertising)

- Sample documentation pp. 48–50

PHASE 1–3: OWNED MEDIA (ORGANIC CONTENT)

Great Hall Seismic Upgrades + Renewal

[Updated April 30, 2024]

In January 2023, the Museum of Anthropology at UBC temporarily closed to the public to facilitate the completion of the seismic upgrades of its Great Hall. **The Museum will reopen to the public on June 13, 2024 at 5pm.**

1. [Project Overview](#)
 2. [Construction Livestream, Photos + Media](#)
 3. [Project Timeline](#)
 4. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 5. [Project Details](#)
 6. [Project Team](#)
-

Project Overview

MOA has been temporarily closed to the public since January 2023 to facilitate the completion of the seismic upgrades of its iconic Great Hall. The Museum is scheduled to [reopen on the evening of June 13, 2024](#) at 5 pm, in time to welcome back the many thousands of local, national and international visitors during the busy summer season.

Groundbreaking Seismic Technology + Building Upgrades

The project will upgrade the resiliency of the Museum and protect its irreplaceable collection in the event of a major earthquake. When the project is complete the Great Hall will look as its famed Canadian architect, Arthur Erickson, intended in his original plans in the mid-1970s, though now it will incorporate groundbreaking 21st-century technology. The cutting-edge design/engineering solution for the Great Hall seismic upgrades is to install base isolators under the suspended main floor slab to absorb the impact of seismic activity, separating the building from the ground and from the adjoining museum structures.

Additionally, MOA is under construction for other critical building upgrades, such as updates to its

Additionally, MOA is under construction for other critical building upgrades, such as updates to its lighting, skylights, roofing, window coverings, carpeting and fire protection. Together, these improvements will better showcase and protect the collection.

Revitalization + Reinterpretation of Great Hall Displays

Importantly, the seismic upgrade project also presents a significant opportunity for MOA conservators and curators, working together with First Nations communities and family groups, to work together to revitalize the displays and interpretation of the massive carvings, poles, belongings and artworks housed in the Great Hall and other areas of the Museum. MOA is working with Indigenous knowledge holders to prepare the reinstallation and reinterpretation of these significant works in the Great Hall in culturally appropriate ways, once the seismic upgrades are complete. The safety and protection of these irreplaceable Indigenous objects is of the highest priority to MOA's team, which is ensuring they are well cared for during construction.

Temporary Closure + Reopening

The planning for the seismic upgrades of the Great Hall began in November 2020, and officially began in December 2021. Since then, progress has been underway to rebuild the Great Hall with cutting-edge, 21st-century base isolation technology. While the Great Hall was demolished in January 2022, the rest of the Museum and its galleries remained open to public for the year and visitors were able to continue enjoying access to feature exhibitions and MOA's permanent collections.

In January 2023, the entire Museum was [temporarily closed](#) to accelerate the completion of this monumental undertaking. Initial timelines that were announced anticipated that MOA would reopen in late 2023; however, as with construction projects of this magnitude, extenuating circumstances have pushed back the much-anticipated reopening to June 2024. Though the Great Hall project has faced pandemic-related supply chain issues, provincial port and concrete labour disruptions, and unexpected construction setbacks, the team of construction managers, engineers, architects, UBC planners and MOA staff continue to steadily advance the project with the extraordinary care and consideration required of a project of this significance.

When MOA reopens in June 2024, it serendipitously marks the 75th anniversary year of when MOA first opened—in its original location in the basement of the UBC Library. A season of special programming is in the works, and will be announced as the Museum's reopening nears.

Heritage Value + Sensitive Approach

MOA has important heritage value for UBC. The Great Hall seismic upgrades therefore involve a sensitive approach, following conservation principles that address both the heritage values and character-defining elements of the site and the building. The [Musqueam Indian Band](#) has participated in planning meetings. In addition, feedback from the [Arthur Erickson Foundation](#) has informed the architectural and

Construction Livestream, Photos + Media

Livestream of construction site:

HTML

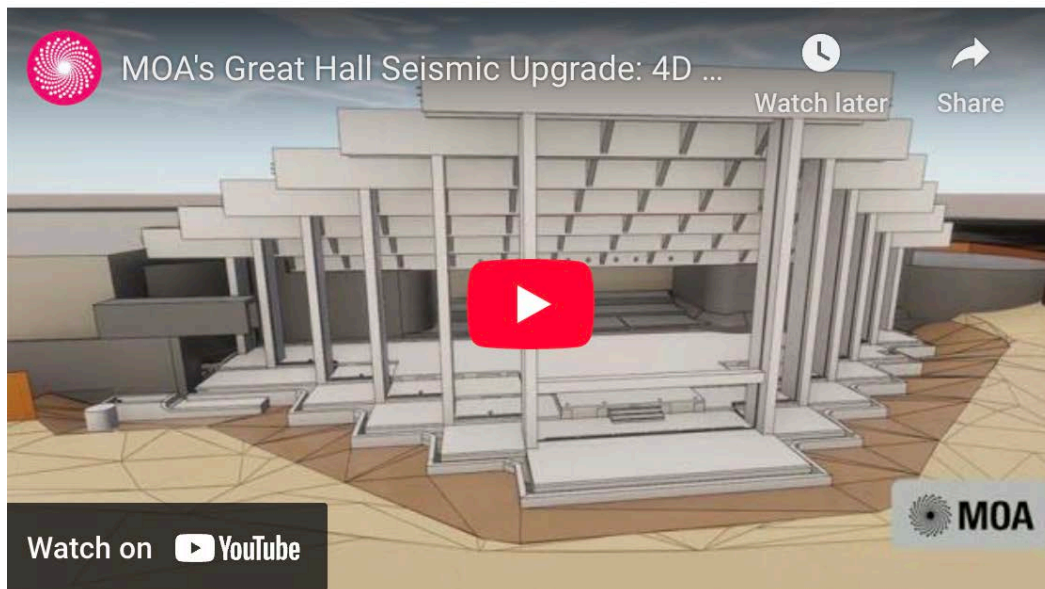


Project photo album (click image to open album):



Photo by Brannen Bell.

4D animated simulation of construction process:



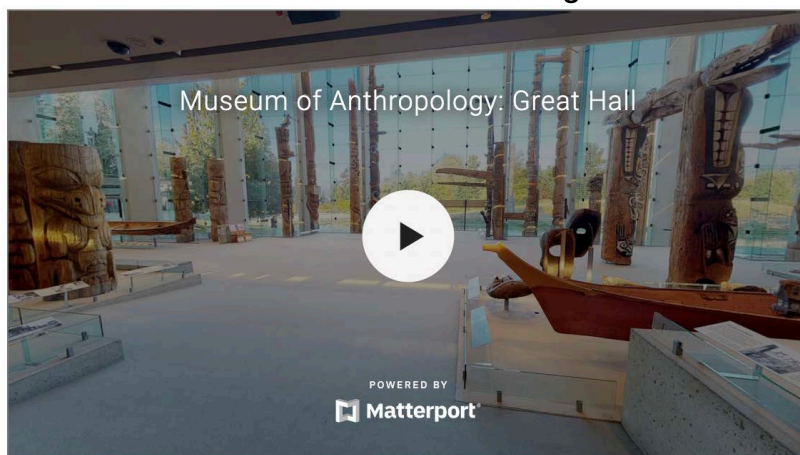
Project proposal:



Open House information panels:

[Link to information panels](#) on UBC Campus + Community Planning website

360° virtual tour of the Great Hall in its original state:



Project Timeline

Upcoming milestones

January 16, 2023 – June 2024: MOA will be temporarily closed to the public to accelerate the completion of the Great Hall seismic upgrades and other building improvements.

June 13, 2024, 5 pm: The Great Hall seismic upgrades will be complete and the Museum will reopen to the public.

Overview

Project Timeline

SUMMER 2017	Great Hall prioritized for seismic upgrades	As part of ongoing UBC seismic planning, the Great Hall was determined to have a high level of seismic risk.
FALL 2018	Public announcement about the MOA renewal project.	Work begins on roof replacement along with project planning for seismic upgrades to Great Hall. Removal of objects in Great Hall begins.
WINTER/SPRING 2019	A complete rebuild of the Great Hall is decided as the best approach	During the project planning process, it was determined that a complete rebuild was the best approach to upgrading the resiliency of the space without compromising its architectural integrity.
SUMMER 2019	Project is presented to UBC's Advisory Urban Design Panel, Arthur Erikson Foundation and others	The presentation shared information to shape the architectural and construction approach to the project.
FALL 2019	MOA's 70th Anniversary Celebration	MOA celebrates its 70th anniversary.
JUNE 18, 2020	Development Permit Application	Application received by UBC Development Services
JUNE 19, 2020	Public comment period open	Public comment period is open from June 19th - July 7th, 2020.
JUNE 25, 2020	Development Review Committee	Review by the UBC Development Review Committee.
JUNE 29, 2020	Virtual public open house	Virtual public open house event 4:30 - 6:30 pm with project design team and Campus and Community Planning staff.
FALL 2020	All objects from the Great Hall relocated and Great Hall no longer accessible to the public	Starting mid-September, all objects from Great Hall will be relocated elsewhere in the museum, and a hoarding wall will be erected in mid-October, closing the Great Hall from public access.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the scope of the project?

In Fall 2020, the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) began preparations for a rebuild of its Great Hall to upgrade the seismic resiliency of the space and protect its irreplaceable collection in the event of a major earthquake. As part of a larger renewal project, the Museum is also currently receiving other building improvements, such as updates to its skylights, lighting, roofing, window coverings and fire protection.

Why is this project happening?

As part of ongoing seismic planning, UBC conducted a comprehensive evaluation of seismic risk across all campus buildings to assess, plan, and prioritize upgrades to buildings or areas within the buildings that have the highest seismic risk. MOA's Great Hall was determined to have a high level of seismic risk and therefore was prioritized for upgrade.

During the project planning process, it was determined that it would not be feasible to achieve improved seismic performance to the Great Hall while retaining the existing structural elements. A complete rebuild of the Great Hall was determined as the best approach to upgrading the resiliency of the space without compromising its architectural integrity.

UBC and MOA acknowledge that the Museum is built on the traditional, ancestral and unceded land of the Musqueam people. Musqueam Indian Band has participated in the planning process.

What is the project timeline?

In Fall 2020, MOA underwent the delicate, complex process of lowering and moving the totem poles from the Great Hall and into an adjacent gallery, in preparation for seismic upgrades. In December 2021, a construction hoarding wall was erected to close the Great Hall from the rest of the Museum. In January 2022, the Great Hall structure was taken down to rebuild it with base isolation technology in place. On January 16, 2023, the whole Museum temporarily closed to accelerate the completion of the complex construction project. The Museum will reopen to the public on the evening of June 13, 2024, at 5 pm.

What's happening to the collection in the Great Hall during construction?

All objects from the Great Hall, including more than 20 massive carvings, are temporarily located elsewhere in the Museum for the duration of the construction. This unique collection will be reinstalled into the Great Hall once construction is complete.

MOA is liaising with Indigenous communities and families whose cultural objects are housed in the Great

Is the Museum going to be closed during the whole construction process?

From January 16, 2023 until June 2024, the whole Museum will be temporarily closed in order to accelerate the completion of the project. Up until January 2023, the Museum and its gallery spaces remained open to the public. However, this year MOA has been temporarily closed to accommodate this complex construction project, and then to re-install the massive carvings in the Great Hall, and complete new exhibitions and displays.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back to the Museum, beginning on June 13, 2024 at 5 pm.

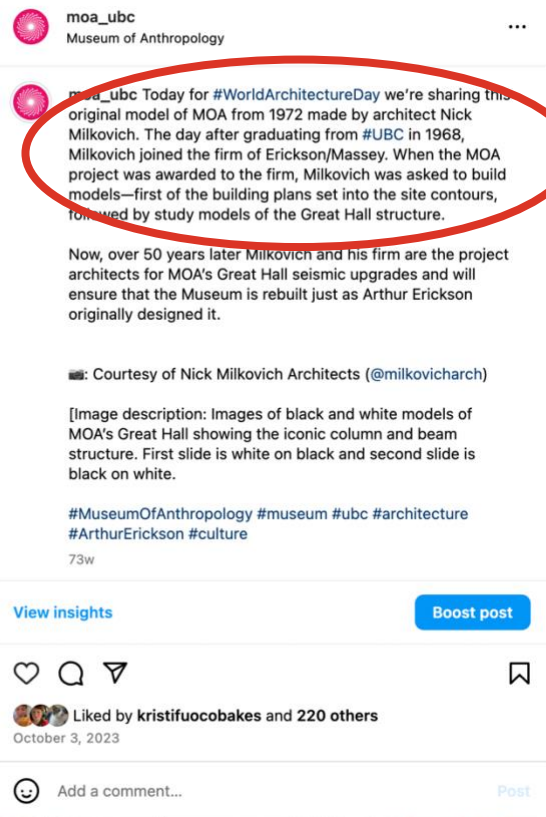
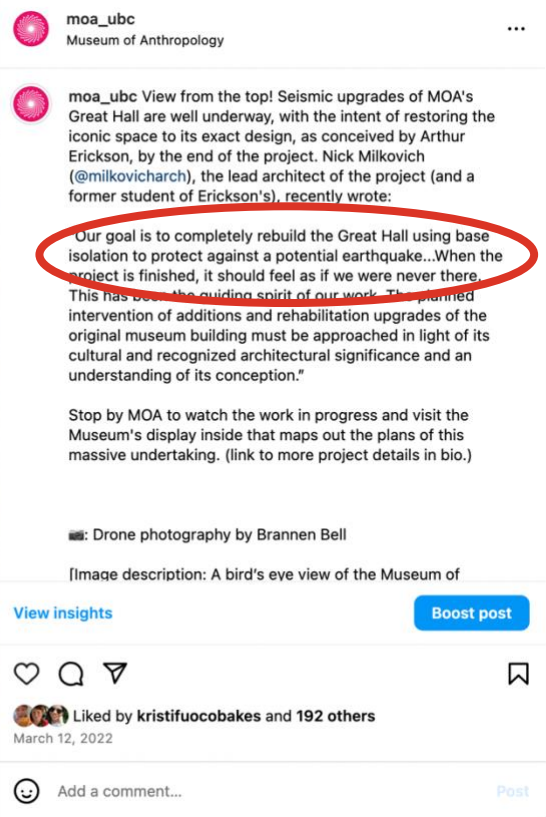
What will the Great Hall look like after the project is complete?

MOA is considered to have important heritage value for UBC. The rebuild of the Great Hall involves a sensitive approach that will follow conservation principles that address both the heritage values and character-defining elements of the site and the building. Feedback from Arthur Erickson Foundation has shaped the architectural and construction approach to the project. The new rebuild for the Great Hall will retain the appearance of the original space to preserve its architectural character and heritage values. When the project is complete the building will look like it does now with some improvements, including new lighting and carpeting.

MOA will also receive some other building improvements, such as updates to its skylights, lighting, roofing, window coverings and fire protection – some of this work has been underway for the past year. Together, these improvements will better showcase and protect the collection. MOA's landscape will also be fully remediated once construction is complete.

Was there public consultation about the project?

As part of public consultation for this project, a virtual open house was held on June 29, 2020. It was a drop-in style event hosted on Zoom. UBC Campus + Community Planning staff, project design representatives and MOA staff were available to answer questions or respond to comments. The public comment period for this project closed on July 7, 2020. Comments received were then considered as part of the development permit approval process.





moa_abc
quycotrendy • Original audio

moa_abc MOA's Great Hall is rising from its foundations in dramatic fashion with the 12 columns being installed over the past weeks. The construction crews (@heatherbraebuilders) made placing 50-foot, 79,000-pound concrete columns look easy. Read more about the seismic upgrades project on our website (link in bio.)

👤: Brannen Bell, Bonnie Sun + Kristi Fuoco

[Image description: Video footage of the columns for MOA's Great Hall being installed.]

#VisitMOA #abc #museum #moaabc #NorthwestCoast
#MuseumOfAnthropology #SeismicUpgrades
#EarthquakeProofing #construction #AerialPhotography
#DronePhotography #architecture

106 w

seldombeaton Haven't been there since the company I work for took all the totem poles on display down and placed them in storage...

106 w Reply

seldombeaton weird looking totem poles, was my first thought...

106 w Reply

View Insights

Boost reel



Liked by zekenorton and 360 others
9 February 2023

Add a comment...

Post



moa_abc
beat.plz • Original audio

moa_abc Watch the Spring 2024 Seismic Upgrades timelapse from our livestream camera. Follow along as the Great Hall is rebuilt, scaffolding is added and then removed and the floor and glass installation begins. 📺

🔗: Link to more info in bio.

#MuseumOfAnthropology #abc #museum #SeismicUpgrades
#EarthquakeProofing

49w

il.kitsgirl Wow did you rebuild the concrete columns from scratch? I can't wait to see MOA re open again a most beautiful building looking even more beautiful. Arthur would be so proud and honoured.

48w Reply

whitiedave :)

48w Reply

starandruss Wow!!!!it actually looks DONE!!! Congrats, love Mom

48w 48w 48w

View insights

Boost reel



Liked by zekenorton and 226 others
March 21, 2024

Add a comment...

Post



moa_abc
Museum of Anthropology

moa_abc Today in recognition of #ShakeOut BC and this important worldwide earthquake drill, we're sharing the cover image from MOA's publication, 'Where the Power Is: Indigenous Perspectives on Northwest Coast Art'. Featured here is Gigaemi Kukwits (Musgamakw Dzawada'enuxw) at MOA in 2019 holding Nininiga'ml Kwak' wala for Earthquake mask. This mask is performed during the Nininiga'ml (Earthquake) dance. When the eyes close, the earthquake has begun.

"In our beliefs, the earth itself is a living being. All of the animals and creatures, their spirit is the same shape as ours. So when our people think of the earthquake, they think of it as a spirit that would be like all the other spirits: when they take off their coats, they have human form. I would think that when the earthquake wrinkles his face, that the earth wrinkles, and that would be an earthquake. The jaw moves up and down with the eyebrows and shakes the whole world." ~Gigaemi Kukwits, excerpt from *Where the Power Is* (pg. 163)

This mask and Gigaemi Kukwits's reflections are shared in the MOA's publication *Where The Power Is: Indigenous Perspectives on Northwest Coast Art* from @figure1publishing. Available from the MOA Shop.

Gigaemi Kukwits (@gigaemikukwits) with Nininiga'ml (Earthquake mask). [MOA Collection A6357]. Attributed to John Nolie. Before 1939. 'Nak'waxda'xw. Kwakwaka'wakw. 🇺🇳: Jessica Bushy.

[Image description: A man holds a carved wood mask with]

View Insights Boost Post

👍👎🔍

👤👤👤 Liked by zekenorton and 407 others
20 October 2022

😊 Add a comment... Post



moa_abc
Museum of Anthropology

moa_abc Last week MOA's 2023 Native Youth Program spent the week at the Museum of Vancouver, leading tours of their exhibition, "That Which Sustains Us", as well as hosting arts + crafts sessions and teaching in the Indigenous plant garden. 🌱

Since MOA is temporarily closed for seismic upgrades the youth will spend much of their summer learning and working at different cultural sites around the city. This week they've been getting creative at Emily Carr University of Arts + Design (@emilycarru). 🎨

👉 Follow their adventures on Instagram @moa_nyp

The 2023 NYP members leading tours of 'That Which Sustains Us' at the Museum of Vancouver (@museumofvan). 🇺🇳: Kristi Fuoco (@kristifuoco)

#moaabc #MuseumOfAnthropology #NativeYouth #indigenous #culture

82 w

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👍👎🔍

👤👤👤 Liked by zekenorton and 143 others
28 July 2023

😊 Add a comment... Post



moa_abc
Museum of Anthropology



moa_abc Have we said thank you to you all lately? We are so grateful to have been named Vancouver's Best Museum once again in the annual @georgiastaight #BestofVancouver. Especially during our temporary closure this year, we are humbled by the most passionate and patient fans who await our reopening. We are grateful. 🙏

📍 : Bill McLennan

[Image description: Photo of MOA's Great Hall at dusk, showing the iconic glass and concrete structure inspired by Northwest

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[Boost Post](#)



Liked by zekenorton and 514 others
15 September 2023



Add a comment...

[Post](#)



moa_abc
Original audio



bizbuysellfacilitator 100
78 w 1 like Reply



canoopass Can't wait to visit you! (from literally all the Canoo members) 🙏
78 w 1 like Reply



ari_delamora Word!
78 w 1 like Reply



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[Boost reel](#)

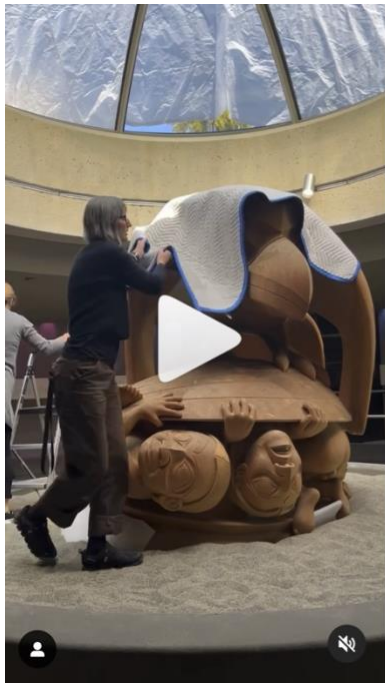


Liked by zekenorton and 625 others
24 August 2023



Add a comment...

[Post](#)



moa_abc
BAANDIT! • rumination

...



moa_abc Raven is awake! After peacefully sleeping in his cozy protective blankets and wrap during MOA's seismic upgrades, today the @moa_conservation and collections team gently woke him back up. 🐼

Stop by the newly updated Bill Reid Rotunda on your visit to MOA — later this week once we are reopened!

MOA reopens this Thursday, June 13 at 5 pm! 🎉

The Raven and the First Men. [MOA Collections Nb1.481]. By Bill

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[Boost reel](#)



Liked by futonthecat and 1,969 others
10 June 2024



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Post

Museum of Anthropology's Post



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[Boost post](#)

Beaty Biodiversity Museum, Theatre at UBC and 621 others

17 comments 53 shares

Like

Comment

Share

Most relevant



Top fan
Steve Anderson
My favorite sculpture anywhere.

36w Like Reply Hide



Michelle Cameron
One of my favourite pieces to visit

36w Like Reply Hide



Top fan
Lyn Ellis
8 weeks! I'll be there!

36w Like Reply Hide



Daniel De Kay
Best museum in the world, bar none!

36w Like Reply Hide



Top fan
Lyn Ellis
My favorite Reid

36w Like Reply Hide



Penny Victoria Schlichter-Lange



Comment as Museum of Anthropology



Museum of Anthropology is at Museum of Anthropology.

Published by Metricool

May 31, 2024 · Vancouver, BC · 🌐

A sneak peak of how things are coming along inside the Great Hall! Are you getting excited yet?...
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Top fan
Ronnie Young

Made flight and hotel reservations just for this event from the Yukon...



Comment as Museum of Anthropology



Museum of Anthropology

Published by Metricool

April 30, 2024 · 🌐

It's happening! We are thrilled to announce that MOA will be reopening on the evening of Thursday, June 13 at 5 pm, after an 18-month closure! 🎉

The Museum's reopening in June will mark the successful completion of cutting-edge seismic upgrades to the iconic Great Hall, plus the revitalization and reinterpretation of displays of Northwest Coast Indigenous carvings, poles, weavings and other works from the past and present. Plus, visitors will enjoy two new feature exhibitions.

MOA will be hosting an extended weekend of festivities, starting with our Reopening Night on Thursday, June 13, 5 to 9 pm (free admission for all). Then, from Friday, June 14 through Sunday, June 16, we are hosting Reopening Weekend Celebrations full of family-friendly fun. Visitors will be treated to performances, hands-on workshops, staff tours, plus food trucks and half-priced admission.

Stay tuned for more. We can't wait to welcome you back to MOA again soon! Mark your calendars: <https://l.mtr.cool/safavmxnt>

📸: MJ Araujo. Design by Lydia Avsec, Copilot Design.



University of British Columbia, Film at UBC and 306 others

18 comments 70 shares

Like

Comment

Share

Public Sentiment Monitored on MOA's Social Media Channels

Samples



daketah I visited the construction site last year, and am VERY excited to come to the new MOA in the fall!

37 w Reply



figcrackers Yay!!! Can't wait to visit MOA again! ❤️

37 w Reply



ll.kitsgirl Wow did you rebuild the concrete columns from scratch? I can't wait to see MOA re open again a most beautiful building looking even more beautiful. Arthur would be so proud and honoured.

47 w Reply



daizoyokoyama Happy new year ! We're planning to visit Van at the re-opening. And your reinforcement using seismic isolation system will be very effective against big earthquakes recently occurred at Noto peninsula.

60 w 1 like Reply



Top fan

Ronnie Young

Made flight and hotel reservations just for this event from the Yukon...

38w Like Reply Hide

3 👍 🤖



pepepryke Amazing to see the museum coming back to life! ❤️

50 w 1 like Reply



willrafuse ❤️ ❤️ ❤️

50 w Reply



jeffkennedyphotography Very cool. Awesome. Can't wait. ❤️

50 w 1 like Reply ...

 **cwtch.david.cwtch** Sweet, sweet vaulted seismic upgrades! 
103 w Reply

 **charles_keillor** Exciting...and amazing! 
103 w Reply

 **vivianfung.tashi** 🍌🍌 all the best!! Can't wait for the upgrade to be complete! ❤️
110 w 1 like Reply

 **Canadian Federation of Friends of Museums CFFM / FCAM** Congratulations on your forthcoming re-opening! ...
38w Love Reply Hide 2  

 **Brynna Williams** I'm so excited !!! **Ava-Beth Williams** ...
38w Love Reply Hide 2 

 **Ava-Beth Williams** **Brynna Williams** YEAAAAASSSSS ...
38w Like Reply Hide

 Reply to Brynna Williams

 **Sheena MacDonald - Lowson** Love the MoA ...
37w Like Reply Hide

 **Kathy Finholm** So excited, just made plans for a birthday visit in August! ...
37w Love Reply Hide 

 **Ronnie Young** Looking forward to opening day with camera in hand. ...
1y Love Reply Hide 

 **Museum of Anthropology** **Ronnie Young** We can't wait to see everyone back in the Great Hall, cameras in hand! 😊 ...
1y Like Reply

[View this email in your browser](#)

MOA
NEWS



MOA's Temporary Closure: Building Resilience Around the Irreplaceable Collection

MOA is now temporarily closed until late 2023 in order to complete seismic upgrades to its iconic Great Hall. So, how did this monumental undertaking get its start?

Invisible to the eye, fault lines lie beneath the land upon which the Museum sits—the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people—and all along the coast of British Columbia. Indigenous oral histories include tales of the megathrust earthquake that struck off BC's west coast in 1700. Scientists don't know

In a recent round of UBC building evaluations, undertaken as part of a campus-wide seismic resilience plan, the Great Hall was identified as one of the spaces at greatest seismic risk. Based on simulations for major earthquake scenarios, the beloved Great Hall was quickly elevated on the university's priority list for seismic upgrading.

These upgrades, which are currently underway, and other building improvements, are critical in order to upgrade the resiliency of the Museum and protect its irreplaceable collections.

[Read Full Story](#)

MOA's Visual + Material Culture Seminar Series



BÁON/BAÓN: Filipinx Canadian Community and Memories From/Of/To Home

How do we tell our migration stories? This seminar examines *butu/buto: bones are seeds* (2022), a community-devised theatre performance based on stories and poetry from Vancouver's Filipinx Canadian Community.

February 16 | 4 pm

In-person at MOA (no gallery access)

Free, open to all

[Join Us](#)

Coming Soon to MOA!



MOA Unmasked: Behind-the-Scenes Museum Tours

Starting in March, join MOA for special opportunities to visit the Museum during our temporary 2023 closure. MOA senior staff and special invited guests will guide monthly tours through the galleries and collections, providing an intimate look at the Museum's behind-the-scenes work.

[Save the Dates](#)

MOA Updates



Great Hall Seismic Upgrades: Construction Updates

The Great Hall is rising from its foundations in dramatic fashion with the 12 columns being installed over the past weeks. The construction crews made placing 50-foot, 79,000-pound concrete columns look easy.

Follow along via [the construction live feed](#) on our website.

[Learn More](#)



MOA Shop Online: Limited-Time Offer

During MOA's temporary 2023 closure, you can access the MOA Shop—and remember, we offer worldwide shipping!

Special offer for MOA e-news subscribers!

Enjoy 10% off your online order from February 1 to April 30, 2023. Use promo code **SHOP10** at checkout to receive your discount. (Terms and conditions apply.)

[Enjoy 10% Off](#)



Indigenous Internship Program: Accepting Applications

Applications are now open for the Spring 2023 cohort of the Indigenous Internship Program at MOA! This program provides training opportunities for Indigenous people working in museums, or who would like to, in the areas of Collections Management, Conservation, Library and Archives, Oral History Language Laboratory, and Curatorial work.

MOA
NEWS



Exciting News: Announcing MOA's Reopening!

Announcing: MOA is set to reopen to the public in June 2024.

MOA's much-anticipated reopening, in June 2024, is later than the previously announced timeframe of late 2023. This new timeline takes into consideration updated construction schedules and ensures appropriate time for the extraordinary care and attention required for a project of this magnitude. Though the Great Hall seismic upgrades have faced pandemic-related supply chain issues, provincial port and concrete labour disruptions, and unexpected construction setbacks, the team of construction managers, engineers, architects, UBC planners and MOA staff

The project is now on the cusp of another major milestone: the installation of the glass curtain walls, one of the defining features of the iconic Great Hall. Over the coming months, we invite you to visit the MOA Grounds to watch the glass installation in progress. The construction team is working tirelessly to ensure the successful completion of this painstaking, complex next step.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude for your support during this transformational period in MOA's history. As we count down to our reopening in June 2024, we look forward to sharing more updates, stories and developments with you. In the meantime, community visits, research and public programs continue during our temporary closure—scroll down to learn more about the upcoming activities happening at MOA.

[Learn More](#)

Upcoming MOA Events



October Tours: Limited Tickets

Limited tickets available for October 12 and 13—[MOA Unmasked: The Museum As a Classroom](#).

MOA Curator of Indigenous Programming Damara Jacobs-Petersen and MOA Education Coordinator Amina Chergui illustrate the educational power of artworks and belongings held in museums.

October 12, 11 am + 7 pm (7



Fall Visual + Material Culture Seminars

Join us at MOA for our interdisciplinary seminar series on visual and material culture.

October 12: [A Finer and More Certain Mirror: Painting the Body in the Nineteenth Century](#)

November 9: [Graphic Historiography: Comics and/on Historical Writing](#)



November Tours: Save the Date

Save the dates for November MOA Unmasked behind-the-scenes tours.

Don't miss your chance to see MOA's expansive world collections in a new and intimate light.

November 16, 11 am + 7 pm
November 17, 4:30 pm
Tickets on sale October 24 at 12 pm.

[View this email in your browser](#)**MOA
NEWS**

Shaking It Up: Seismic Upgrades at MOA

As you may have heard, MOA will reopen in June 2024, following [our temporary closure](#) to seismically upgrade our iconic Great Hall. It's a project many years in the making and we're nearing the end. So, how did we get here and what milestones still lie ahead?

In this special seismic upgrade project update—marking [The Great British Columbia Shake Out](#), the province's annual earthquake preparedness event which takes place today, October 19—we'll show you the tremendous work behind (and below) this monumental undertaking.

into consideration updated construction schedules and ensure appropriate time for the extraordinary care and attention required for a project of this magnitude. Though the Great Hall seismic upgrades have faced pandemic-related supply chain issues, provincial port and concrete labour disruptions, and unexpected construction setbacks, the team of construction managers, engineers, architects, UBC planners and MOA staff continues to steadily advance the project to welcome back all of our visitors from around the world to a revitalized museum.

[Learn More](#)

Project Milestones To Date



Upcoming: Glass Curtain Installation

The installation of the glass curtain walls, one of the defining features of the iconic Great Hall, will occur over the coming months. We invite you to visit the MOA Grounds to watch the glass installation in progress.



April 2023: Skylights Installation

New replacement skylights are to be installed over many parts of the Museum, including in the MOA Cafe, lobby, and conservation labs. The installation of skylights over the MOA Cafe was completed last spring.



February 2023: Roof Beam Installation

The last of six roof beams were installed. The final beam that was installed measures 18.8 metres long! As it was lifted into place by two massive cranes, a crowd of staff, visitors and guests watched and cheered.



January 2023: Column Installation

The Great Hall rose from its



December 2022: Base Isolation

Base isolators were installed



November 2022: Concrete Pouring

Concrete was poured for the

columns were installed early this year. The construction crews made placing 50-foot, 79,000-pound concrete columns look easy.



January – May 2022: Great Hall Demolition

The Great Hall demolition began with a giant "claw" excavator and then the more delicate demolition was done by hand, using concrete saws and small jack hammers in order to not damage the other parts of the building.

"superstructure" is separated from the foundation, reducing the amount of energy transferred during an earthquake.



January 2022: Shattering the Glass

The demolition of the Great Hall began by shattering the glass curtain walls—a dramatic and impressive feat. Each window of the Great Hall had to be broken carefully by hand, starting from the top and moving down.

sits on top of the base isolators, is four-feet thick where it supports columns, and required over 20 truckloads of cement.



December 2020: Pole Lowering Completed

The final poles were lowered from the Great Hall and moved into the O'Brien Gallery where they will continue to rest for the project's duration. Up until the Museum's temporary closure, visitors could see the poles resting.

Construction Machines



**Genie S-65 Telescopic
Boom Lift**



**Liebherr LTM 1160
Mobile Crane**



Finning 336 Excavator



**Genie Z-60/34
Articulating Boom Lift**



**Volvo EC480E High
Reach Demolition**



**Liebherr LTM 1400
Mobile Crane**



Watch a Timelapse

Watch a timelapse video of the project progress, as captured from our livestream camera.

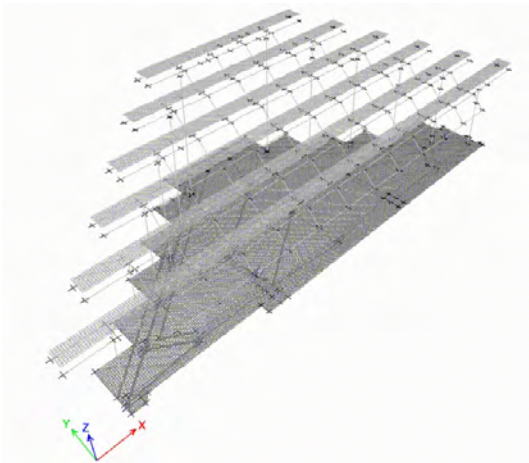
[Watch Now](#)



A Look Back in Photos

Check out the photos we have captured so far of the seismic upgrades project.

[View Album](#)



Learn About Base Isolation Technology

Did you know that the Great Hall will have the first base isolation system used on a new built structure in Canada?

In this interview, Dr. Tony Yang, a professor in UBC's Department of Civil Engineering and an expert in earthquake engineering, discusses the implementation of base isolation technology to upgrade the Great Hall's seismic safety without compromising its historical significance.

[Read Full Story](#)



Construction Trivia

1) How many base isolators are now installed beneath the Great Hall?

- a) 38
- b) 12
- c) 25

2) How thick is the Great Hall's signature curtain wall glass?

- a) 27 mm
- b) 50 mm
- c) 2 mm

- a) 22
- b) 2
- c) 8

4) How much does the longest Great Hall beam weigh?

- a) 25,535 kg
- b) 69,785 kg
- c) 5,025 kg

5) Why is this project happening?

- a) To build a new wing onto the Museum.
- b) Because we love construction projects.
- c) Because the Great Hall was determined by UBC to have a high level of seismic risk.

Answers can be found at the bottom of this e-mail.

From the MOA Shop



MOA Architectural Tote Bag

This is a tote bag worth adding to your collection. Honouring the architectural legacy of the Museum of Anthropology on the UBC campus, this cotton bag features a beautiful line drawing of MOA's stately pillars and expansive glass windows. \$28/each.

[**Shop Now**](#)



MOA Architectural Mug

Add a splash of modernist flair to your next teatime with this timeless mug. A great souvenir, the mug features a minimalist drawing of MOA's iconic Great Hall, the defining structure of the Museum. \$22/each.

[**Shop Now**](#)

Answers to quiz: 1) c 2) a 3) c 4) b 5) c

MOA NEWS



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[What's On](#)

[MOA Shop](#)



MOA Reimagined: Here's What to Look Forward To

If you've been to the MOA Grounds recently you may have taken in MOA's newly rebuilt Great Hall! Just as the renewal project was intended and how it was originally designed by architect Arthur Erickson, the Great Hall looks as it did before the seismic upgrades. Now, however, it is reinforced with state-of-the-art base isolation technology that will protect the building and its precious collections in the event of an earthquake. There have also been numerous advancements in building technology that have

allowed for better waterproofing, higher quality glass and many other improved elements that are now in place in the building.

Inside the Museum, there are new and exciting things to look forward to when you return next month. The Museum will reopen with two new feature exhibitions: [*in Pursuit of Venus \[infected\]*](#) by famed Māori artist Lisa Reihana, and [*To Be Seen, To Be Heard: First Nations in Public Spaces, 1900–1965*](#) curated by Karen Duffek and Dr. Marcia Crosby (Ts'msyen/Haida).

Additionally, a new ceramics installation, [*From the Land*](#), is being installed at the entrance of the Koerner European Ceramics Gallery. Curated by Carol E. Mayer, this permanent installation will feature highlights from the expansive ceramics collections housed at MOA that showcase the breadth of ideas, techniques, forms and cultural expressions in clay.

You will also see newly installed massive carvings in MOA's Great Hall and adjacent display areas—now renamed the Pacific Northwest Galleries—such as Susan Point's house posts and a beautiful new canoe by John Marston.

Mark your calendars for our [*Reopening Night*](#), on Thursday, June 13, from 5 to 9 pm. Free admission for all on this night.

Plus, we invite you to join us for an extended weekend of family-friendly fun at our [*Reopening Weekend Celebrations*](#): Friday, June 14 through Sunday, June 16, 10 am to 5 pm. Half-priced admission all weekend.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Mark Your Calendars

Countdown to Reopening: June 13, 5 pm



PHASE 1–3: EARNED MEDIA (PRESS)

British Columbia

Irreplaceable totems moved aside for Museum of Anthropology seismic upgrades

The 30 or so First Nations carvings will be displayed in an adjacent gallery, lying on their backs

[Rafferty Baker](#) · CBC News · Posted: Nov 15, 2018 7:43 PM PST | Last Updated: December 15, 2018



Workers lay a totem on its back before relocating it out of the MOA's great hall and into an adjacent gallery. (Rafferty Baker/CBC)

When the huge Gitanyow totem was finally lifted off the ground on Thursday morning, a small pile of rotten wood dust and debris fell to the concrete floor.

The pole, inside the Museum of Anthropology's (MOA) great hall, took a six-person crew equipped with a forklift and crane about an hour to dislodge. The workers carefully wrapped sections in padded foam, and through a combination of delicate care and industrial power, laid the totem sideways onto its back.

The totem, believed to have been carved in the Gitanyow community in the 1870s, is one of about 30 carvings that will have to be removed from the great hall, so seismic upgrades can be carried out.



A rigging crew unbolts a totem from its anchor on Thursday. (Rafferty Baker/CBC)

It tells the history of the Gitanyow wolf clan and was sold to the museum in 1958, years before Arthur Erickson's iconic building was constructed.

According to MOA conservator Heidi Swierenga, in the 1970s, Erickson didn't have the benefit of the seismic engineering architects now have.

"We know a lot more now about how the earth and the building is going to behave during a seismic event, and it's time to bring it up to code," said Swierenga.

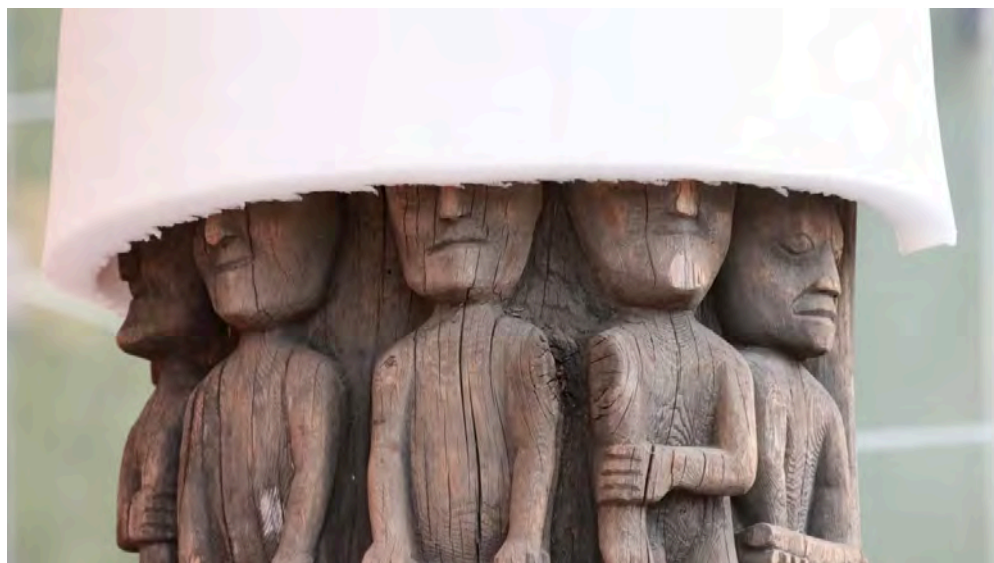


MOA conservator Heidi Swierenga watches as work crews prepare to move a large totem carved in the Gitanyow community in the 1870s. (Rafferty Baker/CBC)

The works are precious and have to be treated in a culturally sensitive way. With the tallest pole measuring nearly 14 metres, and many weighing more than a tonne, it's a challenging job.

"Each pole has different physical characteristics. Some are very, very strong, because they were carved recently and they haven't been outside as long as the older pieces," she said, adding that phase one of totem removal will begin with the older pieces.

The newer carvings will be moved as part of phase two in January.



A totem carved in the Gitanyow community nearly 150 years ago is covered in protective foam before being dislodged and relocated on Thursday. (Rafferty Baker/CBC)

The poles are being moved to an adjacent gallery, where they'll be on display throughout the project — but the totems will be resting on their backs.

"There's no other place where we can actually reinstall them standing up, so it's just seen as a temporary blip in their life, a temporary rest, and then when the work is done, they'll be put back up," said Swierenga.

Karen Duffek, MOA curator of contemporary visual arts and Pacific Northwest, said the museum has a long relationship with the First Nation communities on the coast that are represented in the museums collections, and they've been consulted about relocating the culturally important carvings.



There are 30 big carvings in the Museum of Anthropology's great hall that will need to be carefully and respectfully moved to carry out seismic upgrades. (Rafferty Baker/CBC)

"There isn't Indigenous supervision, but again, when we embark on a project like this, it's with the conversation preceding it that's taken place, so people are aware what's going on and can express any concerns," said Duffek.

She said she hasn't heard any pushback from First Nation communities about the plan, but they'll likely take part in determining how the totems are eventually reinstalled.

- [Pole raising ceremony adds new art to UBC Indigenous farm](#)

It's unclear what the seismic upgrade project will ultimately cost, but \$8.8 million is the number being tossed around as it gets underway.

Swierenga said the totems will be out of the great hall until the project is complete, nine to 12 months from now.

Follow Rafferty Baker on Twitter: [@raffertybaker](#)



January 25, 2022 · ART & DESIGN, NEWS

Construction under way for massive seismic upgrades to the UBC Museum of Anthropology Great Hall

The rest of the facility remains open as the grand glass
structure is entirely rebuilt

BY JANET SMITH





Work moving the irreplaceable carvings and poles from the Great Hall began more than a year ago. Photo by Heidi Swierenga

AFTER MANY YEARS of planning, the massive seismic upgrade of UBC Museum of Anthropology's iconic Great Hall is finally under way—an epic project that entails architectural sensitivity, engineering knowhow, custodial care, and input from Indigenous communities.

The glazing has now been removed from the monumental facade, leaving the familiar concrete-beamed shell open for construction work. The atrium's giant totem poles and carvings were all temporarily moved—most to the adjacent O'Brian Gallery. They're laid on their sides for viewing there, as the rest of the





space that will continue that architectural resilience. It's about the health and well being of cultural heritage but also the health and well-being of all our visitors and staff.”

The Great Hall posed a special challenge when it came to seismic upgrades. The grand, five-storey-high windowed atrium houses huge, irreplaceable wood carvings—but its grand windowed structure puts it at particular risk if there's an earthquake. In 1976, when late BC architect Arthur Erickson designed the glass-and-concrete landmark, not as much was known about that threat. In 2017, UBC tagged the Great Hall as being at high seismic risk, with project planning kicking off the next year.



The iconic structure with its five-storey glass windows was deemed to be a high seismic risk.





of gateway-like concrete frames around the Great Hall.

Architects and the consulting team decided the best way to preserve the striking look of the building was to entirely rebuild the Great Hall, instead of girding it with extra steel beams or bracing. Nick Milkovich Architects Inc. is overseeing the reconstruction, which is estimated to cost \$30.5 million, split between UBC and the provincial and federal governments.

“The aim is to re-create the Great Hall with that light that is so integral to the space—to maintain the aesthetic quality of the space,” explains Rowley. “It’s a very special space.”

Construction was to have started in 2021, but after some pandemic delays, crews are now working to install base isolators under a suspended main floor slab to absorb the impact of seismic activity, separating the building from the ground and from the adjoining museum structures. The Arthur Erickson Foundation has advised the process, and the Musqueam First Nation, whose traditional and unceded land the facility sits on, has been part of the working group.

The Great Hall normally looks out over a reflecting pool, amid an outdoor setting designed by late landscape architect Cornelia Oberlander that will also be remediated after construction.





globe are safely protected from the massive construction project by carefully insulated hoarding. The major show [Sankofa: African Routes, Canadian Roots](#) continues—as does the smaller, seismically-minded *Shake Up: Preserving What We Value*, an exhibit about convergence of earthquake science with Indigenous knowledge.

Meanwhile, Rowley and her team are now able to start looking to the future, and the careful protocols that will have to be followed for the raising of the poles in the Great Hall again; as with the lowering of the carvings that began more than a year ago, MOA is liaising with Indigenous communities and families to whom the cultural objects belong. The seismic upgrades—along with some significant improvements to energy-efficient lighting, skylights, fire protection, and other improvements—are scheduled for completion in 18 months. 



City & Culture

TOPICS ▼

CITY & CULTURE »

The Museum of Anthropology is reopening after 18 months of renos

by V. S. Wells on April 30th, 2024 at 2:18 PM



The iconic glass-and-concrete edifice of the Museum of Anthropology has been completely rebuilt over the last few years.

BRANNEN BELL

Seventy-five years after it first opened its doors, the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at UBC is set to return from its hiatus this June.

The iconic museum has been closed since January 2023 as part of ongoing seismic upgrades, which involved completely rebuilding the whole edifice. So now, the building's visitors—and all the priceless cultural artifacts housed within—will hopefully be much safer from earthquakes.

"We've waited so long to welcome back visitors from around the world to MOA this summer," says museum director Susan Rowley in a statement. "Over the past 18 months, MOA's Great Hall has experienced monumental changes—some visible, some not, but all for a stronger future."

Original architect Arthur Erickson's 1976 design has been meticulously recreated, but with an eye for increased safety. Each of the 25 hulking concrete columns in the main gallery have had base isolators installed under each of them, and the Great Hall has been separated from the rest of the museum and the ground to help limit any potential damage in case of a quake.

Other new additions include structural upgrades to the roof, window coverings, and fire protection; as well as updates to the museum's displays and interpretations, including a huge canoe carved by Stz'uminus artist Qap'u'luq (John Marston).

"Importantly, the displays in the Great Hall and other other gallery spaces have been revitalized and reinterpreted, in collaboration with First Nations communities and families whose objects and belongings are housed at the museum," Rowley continues. "The completion of the seismic upgrades ensures the preservation and safety of this cultural heritage for future generations."

Coinciding with the reopening on June 13, MOA will be presenting two new exhibitions. *To be seen, to be heard: First Nations in Public Spaces, 1900–1965* is a multimedia world premiere, exploring how Indigenous people in BC fought cultural erasure in urban spaces. And *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, by Māori artist Lisa Reihana, a 32-minute video projection disrupts colonial ideals of harmony with the realities of violence and oppression.

On reopening day, admission will be free all evening. June 14, the 100th anniversary of Arthur Erickson's birth, will have half-price admission and special programming; meanwhile, June 15 and 16 will also see reduced entry fees, as well as performances, workshops, tours, and family-oriented activities.

More events are planned as the year progresses, celebrating 75 years since the museum first opened in the UBC Main Library in 1949.

Museum of Anthropology re-opening

When: June 13, 5pm

Where: Museum of Anthropology at UBC

Admission: Free

[Click here to report a typo.](#)

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

UBC's Museum of Anthropology to reopen after 18-month seismic upgrade closure

[WATCH LIVE](#)

It's been 18 months since the public has been able to view the acclaimed collection of Northwest Coast Indigenous carvings and other works. Kier Junos has the details on what you can expect to see when the museum reopens this week.



By John Ackermann

Posted June 11, 2024 11:42 am.

Last Updated June 18, 2024 6:11 am.

The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia is re-opening on Thursday after an 18-month closure to complete seismic upgrades to its Great Hall.

It kicks off a year-long celebration of the museum's 75th anniversary that also includes updated interpretations and new displays.

Staff say visitors will notice some big changes alongside familiar faces.

"The Great Hall itself, that had to be completely rebuilt for earthquake standards, will look very much the same because it is such an architectural icon of Canada," said Karen Duffek, the curator of contemporary visual arts and Pacific Northwest at the MOA. "Though there are some improvements with the quality of the glass, things like that."

The current Museum of Anthropology building, designed by famed Vancouver architect Arthur Erickson, opened in 1976. However, a survey in 2017 found its Great Hall to be at risk of collapse during an earthquake. That prompted work on a seismic facsimile of the original design, begun in 2021.



Related: Museum of Anthropology at UBC to close temporarily

Duffek says the idea was to have the Great Hall be able to move around like a waterbed in case of a large seismic event.

“What an engineering feat really, to first of all, have to take down that entire structure of the Great Hall, which is so renowned, that post-and-beam architecture of concrete and the huge glass panels. All that had to be taken right down and then a big pit was dug, in which these earthquake stabilizer units were placed,” she said.

“So, the floor that was then rebuilt on those stabilizer units is separated from the rest of the museum building by a gap that we don’t see because it’s covered by a floor. But it allows the Great Hall as a unit to move almost in a waterbed-like way if there is a giant earthquake.”

Other upgrades include skylights and other aspects of the structure of the museum.

Related: Who built it, when, why, and what’s good about it? ‘Exploring Vancouver’ tells its story through architecture

Duffek says staff used the 18-month closure to revitalize and reinterpret the museum’s Indigenous collection.

“We took that opportunity to work together with a fabulous Indigenous advisory committee who really challenged us to be bold and to be much visible in terms of diverse Indigenous voices being presented,” she said.

“So, I think that the visitors will see amazing, monumental sculptures still and bowls and other kinds of carvings and baskets and weavings accompanied by contemporary Indigenous voices that really point to how meaningful these things are to them today, how connected they are to these belongings that are so important in the museum space, but their meanings and their connections extend [far] beyond the walls of the museum.”

Along with the reopening, the MOA is presenting two brand-new exhibitions: *In Pursuit of Venus (Infected)* and *To Be Seen, To Be Heard: First Nations in Public Spaces, 1900–1965*.

The museum will reopen at 5:00 p.m. on June 13 with free admission all evening. June 15 marks the 100th anniversary of architect Arthur Erickson’s birth. The MOA is marking that occasion with half-price admission and special programming.

British Columbia

UBC's Museum of Anthropology reopening after 18 months

New technology will allow museum to survive one-in-2,500 year earthquake

[Chuck Chiang](#) · The Canadian Press · Posted: Jun 12, 2024 4:00 AM PDT | Last Updated: June 12, 2024



The redesigned Museum of Anthropology on the University of B.C. campus is set to prominently feature Indigenous perspectives. The museum is reopening after 18 months of seismic upgrades. (Ben Nelms/CBC)

Working on the \$40-million seismic upgrade for one of Canada's most prominent museums was an intensely personal experience for architect Nick Milkovich.

He started his career under renowned architect Arthur Erickson and worked on some aspects of the award-winning concrete and glass design of the Museum of Anthropology on the University of British Columbia campus before the building opened in 1976.

After an 18-month closure to implement "cutting-edge" base-isolation upgrades for the Great Hall, Milkovich said he felt an immense responsibility to carry forward his mentor's vision in preserving the structure's design through the entire process.

"His studio gave me the opportunity to become a decent architect," Milkovich said of Erickson at the museum on Tuesday. "So, it's gratitude, and it's also an obligation to that learning session that I had in that wonderful studio and the people I met."

WATCH | A walkthrough of the newly renovated Museum of Anthropology:**Vancouver's Museum of Anthropology reopens after 18-month seismic upgrade**

► 9 months ago 5:09

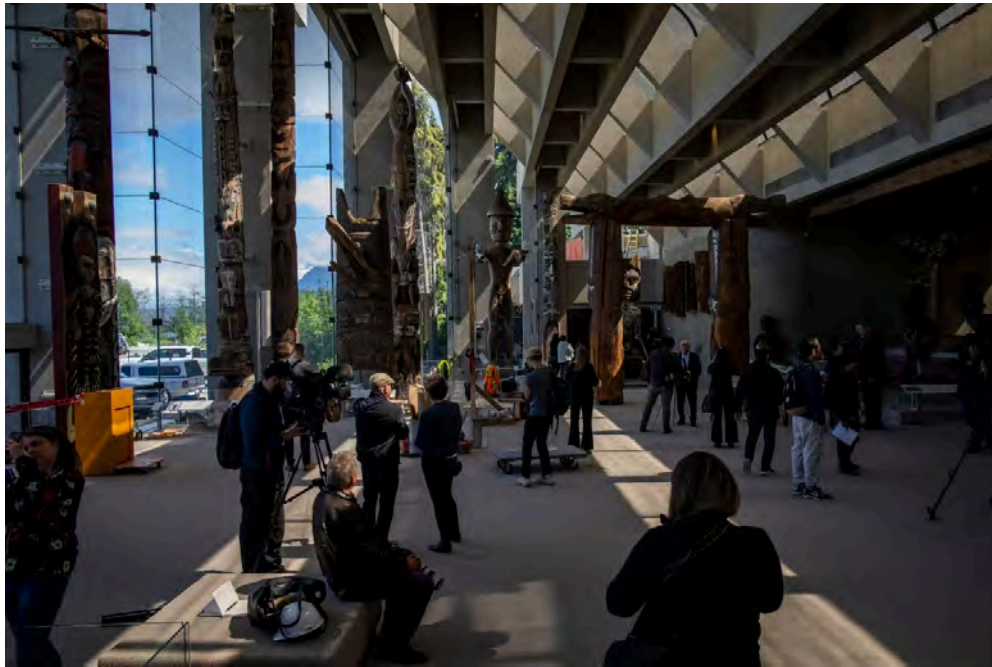
It's been 18 months since the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia closed its doors for seismic upgrades. On Thursday, it will reopen to the public. Staff have been working hard to prepare for it. The CBC's Caroline Chan got a sneak peek of the changes and their plans for the big reopening.

On Thursday, the Museum of Anthropology will reopen with new exhibits after the seismic upgrade, which features a system that would allow it to survive a once-in-2,500-year earthquake.

UBC facilities director of project services Jay Hiscox said the seismic upgrade at the museum was challenging, given Erickson's "unconventional" design where adding new support would have "complicated the building and lost its essence."

Hiscox and Milkovich agreed that in order to preserve the design language of the Great Hall, the only method available to them was the base-isolation, which is more commonly used in earthquake zones such as Japan and Turkey.

"It buys you the opportunity to actually have it still look like the old (museum), but it's completely re-engineered," Hiscox said. "The beams and columns that you see are completely re-engineered from what was there before."



The Museum of Anthropology houses nearly 50,000 works from around the world. Its Great Hall is pictured here. (Ben Nelms/CBC)

Officials say it's the first time a Canadian museum has been retrofitted with the technology, which uses movement joints at the bottom of the building to limit the transfer of ground shifts to the structure.

The museum was identified as a high priority for seismic upgrades in 2017, and director Susan Rowley said they took it as an opportunity to renew the space by adding new exhibits, while refocusing the Indigenous artifacts as part of "living, vibrant, sovereign cultures."

It houses nearly 50,000 works from almost every part of the world, but the museum is best known for its sizable collection of Indigenous northwest coast art, including a stunning display of totem poles in the Great Hall.



A seismic upgrade at the museum was challenging, given its 'unconventional' design, says a UBC official. (Ben Nelms/CBC)

"One of things we had understood when the construction project first started was that our closure would be a relatively short period of time," Rowley said. "Then, when we understood it would actually be a much longer period of time, we as an institution were thinking, what does that give us the opportunity to do? How can we reimagine the work that we are doing?"

That process is reflected in the new exhibits, including one entitled To Be Seen, To Be Heard, focusing on First Nations Peoples in public spaces representing their cultures during Canada's colonial past.



The museum was designed by renowned architect Arthur Erickson. (Ben Nelms/CBC)

"We're all thinking about reconciliation and decolonization and what does that mean, and trying to understand that history, particularly for many of us who grew up not knowing this history, although it's the history of the land in which we live," Rowley said. "It's trying to come to terms with what were we not hearing? How were we not hearing it?"

The museum will also have more of a focus on the artifacts on display in terms of their relationship to Indigenous Peoples and cultures in society, adding to the old perspective of highlighting descriptions and facts specifically on the objects themselves, Rowley said.

- [**How some B.C. museums are collaborating with Indigenous communities on path to reconciliation**](#)

"What we hope is that people come through the museum, and they are so interested and question themselves, and think about received wisdom and stereotypes," she said. "We hope they go away open to looking at things in a brand new way."

Milkovich said many of the people he met while working with Erickson still gather regularly, and he's looking forward to their reactions to the upgraded Great Hall.

"That group of folks, we meet together, reminisce and talk about what we were doing, and I'm going to be taking them through the building," Milkovich said with a big smile.



Construction crews work on the interior of the museum on Tuesday. (Ben Nelms/CBC)

PHASE 3: PAID MEDIA (ADVERTISING)

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PHOTO: M.J. ARANJO / DE SUSA COPYLOT DESIGN

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MOA gratefully acknowledges the Province of British Columbia and the Government of Canada for their support of the Great Hall Renewal Project.

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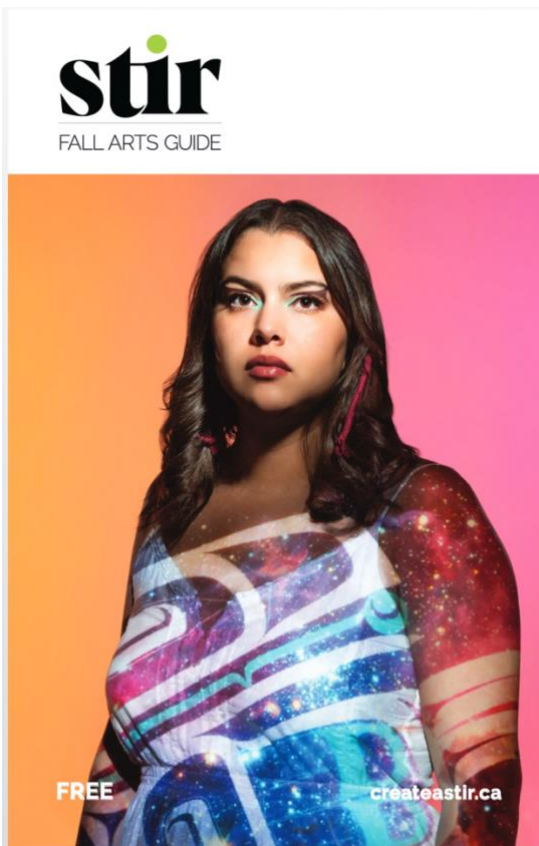
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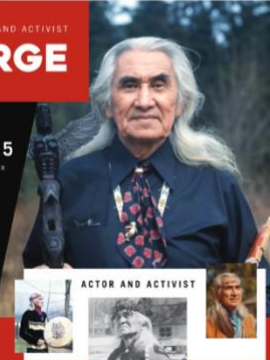
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