



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 17, 2014

Museum of Vancouver celebrates 120 years

(VANCOUVER, BC) – Today the Museum of Vancouver (MOV) reaches a major milestone, as a collector of precious artifacts from around the world and the protector of Vancouver’s past. In recognition of 120 years, MOV will host a celebration on May 29th when admission will be \$1.20 (always free for members). Following the Annual General Meeting that evening, birthday cake will be served and BC Place will be lit in the Museum’s colours. MOV’s celebration will continue on their social media channels with photos of artifacts representing 120 years of accessions, shared daily at 1:20pm.

MOV’s 120th anniversary is not only an acknowledgment of history, but of Vancouver’s history. As MOV CEO Nancy Noble explains, “In Canadian terms, we are an old museum with an old collection. For 120 years this museum has been the repository of the material culture and collective memory of this city. We are a reflection of Vancouver’s identity over time. That is valuable in and of itself.”

In 1894, a group of visionaries formed Vancouver’s Art, Historical and Scientific Association. Soon after, the City Museum was created at the Carnegie Library location at Main and Hastings. In 1967, the city announced the construction of the current landmark building in Vanier Park as part of Canada’s centennial. Designed by well-known architect Gerald Hamilton, the Museum’s distinctive dome top was inspired by the shape of a woven basket hat made by Northwest Coast First Nations people. In 1981, the Centennial Museum was re-named the Vancouver Museum and featured permanent displays, exhibitions and educational programs about the natural, cultural and human history of the Vancouver region.

Society continues to transform and museums have had to adapt to that change. In 2008, the Museum underwent a visioning process that resulted in a shift in focus, taking a cross-disciplinary approach and engaging the community in dialogue about contemporary issues of our city. To reflect the new vision, the Museum changed its name to the Museum of Vancouver in 2009.

“We don’t collect the way colonial collectors did, nor do we communicate information in the same way we did 120 years ago,” Noble explains. “As a contemporary museum, MOV wants to push the boundaries of our role. We believe that the power of history and collections bind the community together, but we want to go beyond that to engage our community in building our collections, telling their own stories, debating contemporary issues and hopefully shaping the future of Vancouver.”

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Media interested in a presentation of our standout artifacts representing 12 decades, and a tour of our 70,000 object collection or interviews with MOV CEO Nancy Noble, can contact Myles Constable (below) to make private appointments.

About the Museum of Vancouver

The Museum of Vancouver (MOV) creates Vancouver-focused exhibitions and programs that encourage dynamic conversations about what was, is and can be Vancouver. History galleries tell the city’s stories from the early 1900s to the late 1970s and are complemented by contemporary feature exhibitions. MOV is an independent non-profit organization located 1100 Chestnut Street, in Vancouver (in Kitsilano’s Vanier Park).

Media Contact

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