



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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čəsnaʔəm, the city before the city
Unprecedented, Three-Site Exhibition Reveals
Archaeological & Cultural Origins of Vancouver

VANCOUVER, BC – Musqueam First Nation, the Museum of Vancouver (MOV), and the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at UBC partner on a groundbreaking exploration of the city's ancient landscape, and Musqueam's early history and living culture. *čəsnaʔəm, the city before the city* is a series of three distinct exhibitions, opening simultaneously on **January 25, 2015**. The unified exhibitions will connect Vancouverites with čəsnaʔəm – one of the largest ancient village and burial sites upon which Vancouver was built – sharing its powerful 5,000-year history and continuing significance.

"People often think of Vancouver as a new city, when in fact it is one of the most significant sites of ancient cultures in Canada – one that has even been compared to other societies such as the Egyptian and Roman societies," says Terry Point, Co-Curator of the Musqueam First Nation and MOV exhibitions. "Visitors to *čəsnaʔəm, the city before the city* will learn it is part of an ancient landscape, and will discover aspects of Musqueam heritage, culture, and knowledge that have never before been shared with the public."

Located in the area now commonly known as the neighbourhood of Marpole in Vancouver, čəsnaʔəm is imbued with the history and culture of the Musqueam people. First occupied almost 5,000 years ago, čəsnaʔəm became one of the largest of Musqueam's village sites approximately two thousand years ago. Generations of families lived at what was then the mouth of the Fraser River, harvesting the rich resources of the delta.

Over the past 125 years, archaeologists, collectors, and treasure hunters have mined the čəsnaʔəm village and burial ground for artifacts and ancestral remains, many of which are in museums and private collections locally and abroad. The land has been given various names since colonialism, including Great Fraser Midden, Eburne Midden, DhRs-1, and Marpole Midden – a name under which it would receive designation as a National Historic Site in 1933.

Today, intersecting railway lines, roads, and bridges to Richmond and YVR Airport, and a miscellaneous assortment of buildings and developments obscure the heart of Musqueam's traditional territory. The significance of čəsnaʔəm to the Musqueam community remains undiminished despite this. In 2012, Musqueam community members held a 200+ day vigil when ancestral remains were unearthed at čəsnaʔəm, putting a stop to a proposed condominium development.

Opening simultaneously in January of 2015, these three čəsnaʔəm exhibitions will bring the rich history of the Musqueam Nation to the attention of Greater Vancouver audiences. Each exhibition will highlight a distinctive aspect of the significance of čəsnaʔəm:

Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre & Gallery

Curated by Leona M. Sparrow, Co-curated by Terry Point, Jason Woolman, and Larissa Grant this exhibition focuses on the sophistication of Musqueam knowledge and technology past and present. It makes connections through a continuum of knowledge and expertise over time. The exhibition will feature oral histories, community interviews, hə́ŋqəmińəm language associated with čəsnaʔəm

belongings on display, and artifact recreation. It will be on display for a minimum of one year.

Museum of Vancouver (MOV)

This multi-year exhibition draws multiple connections between *čəsnaʔəm* artifacts, Indigenous ways of knowing, colonialism, heritage politics, cultural resilience, and contemporary Musqueam culture. It will include graphic and 3D modelling of maps and artifacts, original videography, family-friendly interactivity, and soundscapes blending traditional and modern sounds. The MOV exhibition is the work of a curatorial collective from Terry Point, Susan Roy, Viviane Gosselin, Larissa Grant, Leona Sparrow, Jordan Wilson, Jason Woolman, and Susan Rowley and will be on display for a minimum of five years.

Museum of Anthropology (MOA)

Focusing on Musqueam identity and worldview, and Curated by Sue Rowley and Jordan Wilson, this exhibition will highlight language, oral history, and the community's recent actions to protect *čəsnaʔəm*. Rich in multi-media, it will demonstrate Musqueam's continuous connection to their territory, despite the many changes to the land. This exhibition will be on display for one year.

As a way to further educate, enrich, and connect with people, public programming and events will be offered throughout the duration of the exhibitions' run. The complete range of public programs will include a series of curated tours, cultural exchanges with Musqueam artists, elders, and activists, and cultural tours from Musqueam youth.

For further exhibition information, including complete details on public programs, please visit: thecitybeforethecity.com

About Musqueam First Nation:

Musqueam First Nation are traditional *hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓* speaking people whose territory, and dozens of villages, encompasses much of what is now the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Extensive networks of trade and relations radiate up and down the coast and into the interior. Although a metropolitan city has developed in the heart of Musqueam territory, the community maintains strong cultural and traditional beliefs and these networks. Families teach and pass on this traditional knowledge and history to their people, to keep culture and traditions strong.

Musqueam people continue to thrive, with a population of over 1,200 people; relying on the guiding principles of knowing who they are and where they come from and the responsibilities they share. Nearly half of Musqueam lives on a very small portion of their traditional territory, known as the Musqueam Indian Reserve #2, located south of Marine Drive near the mouth of the Fraser River.

About MOV:

The Museum of Vancouver (MOV) connects Vancouverites to each other and connects Vancouver to the world. The museum is a gathering place that encourages social engagement and inspires conversation about the future. MOV exhibitions and collections invite exploration of contemporary issues and stories from the past. MOV activities ignite a passion for Vancouver and its people. The museum, an enthusiastic advocate for the city, is an independent non-profit organization that depends on support from the community.

About MOA

The Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) is world-renowned for its collections, research, teaching, public programs, and community connections. Founded in 1949 in the basement of the Main Library at UBC, its mission is to inspire understanding of and respect for world arts and cultures. Today, Canada's largest teaching museum is located in a spectacular building overlooking mountains and sea. MOA houses more than 42,000 ethnographic objects and 535,000 archaeological objects, including many, which originate from the Northwest Coast of British Columbia. The Koerner Gallery features one of

Canada's most important European ceramics collections, while MOA's recently opened Multiversity Galleries provide public access to more than 10,000 objects from around the world.

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