

Sacred Journey: witness the power of how Tribal Canoe Journeys have revitalized Indigenous culture, community healing, and youth empowerment on the Pacific Northwest Coast



Sacred Journey, produced by the Heiltsuk Tribal Council, SeeQuest Development and Greencoast Media, presented by Vancity and supported by Amazon Canada, will be on display at Science World.

Photos and assets can be found at this [link](#)

Vancouver, B.C. July 6, 2022 – Starting on July 15, [Sacred Journey](#) will take visitors on a voyage to experience the resurgence of Northwest Coast canoe cultures. Nearly lost as a result of colonization, *Sacred Journey* tells the powerful story of a People reclaiming traditions and ways of life—particularly through the annual Tribal Canoe Journeys taken to revitalize cultures, heal communities, and empower the next generation. This exhibition, produced by the Heiltsuk Tribal Council, SeeQuest Development and Greencoast Media, presented by Vancity and supported by Amazon Canada, will be on display at Science World until February 20, 2023.

For thousands of years, the traditional ocean-going canoe (“glwa” in Heiltsuk) was the main means of transportation for Indigenous Peoples in the Pacific Northwest. It was essential for sustenance, transportation, and for developing unique social and ceremonial life for the First Nations Peoples. Told by Indigenous leaders and participants of today’s canoe resurgence for the first time, *Sacred Journey* unveils this incredible story through the Indigenous framework of “nuyum” (traditional narratives) expressed through figurative art, immersive audio and extensive interactive video projections and displays of those who have participated in a Tribal Canoe Journey.

“Amongst the Heiltsuk Nation and other Indigenous Peoples, the last 150 years have seen massive societal changes that have had devastating and detrimental impacts on our People. During this time of suppression and technology change, the ocean-going canoe, the Glwa, was almost lost. *Sacred Journey* allows us to share the knowledge and experience of this journey from an Indigenous point of view,” said λάλίγασίλα, Hereditary Chief Frank Brown, Heiltsuk Nation. “Tribal Journeys have become an important teacher and cornerstone for awakening our cultures and languages. This exhibition is a chance for the public to immerse themselves and go on a canoe journey they otherwise wouldn’t get to experience.”

Embark on this journey into the history and culture of Indigenous Marine place-based peoples who have lived along these waters for millennia. In this exhibit, visitors will experience stunning art pieces including:

A monumental canvas canoe with four prominent Heiltsuk clan crests in striking colours painted by Heiltsuk artist KC Hall.

Two other Heiltsuk artists designed pieces for this exhibition, Chazz Mack and Ian Reid. Mack designed overarching house posts and paddles to accompany the canoe, while Reid carved an eagle-human mask, located at the entrance to the exhibit.

Renowned Heiltsuk/Tsimshian artist Roy Henry Vickers created a moon and salmon logo for the exhibit and a ‘Many hands’ canoe image.

The interactive audio and video elements of the show were produced by Greencoast Media.

QUOTES

“Our team is so grateful to display this exhibition, celebrating Indigenous canoe culture,” Tracy Redies, President and CEO of Science World. “Science World strives to be a positive, accessible, and culturally safe place that shares important human stories. We are honoured to present *Sacred Journey*, to share a powerful story of canoe resurgence as told by its leaders, and to uphold narratives of Indigenous Peoples as knowledge keepers.”

“I am pleased to welcome the *Sacred Journey* exhibition to Science World, located on the unceded homeland of x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm, Ṣḳẉx̣ẉú7mesh Úxwumixw and səfilwətaʔ Nations. The canoe is an important part of our collective history and culture,” said John (Dickie) Louis from x̣ẉməθḳẉəỵəm (Musqueam Indian Band). “I have always been a canoe puller and now have the opportunity to teach our youth canoe carving as well as cultural ways and practices that have been carried on through generations. A resurgence of canoe building brings back the songs, the dances,



the clothing and the ceremonies. Art can be transformational, significantly strengthening cultures and boosting pride for countless people. I know it was for me and this is what I hope this exhibition will share with all its visitors.”

“Musqueam is proud of the efforts our members, like Dickie Louis, have made to revitalize canoe pulling in our community. We are in full support of this exhibit that showcases the power of Tribal Canoe Journeys and of our relatives from Heiltsuk who have worked hard to share this history,” said Chief Wayne Sparrow, Musqueam Indian Band.

“I am so grateful to see this exhibit be a part of the learning experience at Science World and lifting up the importance of the canoe. Seeing my family paddling the shores makes me feel like I am home. My home is when I’m connected to our land and water. Paddling in the canoe reminds me of this,” said Hillary Hyland, Senior Environmental Specialist, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Science World board member.

“Reconciliation begins with listening, learning, unlearning and relearning. The Sacred Canoe Journey exhibition helps rediscover and reinstate the importance of the ocean-going canoe in Indigenous lives and culture in the Pacific Northwest. It powerfully demonstrates how Indigenous Peoples are reclaiming a cultural mainstay nearly lost to colonization, using it again as a source of pride and empowerment. Vancity is excited to help bring this exhibition to a broad audience,” Jonathan Fowlie, Chief External Relations Officer, Vancity.

“As a people, we have survived the legislated assimilation policies of Canada. We have taken steps to revitalize our traditional customs and family values that promote a strong sense of Haitzaqv identity. *Sacred Journey* and *Bákvjá* is an expression of our journey of self-determination as shown through the resurgence of ocean going canoes,” says elected Chief Councillor Marilyn Slett.

“It is an honour to welcome this exhibition, our ancestors worked, played and put love and prayers on the land. They shaped our future when they took care of our lands and waters, we proudly continue their legacy,” Chepximiya Siyam, Chief Janice George.

“Amazon cares about creating educational opportunities for children and families, and empowering the next generation. We’re proud to work with Science World on this exhibit by integrating *Your Voice is Power*, an initiative to teach coding skills using music from Indigenous artists, adding a unique learning experience for visitors,” said Susan Ibach, Senior Program Manager, Amazon in the Community.

“Vancouver Foundation is thrilled to be partnering to host the opening of the *Sacred Journey* exhibit at Science World,” says Jeska Slater, Director of Indigenous Priorities at Vancouver Foundation. “We’re taking this opportunity to launch our Indigenous Priorities Strategy and will be showcasing the importance of partnering with hereditary leadership and community leaders to advance the priorities of land-based nations and Indigenous-led organizations across the province with flexible, trust-based funding.”

“It has been inspiring to witness the resurgence of the Tribal Canoe Journeys on the Pacific Northwest coast and the impact that these revitalization efforts are having on strengthening cultural identity and fostering agency in today’s youth. The *Sacred Journey* (travelling) Exhibit is a remarkable learning tool and powerful interactive experience for non-Indigenous Canadians and visitors to Canada. The exhibit gives an opportunity for everyone to better understand, respect, and benefit from Haitzaqv and other coastal First Nations knowledge and leadership as



the first, and present, ocean experts and guardians. The Coalition is delighted to help support the promotion of this transformative exhibit," Lisa (Diz) Glithero, National Lead, Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition.

SACRED JOURNEY EXHIBITION DETAILS

This 2000-square-foot exhibition is on from July 15, 2022 – February 20, 2023

Bilingual in French and English

Located in the Our World Gallery at Science World, tickets with admission at scienceworld.ca.

To learn more visit <https://www.scienceworld.ca/exhibition/sacred-journey/>

BÁKVĹÁ PHOTO EXHIBITION

In the Science World atrium during the *Sacred Journey* exhibition, there will be a photoseries on *BákvĹá*, a Heiltsuk word that loosely translates as “gathering and harvesting food for winter.” This series is interpreted by Margaret Brown, a residential school survivor and one of the few remaining fluent Heiltsuk-language speakers in the world. *BákvĹá* is co-produced by the Heiltsuk Nation and co-curated by Frank Brown, Ayla Brown, and Vina Brown, Heiltsuk Nation; and William Knight, Canada Agriculture and Food Museum. It will be accompanied by a 20-foot long by 18 inches wide dugout canoe carved by Canoe Cultures Society.

“Heiltsuk like other first peoples' have lived and died near and on the ocean for millennia, the *Sacred Journey* and *BákvĹá* exhibition share from the first person perspective insights into ancient Pacific Ocean Peoples history and culture. It shares an important message of resiliency and sustainability for current and future generations,”
łáłıyasila, Heiltsuk Hereditary Chief, Frank Brown.

ABOUT HEILSTUK NATION

The Heiltsuk are an ancient seafaring People with over 14 thousand years of continuous use and occupancy of their territorial waters along the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America and are leaders in the resurgence of ocean going canoes and culture. They are an amalgamation of five tribes located on the Central Coast, or what is now referred to as the Great Bear Rainforest, like many other Coastal First Nations they find their sustenance, laws, governance, stewardship commitments and livelihood from the ocean. Learn more about Heiltsuk Nation [here](#).



ABOUT SCIENCE WORLD

Science World is a BC-based charitable organization that engages the people of British Columbia in STEAM literacy. Their mission is to ignite wonder and empower dreams through science and nature. Their vision is that within a generation, Canada will be a country of thriving, sustainable communities rooted in science, innovation and a deep connection to nature.

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