



AGGV's Audain Fellowship Looks at Contemporary Aboriginal Art in Fresh Ways

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The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria has awarded its first Audain Aboriginal Curatorial Fellowship to B.C. artists and researchers France Trépanier and Chris Creighton-Kelly.

Their project, Here Now : Here Before, will look at the history of both Aboriginal artists and artists of colour on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. This research will explore the influence of these histories on contemporary artists.

"Too often Aboriginal art is defined solely by its relationship to European culture and history, not by its connection to other cultures," said Jon Tupper, Director of the AGGV. "This ground-breaking project will add new knowledge to a subject that has been largely overlooked by art historians and scholars."

In probing these cultural connections, Trépanier and Creighton-Kelly will survey the work of Aboriginal artists. They will also look at artists with Chinese, African and South-Asian roots whose ancestors immigrated to this region. The public and artists will have an opportunity to discuss these themes at presentations hosted by the Audain Fellows at the AGGV.

"For me, Here Now : Here Before is about redefining the conversation about art. This project will create space for Aboriginal voices to tell the story," said Trépanier. Creighton-Kelly added, "We will look beyond the official Multiculturalism model of 'celebration' and look deeper at these histories - to see if they conflict, but also, to see if they converge."

France Trépanier is a sang-mêlé of Kanien kéhaka (Mohawk) and French ancestry. She is a visual artist, curator and researcher whose artistic and curatorial work has been presented in Canada and Europe. She divides her time between Québec and British Columbia. France is a board member of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective and the Banff Centre's Aboriginal Program Council.

Chris Creighton-Kelly is a Canadian artist, writer and cultural critic. He is a person of colour with a South Asian/British heritage. His interdisciplinary artworks have been presented across Canada and in India, Europe and the U.S.A. This work has been internationally recognized with various grants and awards from five countries. Chris appreciates his audience a lot.

Trépanier and Creighton-Kelly recently completed: Understanding Aboriginal Art in Canada Today. A Knowledge and Literature Review, commissioned and published by the Canada Council for the Arts and also supported by Artex Information Centre.

The AGGV Audain Aboriginal Curatorial Fellowship was established in 2010 through an endowment by the Audain Foundation for the Visual Arts in British Columbia. It is the only Aboriginal Curatorial Fellowship in Canada. The fellowship, being awarded for the first time, will be presented each year by the AGGV to an Aboriginal art historian or curator to contribute to the body of scholarship related to First Nations art. Fellows receive research funding, an office and administrative support.

For more information, visit ²www.aggv.ca

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
1040 Moss Street
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 4P1
250.384.4171 aggv.ca

Media Contact:
Sandra Hudson
Tel. 250-383-5605 or 250-216-1380
[Media\[at\]aggv.ca](mailto:Media[at]aggv.ca)

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