

November 23, 2016



## **Audain Foundation Pledges \$2 Million to Art Gallery of Greater Victoria – Next Gallery**

British Columbia philanthropist Michael Audain, through the Audain Foundation, has pledged \$2 million to support the expansion plans of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Audain is Chairman of Polygon Homes Ltd., one of British Columbia's leading home builders.

The donation was announced today by AGGV Board Chair, Ruth Wittenberg. "We are extremely grateful to the Foundation and Mr. Audain for their support. This inspiring gift will help ensure that British Columbia's capital city will have the astonishing new home for art that it deserves."

The gift is contingent upon the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria *Next Gallery* receiving the necessary funding from the Province of British Columbia during the 2017 calendar year. The AGGV is currently in talks with both the federal and provincial governments.

Commenting on the donation, Audain noted that "For many years, I considered Victoria my home town as it is where my family has deep roots. While it was an idyllic place growing up, it sadly lacked a public art gallery. I believe it is essential that the capital of our great province, which has so many distinguished artists, should have a significant public art gallery."

Appointed to the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia and the recipient of four honorary degrees, Audain has been a consistent supporter of the arts community, notably serving as Chair of the Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada. He presently serves as Chair of the Audain Art Museum, the Grizzly Bear Foundation, and of course the Audain Foundation, which has donated in excess of \$100 million to support the visual arts.

Audain and his wife, Yoshiko Karasawa, have also built one of Canada's most outstanding art collections. In March of 2016, the couple opened the Audain Art Museum in Whistler to share their collection and create a space for special exhibitions.

The Gallery's commitment to a well-planned renovation of its existing facility was announced in 2012. A request for proposals was issued at the time, seeking architects who could renovate and prepare a design that complements the building's location in the heart of the Rockland neighborhood. In December of 2015, following extensive community consultation, the AGGV received approval for re-zoning from the City of Victoria and unveiled plans for the *Next Gallery*.

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