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**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY APPOINTS RENOWNED
NUU-CHAH-NULTH ARTIST AND CULTURAL HISTORIAN
HAA'YUUPS TO PLAY KEY ROLE IN REINTERPRATION OF
HISTORIC NORTHWEST COAST HALL**

Nuu-chah-nulth artist and cultural historian Haa'yuups (Ron Hamilton) has been appointed as co-curator of the American Museum of Natural History's multi-year project to update, conserve, and restore the historic [Northwest Coast Hall](#). The appointment was announced by Museum President Ellen V. Futter. Haa'yuups is joining Peter Whiteley, the Museum's curator of North American Ethnology, as co-curator of the Northwest Coast Hall renovation.

"We are thrilled that Haa'yuups – one of today's most influential First Nations voices – is joining our efforts in updating and enriching the Museum's very first hall and its first cultural gallery," said Futter. "Close collaboration and ongoing, productive dialogue is absolutely critical in authentically presenting the cultural and artistic expression of our world's living and vibrant cultures. Haa'yuups will bring an important perspective for millions from all over the world who will visit the reimagined Northwest Coast Hall and its updated presentation of cultural treasures."

Haa'yuups is a First Nations artist, scholar, and historian. Over the past 30 years, he has been active globally through publications, public lectures, and curatorial work. In addition to the American Museum of Natural History, he has collaborated with the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico, the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, the British Museum in London, and the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. He is the Head of the House of Takiishtakamthlat-h, of the Huupachesat-h First Nation, Nuu-chah-nulth. In addition to his role as a community scholar and historian, Haa'yuups is also a

regalia designer, painter, carver, dancer, singer, metal engraver, graphic designer, and illustrator.

“I have been aware of the American Museum of Natural History for a very long time,” said Haa’yuups. “In the mid-1960s I remember looking at a book and seeing a pair of ceremonial house screens that were said to be from my great-grandfather’s house listed in the publication as being held by AMNH. I have for a very long time been struck by the amount and depth of research done by Franz Boas. His exhibition as it stood for over a century was certainly one of the most important instruments for educating the world about the creative skills of Northwest Coast peoples. I am deeply honored for the opportunity to participate as a co-curator in the redesign of the Northwest Coast Hall. I am sure the job will be a daunting one, and I am ready for any and all challenges that we will face. I have great faith in Peter Whiteley and his entire crew.”

“With the reimagining of the Hall, our goal is to present the art and material culture of the Pacific Northwest in a way that highlights the ideas, voices, and perspectives past and present behind these wonderful historical pieces,” said Whiteley. “I eagerly look forward to partnering with Haa’yuups to achieve that goal as we work to create a modern exhibition hall that can serve as a new exemplar and transcend the boundaries that have too often divided museums and Native communities. We want the Hall to be a welcoming home for all First Nations/Native Americans, where material culture serves as a portal into understanding the complexities and depths of Native ideas and art-forms.”

In addition to the curatorial role of Haa’yuups, the Museum is consulting with a diverse group of core advisors that includes First Nations scholars, artists, and other authorities, including David Boxley (Tsimshian of Metlakatla; master carver), Chief Ga'lastawikw (Trevor Isaac; Kwakwaka'wakw, Haxwa'mis tribe; collections and education assistant at U'mista Cultural Centre, Alert Bay), Jisgang (Nika Collison; Haida Nation, Ts'aahl clan; director of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay), Kaa-xoo-auxch (Garfield George; Angoon Tlingit, head of the Raven Beaver House/Dei Shu Hit “End of the Trail House”), Judith Daxootsu Ramos (Yakutat Tlingit, Kwaashki'kwaan clan; assistant professor for the Department of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development, University of Alaska Fairbanks), secəlenəxʷ (Morgan Guerin; Musqueam; councillor for the Musqueam First Nation, artist), Snxakila (Clyde Tallio; Nuxalk, orator, ceremonialist, and cultural

researcher for the Nuxalk Nation), Chief Wigvil̓ba Wákas (Harvey Humchitt; Heiltsuk, a community leader and the research liaison coordinator of the Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department, Bella Bella) and Xsim Ganaa'w (Laurel Smith Wilson; Gitksan, Fireweed Clan, House of Guuxsan; former director and curator of the 'Ksan Historical Village and Museum, Hazelton). The restoration was announced last fall at an event attended by representatives from the Haida, Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuuchahnulth, and Tlingit communities, and in November 2017, the Museum hosted an interdisciplinary convening of Native and non-Native experts to consider exhibition design, interpretation, conservation, and reinstallation of the Hall's cultural materials.

The architecture firm [wHY](#) – a design practice dedicated to serving the arts, communities, culture, and the environment – is working with the Museum to update the physical infrastructure of the Northwest Coast Hall while preserving the elegance of the historic space. The project is expected to be completed in 2020 and is one in a series of physical and programmatic enhancements to historic parts of the Museum leading up to its 150th anniversary and the opening of [the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation](#), a major new facility that will house resources for education, exhibition, and collections and reveal modern science to visitors of all ages.

History of the Northwest Coast Hall

Beloved by generations for its magnificent totem poles and other extraordinary Northwest Coast art and material culture – including the 63-foot-long Great Canoe – the Northwest Coast Hall is located in the Museum's first building, which opened in 1877, and is the Museum's oldest cultural gallery. Museum Curator Franz Boas (1858-1942), known as the “father of American anthropology,” conceived the Northwest Coast Hall to highlight the cultures and artistic expressions of the Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest, from Alaska through British Columbia and Washington State. When it opened in 1899, it was the first exhibition hall organized to convey the idea that all cultures should be understood in their own right – a challenge to the then-prevailing approach of representing societies in evolutionary terms on a trajectory from “primitive” to “civilized.”

To create the original gallery, Boas worked closely with his long-term collaborator George Hunt (1854-1933), whose mother was Tlingit and who was raised as a member of

the Kwakwaka'wakw (formerly called Kwakiutl) community at Fort Rupert, British Columbia, where Hunt was born. Hunt played a major role in the collection of cultural materials and documentation of Native Northwest Coast life. In their work, Boas and Hunt communicated the extraordinary value of Northwest Coast cultures to the world, notwithstanding frequent government and missionary repression at home.

Collaboration between the Museum and First Nations has continued through the years, including working together on the special exhibitions *Chiefly Feasts: The Enduring Kwakiutl Potlatch* in 1991, *Totems to Turquoise* in 2004, and on the addition of digital interpretation to the Northwest Coast Hall in 2016 as part of an ongoing effort to bring contemporary Northwest Coast voices into the gallery. This work included seasonal programs that featured a live telepresence robot facilitating two-way communication with representatives from the Haida Gwaii Museum as well as the installation of a new interactive kiosk known as the Digital Totem that was created in close dialogue with First Nations communities and features interviews with members of the Kwakwaka'wakw, Haida, Nuu-chah-nulth, Gitksan, Tlingit, and Tsimshian communities.

The Museum gratefully recognizes the Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Charitable Trust and Lewis Bernard, whose leadership support has made the restoration of the Northwest Coast Hall possible.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has provided critical planning support, including for consultation with First Nations communities.

The conservation of painted totem poles has been made possible by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under grant number MA-30-17-0260-17.

Additional support has been provided by the Gilbert & Ildiko Butler Family Foundation and the Stockman Family Foundation Trust.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH.ORG)

The American Museum of Natural History, founded in 1869, is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. The Museum encompasses 45 permanent exhibition halls, including those in the Rose Center for Earth and Space and the

Hayden Planetarium, as well as galleries for temporary exhibitions. It is home to the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial, New York State's official memorial to its 33rd governor and the nation's 26th president, and a tribute to Roosevelt's enduring legacy of conservation. The Museum's five active research divisions and three cross-disciplinary centers support approximately 200 scientists, whose work draws on a world-class permanent collection of more than 34 million specimens and artifacts, as well as on specialized collections for frozen tissue and genomic and astrophysical data and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, it is the only American museum authorized to grant the Ph.D. degree and also to grant the Master of Arts in Teaching degree. Annual visitation has grown to approximately 5 million, and the Museum's exhibitions and Space Shows are seen by millions more in venues on six continents. The Museum's website, mobile apps, and massive open online courses (MOOCs) extend its scientific research and collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to additional audiences around the globe. Visit amnh.org for more information.

Hours

The Museum is open daily, 10 am–5:45 pm. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Admission

Museum admission is free to all New York City school and camp groups.

Pay-what-you-wish admission is available only at ticket counters, where the amount you pay is up to you.

General Admission, which includes admission to all 45 Museum halls and the Rose Center for Earth and Space but does not include special exhibitions, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, or Space Show, is \$23 (adults), \$18 (students/seniors), and \$13 (children ages 2–12). All prices are subject to change.

General Admission Plus One includes general admission plus one special exhibition, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, or Space Show: \$28 (adults), \$22.50 (students/seniors), \$16.50 (children ages 2–12).

General Admission Plus All includes general admission plus all special exhibitions, giant-screen 2D or 3D film, and Space Show: \$33 (adults), \$27 (students/seniors), \$20 (children ages 2-12).

Public Information

For additional information, the public may call 212-769-5100 or visit the Museum's website at amnh.org.

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