FULLY REVITALIZED NORTHWEST COAST HALL TO OPEN AT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY ON MAY 13

NEW EXHIBITS DEVELOPED WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES PRESENT THE CREATIVITY, SCHOLARSHIP, AND HISTORY OF THE LIVING CULTURES OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FOR B-ROLL FROM TODAY’S PRESS PREVIEW, CLICK HERE

CLICK HERE FOR FULL PRESS KIT

The iconic Northwest Coast Hall at the American Museum of Natural History will return to public view on May 13 with new exhibits developed with Indigenous communities from the Pacific Northwest Coast.

Showcasing the creativity, scholarship, and history of the living cultures of the Pacific Northwest, the Northwest Coast Hall reopens in the Museum’s oldest gallery, which in 1899 became home to its first permanent exhibit dedicated to the interpretation of cultures. More than 120 years later, the Hall has been fully revitalized, with curation by

Kulapat Yantrasast of WHY Architects developed the concept design for the revitalization of the Hall, working closely with the Museum’s award-winning Exhibition Department, led by Lauri Halderman, vice president for exhibition. While retaining the organization of the historic space, the design showcases the vitality and persistence of Pacific Northwest Coast Nations by enlivening the presentation of cultural treasures with new interpretation, storytelling, and dynamic media developed with Native scholars, artists, historians, filmmakers, and language experts.

“The Museum’s historic first gallery and first cultural Hall, the Northwest Coast Hall has been fully reimagined, painstakingly conserved, and gloriously reinvigorated,” said Ellen V. Futter, President of the American Museum of Natural History. “The new Hall was shaped and profoundly inspired through deep collaboration between the Museum’s Curatorial and Exhibition team and our Co-Curator and a group of Consulting Curators from Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest Coast, resulting in a presentation that illuminates the Northwest Coast cultures as vibrant, living communities, while showcasing more than 1,000 glorious works of art, spirituality, and ingenuity. The Hall also includes a rotating gallery presenting the work of current artists, highlighting the bridges between tradition and modern expression. For all these reasons, we are thrilled to unveil the magnificent new Northwest Coast Hall, whose design was developed by Kulapat Yantrasast of WHY Architects. We look forward to sharing its beauty and poignancy with our visitors.”

The 10,200-square-foot gallery is divided into a series of alcoves focused on the scholarship and material culture of Northwest Coast communities. To the left of the entrance from the Museum’s Grand Gallery, an introductory theater presents a short video by Tahltan/Gitxsan filmmaker Michael Bourquin that provides a sense of place and features Indigenous experts introducing the history, persistence, and present concerns of the Native peoples of the Northwest Coast. To the right of the entrance, an exhibition
entitled *Our Voices* highlights the key perspectives of Co-Curator Ḩaa’yuups and the Consulting Curators on the past, present, and future of life on the Northwest Coast, and issues including environmental conservation and racism.

The Hall presents more than 1,000 cultural treasures that are installed throughout the gallery and in 50 display cases, many of which afford nearly 360-degree views of the treasures within, including:

- the iconic 63-foot-long Great Canoe, the largest Northwest Coast dugout canoe in existence, which has been relocated to the Hall for the first time in more than 70 years in a position suspended from the ceiling and is newly enhanced with exhibition text on its Haida and Haíłzaqv design elements
- more than 60 monumental carvings, ranging from 3 to 17 feet tall, including an immense Raven Nuxalk house entrance pole, four brilliantly painted Tsimshian house posts, and other sculptures expertly restored by Museum conservators with guidance from Native experts
- magnificent examples of Pacific Northwest Coast material culture, including a huge Kwakwaka’wakw transformation mask with sculpin and sea-raven, a Nuu-chah-nulth ceremonial Wolf curtain stretching more than 37 feet long, a Haida bentwood container known as “The Final Exam,” that represents a brilliantly complex elaboration of northern Northwest Coast design and spectacular Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Gitxsan headdresses and clothing items
- new pieces created specifically for the Hall, including a Suquamish woven basket, a “shadow,” or re-creation, of a beaver-shaped Tlingit canoe prow with a remarkable history, and a 6-foot red cedar pole showing the different stages of carving a monumental pole
- an exhibit featuring works by present-day Native artists, illustrating the influence of materials, styles, and stories from past generations today, including in fashion and youth culture like skateboards and sneakers
- a rotating gallery of contemporary art that showcases the continuity and transformation of Indigenous creative traditions, opening with *Living with the Sea*, an exhibition that explores what the ocean means to Northwest Coast Native peoples and includes the
impressive sculpture “Whaler’s Wife Transforming into a Whale” (2018) by Makah artist Greg Colfax KlaWayHee

- multimedia displays highlighting the peoples of the Pacific Northwest and their persisting traditions in the face of challenges that continue to confront their communities today

“I hope that visitors to this historic Hall come away with an even deeper understanding of the diversity and resilience of these living cultures as well as the complexities of Native Northwest Coast ideas, scholarship, and histories,” said Curator Peter Whiteley. “I am honored to have worked with Co-Curator Ḫaa’yuups and the project’s Consulting Curators, whose expertise, dedication, and longstanding partnership made the revitalization of this Hall possible.”

“I want my great-grandchildren to come here. I want them to be proud of where they’re from, proud of who they are, proud of the history of their family and the achievements of our people, the intelligence of people, the knowledge of people, the science of people in my community,” said Co-Curator Ḫaa’yuups. “So I want the Hall to reflect that reality, that there’s a different way to think about the world around you.”

The updated Northwest Coast Hall was developed as part of a multi-year collaboration between Museum staff and a group of Consulting Curators from Native Nations of the Northwest Coast who helped guide object selection, exhibit design, and exhibit interpretation. The project included several in-person convenings in New York, trips by Museum staff to Northwest Coast communities, and ongoing remote consultations before and especially after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In parallel, the Museum’s Object Conservation Laboratory worked closely with the project’s Consulting Curators and other Native experts to develop protocols for the treatment of materials, in some cases recreating missing design elements. The Conservation Lab also engaged interns from a range of Indigenous communities during the project, sharing expertise with young professionals pursuing the field.

In addition to Co-Curator Ḫaa’yuups, Consulting Curators on the project included:

- Daxootsu | Judith Ramos, Kwáashk’ikwáan Clan, Yaakwdáat Kwáan, Tlingit
- Chief Ga’lastawikw | Trevor Isaac, Haxwamis, Kwakwaka’wakw
Hall Organization

“It started with us listening. The strong voices of the Northwest Coast cultures are vibrantly amplified through the new installation of objects, presented in the round and with contextual relationships to one another,” said Kulapat Yantrasast, founder and creative director of WHY. “As an architect, the opportunity to really spend time absorbing and conversing with the multiple cultures represented in our project has greatly informed how we were able to bring out a fresh design, one that provides clarity and sense of place while respecting and responding to the deep context and diverse stories that the meaningful art objects present.”

The Northwest Coast Hall is organized into a series of alcoves, with dedicated sections that present the creativity and scholarship of the Coast Salish, Haida, Haíłzaqv, Kwakwa̱ka̱wakw, Nuu-chah-nulth, Nuxalk, and Tlingit communities as well as an alcove focused on the Gitxsan, Nisga’a, and Tsimshian Nations. Featured within these sections are cultural treasures from each community — including spectacular masks, intricate weavings, feast dishes, and ceremonial regalia — contextualized with important information in labels that include names and terms in both English and Native languages. Each alcove includes a dynamic media installation that introduces visitors to the traditions, languages, music, and histories of these living cultures and makes connections to themes and topics in adjacent sections, demonstrating the interconnectedness of Northwest Coast communities.

Throughout the gallery are more than 60 monumental carvings, including soaring house posts and other large-scale carvings as well as eight scenes depicting views of Northwest Coast landscapes, installed in the space’s original window frames, which had
been concealed for decades. At the end of the Hall that leads into the Museum’s LeFrak Theater are two sections devoted to the work of current-day Northwest Coast artists, including a rotating gallery of contemporary art and *Generation to Generation*, an exhibition demonstrating how traditional art forms are creatively re-interpreted by today’s generations.

**American Museum of Natural History 150th Anniversary Projects**

The Northwest Coast Hall has been revitalized as part of the physical and programmatic initiatives undertaken in conjunction with the 150th anniversary celebration of the Museum, which was founded in 1869.

Anniversary projects include the **Allison and Roberto Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals**, which opened in June 2021, and the opening, in winter 2022-23, of the **Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation**, a major new facility designed by Jeanne Gang and Studio Gang that will add exhibition galleries, state-of-the-art classrooms, an immersive theater that will reveal new frontiers of scientific research through scientific visualizations, and a redesigned library that includes a new scholars’ reading room, exhibition alcove, group study zone, and an adult learning zone, all while revealing more of the Museum’s scientific collections.

**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 more than 40 permanent exhibition halls, including in the Rose Center for Earth and Space, and the Hayden Planetarium, as well as galleries for temporary exhibitions. The Museum’s scientists draw on a world-class permanent collection of more than 34 million specimens and artifacts, some of which are billions of years old, and on one of the largest natural history libraries in the world. Through its Richard Gilder Graduate School, the only such freestanding, degree-granting program at any museum in the United States, the Museum grants the Ph.D. degree in Comparative Biology and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree. The Museum’s website, digital videos, and apps for mobile devices bring its
collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions around the world. Visit amnh.org for more information.

**Hours**
The Museum is open Wednesday–Sunday, 10 am–5:30 pm. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

**Admission**
Museum admission is free to all New York City school and camp groups. New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut residents (with ID) have the option to pay what they wish for General Admission; the reservation must be made online, and the transaction must be completed at a Museum ticket counter.

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

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

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

**Health Protocols**
The Museum maintains [COVID-19 protocols](amnh.org/health-safety) to protect the health and safety of visitors and has taken steps to maintain a safe environment, including requiring facial coverings for visitors ages 2 and up and upgrading ventilation. Visit amnh.org/health-safety for more information about these and other health and safety protocols.

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

**Follow**
Become a fan of the American Museum of Natural History on Facebook at facebook.com/naturalhistory and follow us on Instagram at @AMNH or Twitter at twitter.com/amnh.

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

Critical support has also been provided by The Selz Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and the Family of Ned Hayes.

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

The contemporary art gallery is supported by the Henry Luce Foundation.

Additional support has been provided by the Nath Family, the Stockman Family Foundation, Bank of America, the Gilbert & Ildiko Butler Family Foundation, and David and Susan Rockefeller.

The Museum gratefully acknowledges Allison and Roberto Mignone for their leadership support of the redesigned Halls of Gems and Minerals.

Generous support has been provided by Melissa and Keith Meister, the Arthur Ross Foundation, Kenneth C. Griffin, and David Yurman.

Additional support has been provided by the John & Amy Griffin Foundation and the City of New York.

The American Museum of Natural History gratefully acknowledges Richard Gilder and the Gilder Foundation, Inc., whose leadership support has made the construction of the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation possible.

The Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation is also made possible thanks to the generous support of the City of New York, the Council of the City of New York, the Manhattan Borough President, the State of New York, the New York State Assembly, and the New York State Senate.
Critical founding support has been provided by David S. and Ruth L. Gottesman; Kenneth C. Griffin; the Davis Family; the Bezos Family Foundation; Louis V. Gerstner, Jr.; the Susan and Peter J. Solomon Family; Judy and Josh Weston; the Macaulay Family Foundation; Katheryn C. Patterson and Thomas L. Kempner, Jr.; New York Life Foundation; the Seedlings Foundation in honor of Michael Vlock; the Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Foundation; Valerie and Jeffrey Peltier; Morgan Stanley; The Marc Haas Foundation in honor of Robert H. Haines; the Hearst Foundations; David Yurman; the Charina Endowment Fund; Nancy B. and Hart Fessenden; Keryn and Ted Mathas; the Estate of Margaret D. Bishop; the Henry Peterson Foundation; and an anonymous donor.

Image Credit: D.Finnin/AMNH