

April 27, 2015

The Royal BC Museum wins prestigious award for *Our Living Languages*

VICTORIA, BC – Today in Atlanta, Georgia, the American Alliance of Museums ([AAM](#)) announced that the Royal BC Museum has been selected as a winner in the 27th Annual AAM Excellence in Exhibition Competition for the feature exhibition [Our Living Languages: First Peoples' Voices in British Columbia](#).

Our Living Languages is one of only four entries – from 37 submitted by some of the world's most innovative and progressive museums – to receive the award this year.

Our Living Languages, which opened on National Aboriginal Day (June 21) in 2014, is a ground-breaking, interactive exhibition celebrating the resilience and diversity of First Nations languages in BC in the face of change. Created in partnership with the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC), the exhibition highlights First Nations communities throughout the province that are working to help their languages survive and flourish.

"This award celebrates the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect that drove this exhibition's planning, development and ongoing programming," said Royal BC Museum CEO Prof Jack Lohman. "It has set the bar high for our future feature exhibitions, which must also connect with visitors emotionally and intellectually through rich content, innovative technology and creative talent."

The AAM competition judges noted that they were particularly impressed with the Royal BC Museum's commitment to partnership in developing and designing the exhibition, and with its employment of auditory components – a central feature in an exhibition devoted to the sounds and cultural meaning of languages at risk.

In the partnership, FPCC supplied all the exhibition content, based on their province-wide programs and contacts. The content was developed through consultation sessions with FPCC language and cultural experts throughout the province in 2013.

"It was very important for us to tell the story of BC's 34 First Nations languages from the perspective of First Nations people," said Tracey Herbert, Executive Director of the First Peoples' Cultural Council. "By consulting with First Nations community experts to develop design, story layout and content for the exhibition, we were able to capture the beauty of our languages and draw attention to many amazing community-based language revitalization efforts."

The auditory experiences that the AAM judges recognized include audioscapes and the *Cradle Theatre*, which features First Nations lullabies and languages as they are spoken in the home. Throughout the exhibition, designers created distinct areas where visitors can sit and rest while immersed in audio, undistracted by passersby.



The Royal BC Museum will feature *Our Living Languages* on the 3rd floor of the museum, next to the permanent First Peoples Gallery, for a three-year-run, concluding in June, 2017.

The AAM, based in Washington, DC, supports 21,000 museums, individuals and companies by developing standards and best practices, providing resources and career development, and advocating for museums to thrive.

Past winners of the Annual AAM Excellence in Exhibition Competition include the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles and the Chicago History Museum.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores **the province's human history and natural history**, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Looking to the future, by 2017 the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.

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