

Audain Art Museum Promotes Kiriko Watanabe to Gail & Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chief Curator

For Immediate Release

WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA (January 26, 2026) – Dr. Curtis Collins, Executive Director of the Audain Art Museum, is pleased to announce the promotion of Kiriko Watanabe to Gail & Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chief Curator. “Kiriko Watanabe has been a key part of the Museum’s success over the past 8 years through her diligent guidance of the Permanent Collection’s strategic growth and the production of exceptional Special Exhibitions that have enhanced the AAM’s national standing. She is very deserving of this promotion to Chief Curator.”

Watanabe was appointed the Gail & Stephen A. Jarislowsky Curator of the Audain Art Museum in July 2018. Her first exhibition, *Emily Carr: Fresh Seeing – French Modernism and the West Coast*, co-curated with Dr. Kathryn Bridge, examined the influence of Carr’s time in France on her artistic development. She later collaborated with Dr. Patrik Andersson to organise *Out of Control: The Concrete Art of Skateboarding* bringing skateboarding into contemporary art, engaging local communities and international visitors. More recently, Watanabe curated *Manabu Ikeda: Flowers from the Wreckage*, featuring the museum’s inaugural artist-in-residence and becoming the first exhibition in its history to tour internationally. “My curatorial practice is grounded in collaboration with artists, collectors, and curators to create exhibitions that foster appreciation of art and public engagement,” says Watanabe. “It has been a great pleasure to support the growth of the Audain Art Museum, and I look forward to its continued evolution.”

Following popular demand, Watanabe is organizing Ikeda’s return to the Museum for a week this March. This summer, her next major project, *Takao Tanabe: Inside Passage*, co-curated with Jonathan Shaughnessy and Steven McNeil, opens in Whistler to coincide with the artist’s 100th birthday. The exhibition will then be presented at the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria in 2026–2027, before touring other venues.

About Audain Art Museum

Established in 2016, the Museum was founded via a major philanthropic gift from Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa. The Permanent Collection is focused on the art of British Columbia, exemplifying the richness of cultural difference in Canada. Highlights include hereditary Haida Chief James Hart’s *The Dance Screen*, an exceptional collection of historical and contemporary Indigenous art, a comprehensive selection of paintings by Emily Carr, and a brilliant range of works by Vancouver’s photo-conceptualists, such as Jeff Wall and Vikky Alexander. The Museum also hosts special exhibitions year-round that feature artists and collections of national and international significance.

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