

Whistler's Audain Art Museum Raises a Record-Breaking \$1.5 Million at Annual Gala Marking its 10-Year Anniversary

WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA (April 20, 2026) – Celebrating the Audain Art Museum's 10-year anniversary, the 2026 Audain Gala presented by Nicola Wealth—held on Saturday, April 18 at the Fairmont Chateau Whistler—raised an unprecedented \$1.5 million. The sold-out event welcomed more than 500 guests and art enthusiasts for an unforgettable evening of art, philanthropy, and community in support of the Museum.

Hosted by beloved “Man About Town” Fred Lee and award-winning CBC journalist Gloria Macarenko, the night began with an elegant cocktail reception, followed by fine dining and spirited fundraising. A gravity-defying performance by Treeline Aerial captivated the ballroom, before an inclusive giving campaign garnered over \$250,000 in support of engagement initiatives at the Museum, including an extraordinary \$125,000 pledge from anonymous philanthropists Friends of the Audain.

The Live Art Auction was the highlight of the evening, featuring 10 outstanding works by artists represented in the Museum's Permanent Collection—Graham Gillmore, Jack Shadbolt, Jin-me Yoon, Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, Stan Douglas, Angela Grossmann, Dana Claxton, Douglas Coupland, Andrew Dadson and Beau Dick—many of whom were in attendance, alongside a Tribute Lot honouring Whistler-based artist Doria Moodie, who has generously donated a painting to each annual fundraiser since 2016. Stan Douglas' *Coat Check, 1974* achieved a remarkable \$200,000 hammer price, with this year's auction setting a new record and marking the highest-value artwork ever sold at the Audain Gala.

In an inspiring speech met with a standing ovation, Founder Michael Audain O.C., O.B.C., noted “Fourteen years ago there were quite a few people who were skeptical that an art museum could exist and find support in a mountain resort. Well, today, I'm told that the Audain Art Museum has a reputation for the strength of its collection and exhibitions, right across Canada and even beyond. The art treasures housed here in Whistler will go on to serve as testimony about the hopes and dreams of artists from yesterday and today, to our children, grandchildren, and then in my case, great-grandchildren.”

“We are deeply grateful for the incredible generosity of our supporters and the broader community as we mark the Audain Art Museum's 10-year anniversary,” said Dr. Curtis Collins, Executive Director. “The Audain Gala has become one of British Columbia's premier cultural fundraisers, reflecting both the vitality of our Permanent Collection and the impact of our Special Exhibitions and engagement programs. We extend our sincere thanks to Nicola Wealth for their continued support, and to everyone who helped make this milestone celebration such a resounding success!”

The 2026 Audain Gala, hosted by Venue Sponsor Fairmont Chateau Whistler, was made possible with thanks to the generous support of Presenting Sponsor Nicola Wealth, Gold Sponsors RBC Royal Bank and Patkau Architects, Silver Sponsors Axiom Builders and Beedie Living, with Additional Support from Dentons, CAI Capital and Homo Deus Estates, Live Art Auction Sponsor Heffel Fine Art Auction House, Preview Venue Sponsor Monte Clark Gallery, Preview & After Party Sponsor Savoury Chef, Design & Branding Sponsor Burnkit, Fine Art Delivery Sponsor Denbigh, Wine Sponsor Mission Hill, Experience Sponsor Tweedsmuir Park Lodge, Floral Sponsor Garden Party Flowers, Fine Art Appraisal Sponsor Rogers Art Advisory, Design & Décor Sponsor Lux Affairs, Non-alcoholic Wine Sponsor Soft Crush, Spirits Sponsor Corby and Video Sponsor Reactive Media.

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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