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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery to Receive 2022 Leadership Award for Engagement from the Alberta Museums Association

September 14, 2022

Edmonton, Alberta - The Alberta Museums Association (AMA) is pleased to announce Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery (MAG) as the recipient of the AMA's 2022 Leadership Award for Engagement, in recognition for their community engagement work with their local Indigenous communities and their collaborative work in the development of the *Powwow! Ohcîwin the Origins (Ohcîwin)* exhibit.

The MAG is a leader in community engagement, moving beyond waiting for their community to approach them by asking how they can help members of their community. They are active, long-term supporters of the Remembering the Children Society and were active listeners in the community consultations that took place during the Truth and Reconciliation hearings and ceremonies in Red Deer. When the final Truth and Reconciliation recommendations came forward, MAG continued their community engagement work at a steady and increasing pace.

In 2015, the MAG was the host site for Walking With Our Sisters. This community lead ceremony honoured Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Children, and the museum has described this ceremony as a catalyst of change for the museum where they handed over leadership and power to their local Indigenous communities. The MAG staff regularly attend meetings of their Indigenous partner organizations, such as Urban Aboriginal Voices, to ask where they can be in service of their partner organizations programming and community supports. Through all their community engagement outreach, the MAG actively demonstrates the importance of engaging in partnerships with Indigenous communities.

The *Powwow! Ohcîwin the Origins (Ohcîwin)* exhibit, which opened in September of 2020, presents a positive and affirming look at contemporary Indigenous traditions. Curated by First Nations experts in powwow, the exhibition shows that powwows, Regalia, and Indigenous culture are living, breathing active cultures. The MAG collaborated with the Indigenous creators of the exhibit, Patrick and MARRISA Mitsuing, and worked with a diverse team of Indigenous Artists to assemble the dance regalia on display, demonstrating the power of trust, respect and the evolving nature a collection can take. Through their community engagement outreach in service to their communities and their approach to Indigenous led exhibit development, the MAG actively demonstrates the importance of engaging in partnerships with Indigenous communities. The impact of the exhibit extends beyond Red Deer as it is now a travelling exhibit.



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Nominations for the Leadership Awards are adjudicated by the Leadership Awards Committee, comprised of Individual Members of the AMA. The Award will be presented at an Awards Ceremony during the AMA's 2022 Annual Conference *Inside Out: Reconsidering Museum Culture*. Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery's achievements will be celebrated during this Awards Ceremony, taking place on Saturday, September 17, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. in the Betty Andrews Recital Hall at MacEwan University.

Background

The Leadership Award for Engagement recognizes those who cultivate museum and community interaction. Recipients in this category are continually searching for ways to engage the public with culture. They see museums as a fundamental part of society - as something to be accessed and embraced by everyone. They lend their space and ideas to engaging programming and other activities that take museums outside their traditional roles in society and encourage inclusive conversations. They create opportunities for reconciliation, hope, and healing. They seek to connect people to museum collections in unusual and daring ways. They advocate for museums as evidenced through their everyday work. They engage various communities to tell exceptional stories that could otherwise be overlooked. These initiatives provide meaningful experiences for Albertans to discover more about the stories of the people and cultures that define our history and shape our modern communities.

The AMA Leadership Awards recognize the exceptional work of Alberta museums and museum professionals in creating value, accessibility, and relevance in their communities. The Leadership Awards recognize excellence, innovation, and creativity in Alberta's museum community in three categories: Engagement, Education, and Sustainability. More information about the AMA Leadership Awards can be found on [the AMA website](#).

The Alberta Museums Association provides a variety of programs and services to over 500 museums and museum professionals across Alberta. Through its focus on community engagement, social responsibility, and sustainability, the AMA utilizes its funding, accreditation, awards, and professional development opportunities to support institutions in their vital role as leading contributors to the social, cultural, and educational fabric of Alberta. The AMA believes that museums can leverage their positions as trusted institutions to encourage respectful dialogue, provide educational opportunities, and bring awareness to some of society's most pressing issues.

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