

PRESS RELEASE

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Immediate release

Pitt Rivers Museum collaborate on *Sovereign Nation*: an international exchange between Haida artist Gwaai Edenshaw from Haida Gwaii, Canada and Anna Glynn and Robin Colyer from Flintlock Theatre

The Pitt Rivers Museum are delighted to announce our collaboration with Oxford company Flintlock Theatre in support of their international exchange with Gwaai Edenshaw: a renowned indigenous Haida artist from the Haida Gwaii archipelago off the west coast of Canada.

Supported by the New Conversations fund (provided by Farnham Maltings, the High Commission of Canada in the U.K and the British Council) and Arts Council England, the exchange centres on the Pitt Rivers Museum's Star House Pole, which was purchased from the Haida people in 1901. In July 2019, Anna and Robin from Flintlock will visit the original site of the Star House Pole in the village of Old Masset and in March 2020, Gwaai will visit Oxford. During their visits, the artists will work with local people to explore Canada's and the UK's shared relationship to colonialism including, a weekend of workshops in Oxford for students from all six city state schools. Throughout the exchange, the artists will record their experiences via a series of short films that will be on display at the Pitt Rivers later in the year.

The project was one of nine selected from over 100 applications. Janice Charette, High Commissioner of Canada in the UK, announced *"Canada is proud to support these artistic collaborations between our country and the UK and we are especially pleased to be able to give some of these arts organisations their first chance to share their work internationally."*

Gavin Stride, Director of the Maltings, said: *"Our involvement in this programme is made possible through support and investment of Arts Council of England. We received more than 100 applications for this unique program and narrowing them down was a true challenge. Those selected demonstrate clear objectives and a curiosity to explore new ideas and ways of working. The hope is that this initial support will lead to long term partnerships."*

Mariya Afzal, Country Director, British Council in Canada, said: *"We are pleased to witness the beginnings of many new and timely conversations between UK and Canada. The selected projects highlight the value, importance and need for cultural exchanges which speak to the British Council's mandate for creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust."*



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Andy McLellan, Head of Learning and Participation at Pitt Rivers Museum, said: *“This is a wonderful opportunity to take a longstanding collaboration between the Haida Nation and the Pitt Rivers Museum and develop it in a new direction. It will create unique learning opportunities for Oxford teenagers led by Flintlock Theatre and Gwaai Edenshaw, a world-class artist and film-maker.”*

Flintlock Theatre said *“We are beyond excited to work internationally for the very first time, and on a project as fascinating as Sovereign Nation. It’s a real privilege to work with an artist of Gwaai’s stature and to do that with the support of a great institution like the Pitt Rivers Museum. We’re looking forward to returning to Oxford to share all we’ve learned with people locally via the really varied programme of activity that’s in the works.”*

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- **The Pitt Rivers Museum** is one of the finest archaeological and ethnographic teaching museums in the world. Founded in 1884, when General Pitt Rivers, an influential figure in the development of archaeology and evolutionary anthropology, donated his collection of more than 27,000 objects to the University of Oxford, it now stewards over 550,000 objects. These collections of historical, social and ritual significance are of an extraordinary range and depth, including great works of art, invention and design from around the world. The Museum carries out world-leading conservation and research and welcomes half a million visitors each year, and currently focuses on developing more socially engaged practice with a focus on inclusivity. The Pitt Rivers Museum is much loved for its characteristic multi-layered and dense displays. Today, the Museum is a dynamic, forward-looking institution with many connections to stakeholders throughout the world.
- **Farnham Maltings** is a cultural organisation based in Surrey, England and working on a local, national and international level. We support, collaborate with and invest in artists to make new theatre and reach new audiences. We believe that the arts help us to make sense of the world, bring people together and articulate new ideas. We support a network of 180 venues across the south east of England, organise a bi-annual showcase of new English performance for an international audience, produce a stable of independent theatre companies and are working to diversify the makers and audience for the arts in the UK. Farnham Maltings is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and receives specific support for its international programme. Registered charity no 305034. farnhammaltings.com
- **The British Council** is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 75 million people directly and 758 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. We make a positive contribution to the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. www.britishcouncil.org
- **The High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom** is the country’s diplomatic mission to the UK. The High Commission works to enrich the Canada-UK relationship across cultural and creative industries through a range of activities including exhibitions hosted in our gallery space within Canada House on Trafalgar Square, events that showcase Canadian culture across the country, our work with partners such as the British Council and Farnham Maltings and a quarterly Culture Canada newsletter to build awareness of Canadian cultural presence in the UK.
- **Gwaai Edenshaw (Hluugitgaa)** (gwaai.com) is a celebrated Haida artist working with sculpture, carving, graphic art, theatre and film. Trained under Bill Reid, he’s interested in telling traditional stories in non-traditional ways, working on both monumental and miniature scale – two key works are *Two Brothers Pole* (2011) for the people of Jasper, Canada and *Putting Things Together in his Mind* (2009) – a 17 ounce gold sculpture. 2018 saw the release of *SGaawaay K’uuna (Edge of the Knife)* - the first feature entirely in the Haida language. Co-directed by Gwaai, it followed on from his involvement in *Sinxii Ganguu* – the first play in over one hundred years entirely in the Haida language.

- **Flintlock Theatre** is an Oxford-based theatre company creating original work across the country. Flintlock Theatre is a not-for-profit organization led by Anna Glynn and Robin Colyer. Founded in 2012, Flintlock also run **Flintlock Theatre School**, which has provided classes and courses to young people aged 5-19 from across the county since 2010. www.flintlocktheatre.com