

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, December 11, 2020

***Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work***  
**The new ACI book by Gerald McMaster**

**A vital contemporary perspective on the iconic Haida artist and activist, marking the first time a major book has been written on Reid by an Indigenous scholar and the centenary of his birth. The free online publication is part of the ACI's mission to make Canadian art a contemporary conversation and to explore the legacy of those who have shaped this country's cultural landscape.**



DECEMBER 11, 2020, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—The Art Canada Institute is proud to present Gerald McMaster's *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work*, the vital new book exploring the iconic Haida artist's life, career, and works. The publication release coincides with the centenary of Reid's birth. To access *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* by Gerald McMaster please visit the open source online artbook [here](#).

In ACI's *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work*, acclaimed scholar, curator, and OCAD University Tier 1 Canada Research Chair Gerald McMaster expertly weaves together the narrative of Reid's life, delving into his creative practices and journey, while exploring Haida cultural heritage. The book includes over 150 images, many never before published until now.

Reid worked as a radio announcer (he held a job at CBC) before establishing himself as a well-respected jeweller. Following in the footsteps of his great-great-uncle, the master Haida artist Daxhiigang (Charles Edenshaw), he innovatively responded to Haida worldviews in the times in which he lived, producing renowned large-scale works that today occupy sites of international importance, including the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C. By passionately engaging Haida cultural practices that were once banned by the Indian Act, Reid embraced and emboldened a tidal shift that produced symbols for a nation.

"Reid experienced deep joy in creating art. In staying true to Haida understandings, he advocated that care must be taken with each minute and unseen part because, ultimately, the work is not only for human eyes—one must remember the eyes of the supernaturals and the ancestors," says McMaster.

“Reid’s legacy is a complex story of power, resilience, and strength,” says Sara Angel, Founder and Executive Director of the Art Canada Institute. “His contributions to Northwest Coast art and culture, as well as to environmental and social issues, are more relevant now than ever before.”

*Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* details this incredible journey, exploring how Reid lived the reality of colonialism yet tenaciously forged a creative practice that celebrated Haida ways of seeing and making. He is remembered as a passionate artist and an adamant community activist, mentor, and writer who struggled with and shifted Canada’s understanding of and engagement with Indigenous creators.

On Thursday December 17, 2020, [Onsite Gallery](#) and [Wapatah: Centre for Indigenous Visual Knowledge](#) will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Iljuwas Bill Reid. Featured guests in conversation with Gerald McMaster will include Kathryn Bunn-Marcuse, Director of the Bill Holm Center for the Study of Northwest Coast Native Art, and Jisgang Nika Collison, Executive Director and Curator of the Haida Gwaii Museum at Kay Llnagaay, and granddaughter of Iljuwas Bill Reid. The event, which also marks the publication of *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work*, will explore the artist’s legacy, how Reid shaped the perception and development of Northwest Coast art, and his lasting impact within the Haida community.

For more information about this special event and to register, please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/a-conversation-on-the-legacy-of-iljuwas-bill-reid-celebrating-100-years-tickets-131471951145>

For **interviews** or **media requests**:

With **Gerald McMaster**, author of *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life and Work*, or **Sara Angel**, Executive Director, Art Canada Institute, please contact: [media@aci-iac.ca](mailto:media@aci-iac.ca)

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**About Gerald McMaster:**

Gerald McMaster, O.C., is one of Canada’s most revered and esteemed educators. He is a curator, artist, and author, and is currently professor and Tier 1 Canada Research Chair of Indigenous Visual Culture and Curatorial Practice at OCAD University where he leads a team of researchers at the Wapatah: Centre for Indigenous Visual Knowledge. McMaster served as the curator for the 1995 Venice Biennale, artistic director of the 2012 Biennale of Sydney, and curator for the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale. He is nêhiyaw (Plains Cree) and a citizen of the Siksika First Nation.

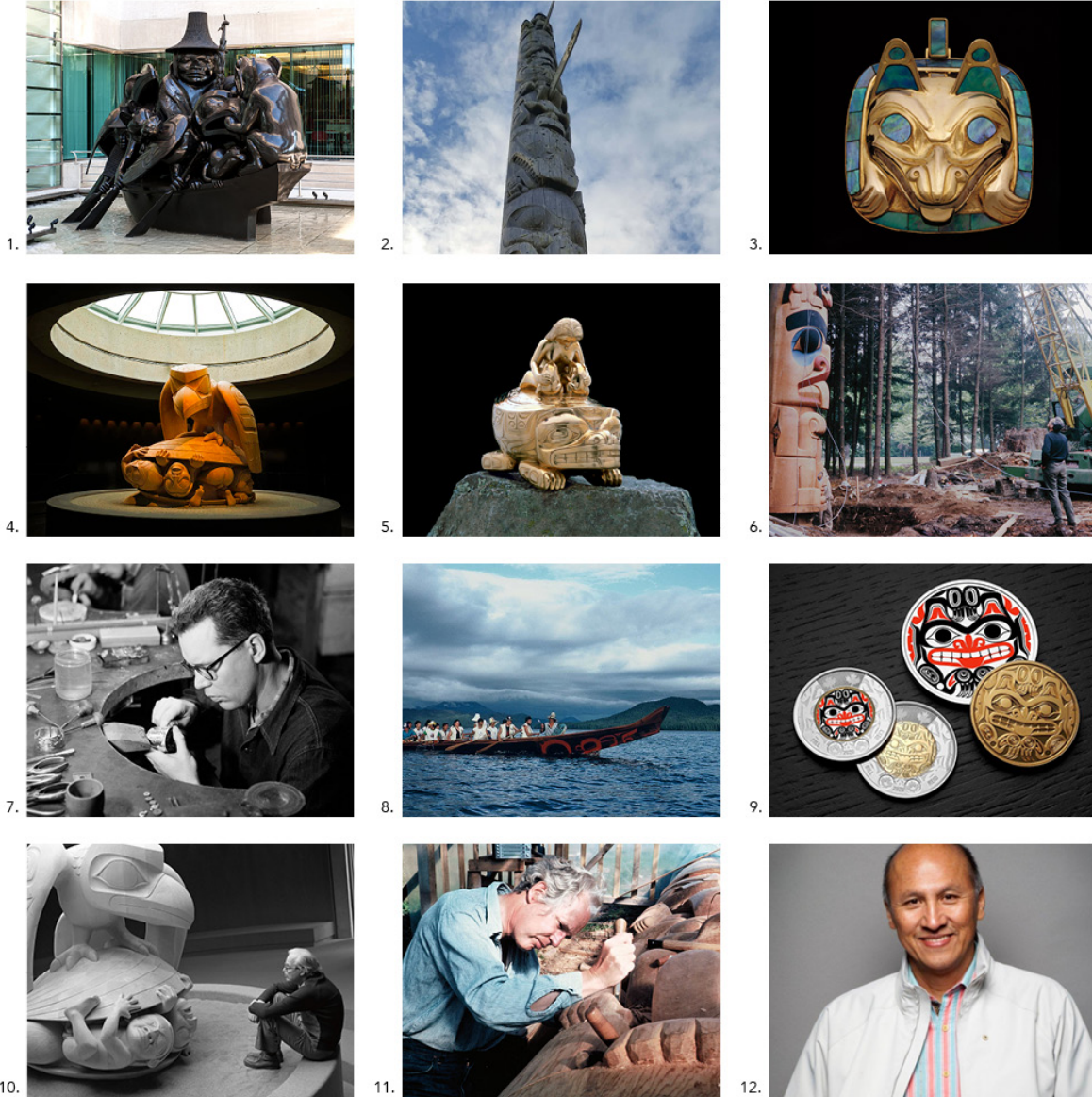
**About the Art Canada Institute:**

The Art Canada Institute is the only national institution whose mandate is to promote the study of an inclusive, multi-vocal Canadian art history to as broad an audience as possible, in both English and French, within Canada and internationally. ACI works with Canada’s leading art historians, curators, and visual culture experts, and is dedicated to the creation of authoritative original content on the people, themes, and topics that have defined Canadian art history.

*Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* forwards ACI’s mission to create a central digital resource to share Canada’s most important works of art, and where they are located, with the world. ACI is an indispensable resource for exploring and learning about Canada’s visual arts heritage. To date, ACI has published 44 expert-authored digital books to audiences free of charge. As well, the Art Canada Institute has recently developed Canada’s only comprehensive art education guides for teachers and students from kindergarten to grade 12 – content that is also free and available on line and serves over 700,000 educators. Visit us at [aci-iac.ca](http://aci-iac.ca)

## IMAGES

Download image files [here \[https://bit.ly/bill-reid\]](https://bit.ly/bill-reid).



## IMAGE CAPTIONS & CREDITS

From top to bottom:

1. Bill Reid, *Spirit of Haida Gwaii: The Black Canoe*, 1991, plaster and metal, 389 x 605 x 348 cm. Collection of the Canadian Embassy, Washington, D.C. © Bill Reid Estate.
2. Bill Reid, *Skidegate Dogfish Pole*, 1978. Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay, Skidegate, Haida Gwaii. Photograph by Dorin Odiatuu (c.2019). Courtesy of Dorin Odiatuu. © Bill Reid Estate.

3. Bill Reid, *Wolf pendant*, 1976, 22k gold, Haliotis shell, 4 x 4 x 1.5 cm. Simon Fraser University Bill Reid Collection (2002.1.34). Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver. © Bill Reid Estate.
4. Bill Reid, *The Raven and the First Men*, 1980, yellow cedar, laminated and carved, 188 x 192 cm (height x diameter). Collection of the UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, Walter C. and Marianne Koerner Collection, 1980 (Nb1.481). Photo credit: photo illustration by Jim Cox. © Bill Reid Estate.
5. Bill Reid, *Haida Myth of Bear Mother Dish*, 1972, 22k gold, 7.3 x 5.2 x 7 cm. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (VII-B-1574 a-b). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau. © Bill Reid Estate.
6. Bill Reid watching memorial pole being raised in the *Haida Village* at Totem Park at the University of British Columbia, 1962, photograph by George Szanto. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, George Szanto fonds (a035985). Courtesy of UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver.
7. Bill Reid working, published in *Western Homes and Living*, January 1955. Collection of West Vancouver Art Museum. Photo credit: Selwyn Pullan.
8. *Loo Taas*, 1986. Red cedar wood, paint, 1520 cm (length). Collection of the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay, Haida Gwaii. Courtesy of Guujaaw.
9. New two-dollar coins from the Royal Canadian Mint featuring a grizzly bear design by Bill Reid, 2020. Photo credit: Alex Reeves/Royal Canadian Mint.
10. Bill Reid seated beside *The Raven and the First Men* at the UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, c.1980, photograph by William McLennan. Collection of the Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives, UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver, William McLennan fonds (a035127c). Courtesy of UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver.
11. Bill Reid carving in Skidegate, c.1976, photograph by Martine J. Reid. Courtesy of the Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art, Vancouver.
12. Gerald McMaster, author of *Iljuwas Bill Reid: Life & Work* and Canada Research Chair of Indigenous Visual Culture and Curatorial Practice and director of the Wapatah: Centre for Indigenous Visual Knowledge at OCAD University.