

September 21, 2016

**The Royal BC Museum acquires a new sculpture by  
Victoria artist Elza Mayhew (1916-2004)**

**Victoria, BC**—Today, the Royal BC Museum unveiled a newly acquired sculpture, “Caryatid”, by renowned Victoria artist Elza Mayhew (1916-2004). The bronze sculpture is a gift from Mayhew’s family.

“Caryatid” now resides in the Native Plant Garden, just below the Carillon and above the BC Archives’ reflecting pond—where another Mayhew sculpture, “Spirit”, created in 1964, presides.

“Spirit” has been a feature on the Royal BC Museum grounds for nearly half a century, one of 28 architectural and ceramic artworks that were installed to commemorate Confederation in 1967.

Mayhew, born in Victoria, was a prolific artist whose work spanned the miniature to the monumental. Although not her largest work, “Caryatid” typifies the size and scale of much of her work: more than 2.7 metres (9 feet) tall, with its base it weighs 489 kilograms (1078 pounds).

Mayhew’s artistic significance was equally monumental. She represented Canada at the Venice Biennale in 1964 and has a number of works featured in public collections across Canada.

As its name suggests, “Caryatid” evokes a classical architecture feature, a pillar in the shape of draped female figure.

In 2015 the Royal BC Museum also received a related donation from the Mayhew family: a charcoal rubbing, on Japanese paper, of the front side of “Spirit”, by Japanese artist Isamu Akino. The public can learn more about the rubbing, described as item PDP10261, through the BC Archives Collection Search ([search-bcarchives.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/](http://search-bcarchives.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/)).

“Caryatid” and “Spirit” are both accessible to the public at any time and in any weather. The Native Plant Garden is a welcoming, quiet space that serves as a meditative area, an educational showcase of native plants, and, with this recent acquisition, an energetic hub of dialogue about natural history, human history and art.

**About the Royal BC Museum**

The Royal BC Museum explores the province’s human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for



discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Looking to the future, the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.

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