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Fugitives hiding out at the BC Archives

VICTORIA, BC—Researchers know the BC Archives is a phenomenal resource for historical documents, and it turns out that the shelves also hold a surprising selection of odd material items **that don't seem to fit**, like bullets, wallets and rocks.

Fugitives in the Archive, the new Pocket Gallery exhibition at the Royal BC Museum, is inspired by the unexpected objects that two artist-anthropologists encountered while conducting research at the BC Archives.

Fugitives in the Archive is a collaboration between Dr. Trudi Lynn Smith, Adjunct Assistant Professor in the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria, and Dr. Kate Hennessy, Associate Professor at the School of Interactive Arts & Technology at Simon Fraser University, and the BC Archives, part of the Royal BC Museum.

Smith and Hennessy use the term “fugitives” to describe objects that resist archival preservation techniques or do not conform to archival conventions. *Fugitives in the Archive* features diverse objects such as bullet fragments and acid-burnt paper, each bearing a unique story.

For example, the exhibition features an image of a box of cellulose nitrate negatives, which in unstable conditions can be extremely volatile. Used widely between the 1880s and the early 1950s, cellulose nitrate was notorious for starting fires in cinema projection rooms. (They are now part of the **BC Archives' sample collection and used to demonstrate the unstable nature and decomposition of nitrate negatives.**)

The exhibition is a rare fusion of art and archives, provoking questions about the ongoing human connection to materials in archives and our responsibility to consider the role of archives in our society.

The Pocket Gallery occupies a corner “**pocket**” of **the museum's ground floor Clifford Carl Hall** and is easily accessible, for free, to all visitors during opening hours (10:00 am to 5:00 pm, seven days a week).

The Pocket Gallery was originally envisioned, in early 2016, to cast a bright light on the amazing array of Royal BC Museum collections, research and conservation work that visitors rarely get to see.

It has since been broadened to also feature the work of partners, like the Sisters of St. Ann, and external research that investigates and interrogates the museum collections, like *Fugitives in the Archive*.



You can see images of the current Pocket Gallery display at <https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/visit/exhibitions/pocket-gallery>.

The Pocket Gallery is supported by Helijet.

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. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

- 30 -

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