

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Vancouver Art Gallery Announces Three Major Exhibitions Advancing the Mission of the Centre for Global Asias

A major survey of Iranian modernism, an immersive moving-image experience by Stephanie Comilang and a six-decade survey of Hong Kong art trace stories of modernity, migration and transformation



October 15, 2026, VANCOUVER, BC // Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətaɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

The Vancouver Art Gallery today announced three upcoming exhibitions that bring together extraordinary artistic practices and perspectives from across Asia and its global diasporas. Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery as an initiative of the Centre for Global Asias, the 2026/2027 exhibition line-up includes the largest exhibition of Iranian modernism in Canada, six decades of artistic innovation in Hong Kong and two ambitious moving-image installations from Filipina Canadian artist, Stephanie Comilang.

"What makes these exhibitions so compelling is the remarkable range of artistic voices and histories they bring together," says **Eva Respini**, Co-CEO & Chief Curator of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "From the bold experimentation of Iranian modernists to the evolution of Hong Kong's artistic landscape and Stephanie Comilang's powerful explorations of migration, labour and new technologies, each exhibition reveals how artists make sense of a changing world. We hope audiences will discover new artists and ideas, and challenge familiar narratives."

Opening between December 2026 and February 2027, *Modern Iran and the Avant-Gardes, 1948–78*, *Made in Hong Kong: From the Collection* and *Stephanie Comilang: Search for Life* span distinct artistic periods and practices, while revealing connections across themes of migration, identity, cultural exchange and transformation. Together, they reflect the Centre for Global Asias' commitment to advancing new perspectives on modern and contemporary Asian art and fostering dialogue between Vancouver and the wider world.

"There is no single Asia, but many Asias—each with its own stories, perspectives and artistic traditions, shaped by centuries of movement and exchange," says **Sirish Rao**, Co-CEO & Executive Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "Situated on the Pacific Rim, in a city shaped by deep cultural connections to Asia and its diasporas, the Vancouver Art Gallery has a unique opportunity to bring these histories and artistic voices into dialogue. Through the Centre for Global Asias, we are expanding how Asian art is understood and experienced in Canada, while fostering connections between artists, communities and ideas across the world."

Modern Iran and the Avant-Gardes, 1948–78
December 11, 2026–May 2, 2027

Guest curated by **Pantea Haghighi**, *Modern Iran and the Avant-Gardes, 1948–78* explores how complex cultural tensions during a thirty-year period of rapid modernization led to extraordinary artistic innovation. Featuring significant international loans from public and private collections, the exhibition presents over 80 works—in painting, sculpture, mixed media, photography, drawing and architectural documentation—from more than 30 Iranian artists of the modern period, including women artists whose contributions have historically been overlooked.

In the years following the coup of 1953, artists worked fluidly between Iranian and Western modes of production. Many artists found recognizably Iranian pathways toward abstraction, bringing traditional Iranian art into dialogue with Western Abstract Expressionism. Through new expression of form Iranian artists positioned their work between a fixed past and an open future. The exhibition demonstrates how a generation of creators bridged heritage and progress against a backdrop of nationalism, foreign intervention and political upheaval culminating in the 1978 Islamic Revolution.

Metro Vancouver is home to a distinguished community of living artists and architects from this pivotal generation whose work is highlighted in the exhibition, including **Hossein Amanat**, **Seyed Mohammad Ehsaey** and **Parviz Tanavoli**. For many of the artists in the exhibition, this is the first time that their work has been exhibited in a museum in Canada.

Made in Hong Kong: From the Collection
February 12–September 12, 2027

Drawn entirely from the Gallery's permanent collection, *Made in Hong Kong* is anchored by the largest donation of Hong Kong art in the Gallery's history made by Continuum Hong Kong (ACHK) in 2025.

Spanning six decades and organized loosely chronologically, this is the first exhibition in Canada to trace the evolution of Hong Kong's artistic identity. From experiments with modern ink and oil painting in the 1960s and 1970s; new approaches to installation, performance and institution-building in the 1980s and 1990s; to socially engaged practices shaped by civic participation, global circulation and the diaspora in the 2000s, the exhibition reveals an artistic culture defined by continual adaptation rather than a single stable identity or artistic language.

Featuring more than 50 works by 35 artists, many of whom are exhibiting in Canada for the first time, the exhibition also includes two new commissions from Vancouver-based artists **Greg Girard**, **Howie Tsui** and **Lam Tung Pang**. The exhibition, curated by Senior Curator and Senior Director of Collections & Programs **Diana Freundl**, will be accompanied by a special issue of *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art*—the first English-language journal devoted to Chinese contemporary art and culture—featuring essays from many of Hong Kong's prominent art and culture writers.

Stephanie Comilang: Search for Life
February 12–May 16, 2027

Filipina Canadian artist **Stephanie Comilang** presents her most ambitious work to date at the Vancouver Art Gallery. *Stephanie Comilang: Search for Life* is an immersive moving-image adventure through two multi-channel video

installations—*Search for Life I* (2024) and *Search for Life II* (2025)—to offer a nuanced perspective on interconnected global histories that feels both timely and enduring.

Search for Life I traces shipping routes used by Spanish conquistadors following the colonization of the Philippines, underlining the extraordinary scope of today's global maritime shipping networks as well as the vital role of Filipino seafarers. The work holds particular resonance in Vancouver, a port city shaped by migration, maritime trade and ongoing cultural exchange across the Pacific Rim. In June 2026, the Vancouver Art Gallery acquired *Search for Life I* for its permanent collection.

Search for Life II explores themes of migration, labour, diaspora and technology through the history and industrialization of pearl diving in the Persian Gulf, the Philippines and China. In the work, the pearl is both an object of currency and speculative subject, connecting global cultures and collapsing past and future narratives through desire, exchange, glamour and evolving technology. Filmed from multiple perspectives using drone and iPhone cameras, as well as Meta's smart glasses, the work shares an aesthetic with the TikTok accounts of farmers, retailers and influencers selling pearls and jewellery in China.

Alongside these major international exhibitions, the Gallery continues its commitment to championing local artistic talent through *Vancouver Now!*, a series of solo exhibitions celebrating the artists shaping the city today. Following inaugural artist **Emily Hermant**, the series will feature **Annie Briard** from December 2026, whose immersive installations combine video, light and sound to explore perception and how we experience the world, followed by **Manjot Kaur** from April 2027. Drawing on the traditions of Indian miniature painting, Kaur's richly detailed paintings and multichannel sound installation imagine hybrid human-bird beings inspired by Hindu female deities.

The series continues through 2028 with **Lauren Crazybull**, who creates portrait-based paintings that consider Indigenous presence, self-representation and multiplicity while asserting the humanity and resilience of Indigenous peoples, followed by **Karice Mitchell**, who transforms found images through analogue and digital processes to explore Black femme visibility, protection and alternative ways of being.

Entry to all exhibitions is included with general admission. Visitors under 18, caregivers and Indigenous Peoples receive free admission year-round. For \$58 annually, a **Gallery Access Pass** provides unlimited entry to every exhibition. Those who choose to become **Gallery Members** join a community that champions creativity and supports the Gallery as a gathering place for art, artists and the public—while enjoying unlimited admission, guest passes and exclusive perks throughout the year.

An initiative of:



EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

Modern Iran and the Avant-Gardes, 1948–78

December 11, 2026 – May 2, 2027

Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery as an initiative of the Centre for Global Asias and guest curated by Pantea Haghighi

Presented by:



Cultural Partner:



Government Partner:



Additional Support:

Patricia Charles

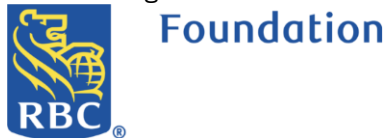
Grace and Martin Robin



Media Partner:



The work of guest curator Pantea Haghighi is generously supported by:



Vancouver Now! Annie Briard

December 11, 2026–March 29, 2027

Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Siobhan McCracken Nixon, Audain Associate Curator of BC Art

Made in Hong Kong: From the Collection

February 12 – September 12, 2027

Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery as an initiative of the Centre for Global Asias and curated by Diana Freundl, Senior Curator, with Andrea Valentine-Lewis, Curatorial Assistant

Presenting Partner:



Stephanie Comilang: Search for Life

February 12 – May 16, 2027

Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery as an initiative of the Centre for Global Asias and curated by Diana Freundl, Senior Curator, with Andrea Valentine-Lewis, Curatorial Assistant

Vancouver Now! Manjot Kaur

April 16–August 8, 2027

Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Diana Freundl, Senior Curator

The *Vancouver Now!* series is presented by:



Foundation

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For media requests, email: media@vanartgallery.bc.ca

Manoucher Yektai, *Untitled*, 1962, oil on linen, Collection of Karma Gallery, Photo: Courtesy the Estate and Karma Gallery, © The Estate of Manoucher Yektai

Sin Wai Kin, *Irreconcilable Differences*, 2020 (video still), single-channel video, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, From the Art Continuum Hong Kong Collection, Image: Courtesy of the Artist and Blindspot Gallery

Installation view of *Stephanie Comilang: Search for Life II*, exhibition at Sharjah Art Foundation, 2025, Photo: Danko Stjepanovic

ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR GLOBAL ASIAS

The Centre for Global Asias (CGA), originally founded in 2014 as the Institute of Asian Art, is a platform dedicated to catalyzing, amplifying and sharing new understandings of modern and contemporary Asian art and thought. The CGA recognizes Vancouver's unique location on the Pacific Rim, and the cultural and geopolitical connections that radiate from here, thanks to the diverse people who call this region home. The CGA amplifies the work of artists and thinkers from the local and global Asian diaspora through exhibitions, public talks, film screenings and performances and fosters research within the Gallery, as well as partnerships with other cultural institutions and visiting scholars.

The Centre for Global Asias is made possible with generous support from:

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ABOUT THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

Founded in 1931 on the ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's celebrated exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the world. Special attention is given to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists, as well as to those of the Asia Pacific region—through the Centre for Global Asias (formerly the Institute of Asian Art) founded in 2014. The Gallery's exhibitions also explore the impact of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture.

The Gallery's new Art of Wellbeing lab furthers its commitment to community by promoting the role of art in fostering health and wellbeing. Developed in collaboration with healthcare professionals, researchers and Indigenous Elders, the lab creates opportunities for individuals to engage with art in ways that support mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

Committed to inclusivity and accessibility, the Gallery welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year to share perspectives, build community and shape our collective future through art.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a charitable not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the B.C. Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.