

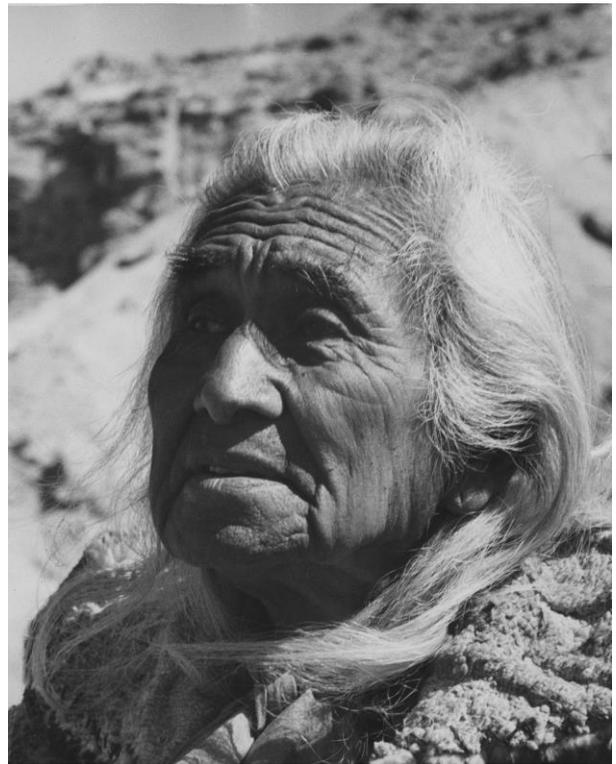
CHIEF DAN GEORGE : ACTOR and ACTIVIST **A Travelling Exhibit**

Chief Dan George : Actor and Activist

"Chief Dan George: Actor and Activist" is an exhibit exploring the life and legacy of Tseil-Waututh Chief Dan George (1899-1981). The exhibit examines Chief George's influence as an advocate for the rights of First Nations peoples and his career as an actor. Although centered on Dan George, the exhibit delves into significant events and individuals in the First Nations rights movement in BC and Canada and will touch on the wider history and portrayal of indigenous people in film and Canadian television.

Dan George (born *Geswanouth Slahoot*) was raised on Burrard Indian Reserve #3 and became a student at North Vancouver's St. Paul's Indian Residential School when he was five years of age. The son of hereditary chief George Sla-holt, he spent much of his working life as a longshoreman and logger; he did not start his acting career until the age of 60. During the 1960s and 70s he appeared in many television, movie, and stage productions in which he worked to promote better understanding of First Nations people and challenged the commonly viewed portrayal of First Nations people on screen. Nominated for an Academy Award for his role in the film *Little Big Man* (1970), he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1971.

Chief George came to national attention in 1967 when, it was said, he silenced a crowd of 32,000 with his *Lament for Confederation* speech at Vancouver's Empire Stadium during the City's celebration of Canada's centennial.



How long have I known you. Oh Canada? A hundred years? Yes, a hundred years. And many, many seelanum more. And today, when you celebrate your hundred years. Oh Canada, I am sad for all the Indian people throughout the land.

Those are the first few lines of Dan George's poignant soliloquy *Lament for Confederation*. Widely publicized, the speech was credited with helping revive native political activism in Canada.

The exhibit also considers other significant figures, events and milestones in the First Nations rights movement, including local Squamish Chief Joe Capilano (1850-1910) who led delegations to meet with the Prime Minister of Canada and the King of England seeking rights for indigenous people, as well as

Squamish leader Andrew Paull (1892-1959), a lawyer and political activist, who represented the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, and later the North American Indian Brotherhood.

The exhibit draws on the North Vancouver Museum & Archives' archival and artifact collection, including paintings, photographs, and memorabilia donated by Chief George's friend and one-time personal assistant Lorraine Fenkner. The exhibit is supported by additional materials from other collections and repositories including the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the George family and is being developed with input from the Indigenous Voices Partnership whose members represent the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, and local First Nations.

Space Requirements

The full exhibit requires approximately 1,000 square feet of space for four exhibit components :

- A. *Chief Dan George : Actor and Activist* exhibit (ca. 600 sq. ft.)
- B. Timeline of First Nations Rights in Canada (ca. 300 sq. ft.)
- C. Large format illustrated book of Coast Salish Peoples in North Vancouver (ca. 100 sq. ft.)
- D. Compilation video with photos, audio and film clips from Chief George's career.

NOTE : If space is limited, borrowers may choose to exhibit only component A.

It is also possible, with permission, for borrowers to enhance the exhibit with relevant items from their own collections and/or locally-relevant exhibit texts in order to help connect the exhibit to the borrowing organization's community.

Exhibit Description

Included in the full exhibition are archival materials, paintings, and selected artifacts, a large wall-mounted timeline of significant dates and events in the relationship between BC's indigenous people, the province of BC and the government of Canada, an original limited edition large-format book (available in both English and French) about the Coast Salish first peoples in North Vancouver, and a compilation video with photographs, audio and video recordings of excerpts from Chief George's performances and speeches.

A: Dan George Actor and Activist exhibit

- This exhibit explores the life and legacy of Tsleil-Waututh Chief Dan George (1899-1981), his influence as a First Nations rights activist and his career as an actor.
- The exhibit draws on the NVMA's archival and artifact collection, including paintings, photographs, and memorabilia donated by Chief George's friend and one-time personal assistant Lorraine Fenkner.
- It is supported by additional materials from other collections and repositories including the Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the George family.
- **Space requirements:** This exhibit component is planned for a space of at least 600 square feet. It consists of large scale graphic panels, framed paintings, artifacts that must be displayed in

secure cases and a multimedia component that can be displayed on a monitor or projected on a wall or a screen.

Individual Components of Chief Dan George Actor and Activist exhibit:

| Component | Description | Size |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Exhibit Introductory panel | Vinyl wrapped MDF plaque with cleat for hanging | 32" x 42" |
| Family and Life on the Burrard Reserve panel | Vinyl wrapped MDF plaque with cleat for hanging | 32" x 42" |
| Poet, Musician and Entertainer panel | Vinyl wrapped MDF plaque with cleat for hanging | 32" x 42" |
| First Nations Rights Activist and Environmentalist panel | Vinyl wrapped MDF plaque with cleat for hanging | 32" x 42" |
| Actor panel | Vinyl wrapped MDF plaque with cleat for hanging | 32" x 42" |
| Granite Trees painting by Lorraine Fenkner | Acrylic on board framed painting with cleat for hanging | 24" x 28" |
| Chief Dan George on the beach painting by Lorraine Fenkner | Acrylic on canvas framed painting with cleat for hanging | 30" x 40" |
| Chief Dan George and Clint Eastwood painting by Lorraine Fenkner | Acrylic on canvas framed painting with cleat for hanging | 36" x 48" |
| Portrait of Chief Dan George painting by Lorraine Fenkner | Acrylic on board framed painting with cleat for hanging | 23" x 38" |
| Label about Lorraine Fenkner | Vinyl wrapped PVC board with cleat for hanging | 9" x 18" |
| Label about paintings | Vinyl wrapped PVC board | 3" x 10" |
| <i>In Circle</i> album recorded by Chief Dan George and Fireweed, 1973 with label | Vinyl record in cardboard case Vinyl wrapped PVC board | 12.5" x 12.5" LP 5" x 3" label |
| <i>The Ecstasy of Rita Joe</i> album, 1971 | Vinyl record in cardboard case | 12.5" x 12.5" |
| <i>George Ryga's The Ecstasy of Rita Joe</i> book | Paperback book | 5" x 8" |
| <i>Maclean's</i> magazine, 1971 | Paperback magazine | 8.5" x 11" |
| Program from funeral for Chief Dan George, 1981 | Paper | 5" x 8" |
| Book of commemorative postage stamps featuring Chief Dan George, 2008 | Book of stamps | 3" x 6" |
| 2 artifact labels | Vinyl wrapped PVC board | 5" x 5" each |



Exhibit installation at the North Vancouver Museum & Archives. Opened June 22, 2017.

B: First Nations Rights in Canada timeline

- Starting with the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and continuing into the present, this timeline exhibit charts the significant events and individuals involved in the evolution and struggle for First Nations rights in Canada. The timeline includes the passing of the Indian Act in 1876 and subsequent amendments to the Act such as the prohibition against Potlatch ceremonies in 1884.



- First Nations organizations who struggled and petitioned for the rights of indigenous people, including the longstanding Nisga’a struggle for recognition of their land which started with delegations in 1887 and culminated in 1996 with a land claim settlement, are highlighted.
- Significant events and individuals like Nisga’a leader Frank Calder (1915-2006, who became the first native person elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly of B.C.) and North Vancouver’s Chief Andrew Paull (1892-1959, a “lawyer without a ticket” who was president of the North American Indian Brotherhood) are featured.
- **Space requirements:** The timeline requires 100 linear feet of wall space in an overall space of 300 square feet. Timeline consists of 12 individual panels of vinyl mounted on PVC board with cleat for hanging. Maximum panel size is 28” x 36”. There are also four portrait panels (20” x 28” vinyl wrapped MDF board with cleat for hanging) featuring significant First Nations leaders from B.C. (Joe Capilano, Frank Calder, Andy Paull, and Simon Baker). Using compelling photographs, the exhibit consists of a combination of a series of wall panels mounted on cleats for ease of installation and removal.

C: Indigenous Peoples and First Nations in North Vancouver: History, Culture and Tradition book

- This is the newest in a series of large-format, limited edition original illustrated books (24”H x 32”W when open) produced by the NVMA. This book tells the story of the history and culture of the Coast Salish peoples in North Vancouver. It includes both the historical traditional culture, and contemporary culture of local First Nations in North Vancouver, and highlights significant individuals like Joe Capilano (aboriginal name *Sahp-luk* (1850-1910)), who led delegations to London (1906) and Ottawa (1908) to press for recognition of native rights.
- Featuring large photographs and succinct descriptions, the book draws on NVMA’s archival and artifact collections, as well as other local resources, and is produced with guidance from NVMA’s Aboriginal Voices partnership. It is available in both English and French versions.



A large-format limited edition original book written by Squamish language educator Khelsilem. The book comes with its own Plexiglas display stand (12” H x 24”W) and can easily be displayed on a tabletop.

D. Video

- A compilation video with photos, audio and film clips from Chief George's life and career will be supplied on a DVD. It can be displayed via projection or on a monitor. Video is approximately 9 minutes in length.

Ancillary materials

The exhibit is accompanied by digital copies of promotional materials (in English and French), as well as educational materials, teacher resources and suggestions for interpretive activities.

Booking Information and Fees

June 2017 to April 2018 : North Vancouver Museum in Presentation House, North Vancouver, BC
June 2018 to October 2018 : U'Mista Cultural Centre, Alert Bay, BC
January 2019 to April 2019 : U'Mista Cultural Centre, Alert Bay, BC
June 2019 to October 2019 : Sidney Museum, Sidney, BC
January 2020 to April 2020 : **available**

Loan Fee : \$1,800 plus return shipping for a loan period of approximately 18 weeks.

Note regarding grant support from the Museums Assistance Program

The exhibition *Chief Dan George : Actor and Activist* received financial support from the Museums Assistance Program (MAP) of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Exhibiting venues are encouraged to apply for funding through MAP's Access to Heritage program to assist with costs of hosting this exhibition. Eligible costs could include loan fees, shipping and insurance, and costs for the exhibition curator, Dr. Karen Dearlove, to travel to the borrowing venue at the time of installation. The application deadline is November 1. For more information, please contact :

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For more information about this travelling exhibition

For more information about *Chief Dan George : Actor and Activist*, please contact Karen Dearlove, PhD, Curator, NVMA (dearlovek@dnv.org 604-990-3700 ext. 8005).

North Vancouver Museum & Archives Commission

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Chief George on the beach at the Tsleil-Waututh Reserve on Burrard Inlet, North Vancouver, ca. 1970s.

