



**ABORIGINAL  
TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

kla-how-èya  
Welcome

VANCOUVER  
**COAST & MOUNTAINS**  
*All things are possible!*

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Exploring the Artist's Way...Aboriginal Style**

(Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)--- Centuries ago British Columbia's native land was home to hundreds of aboriginal cultures, each with their own distinct art forms. All of these indigenous groups had a strong oral tradition with no written language at the time of European contact, so the most profound expression of culture was, and still is, through the visual arts.

Though living a contemporary lifestyle in modern villages, the First Nations of BC still dance and sing in the way of their ancestors, and they still tell the creation stories told to them through the millennia. Modern arts and crafts are handed down through the elders, sometimes executed according to strict guidelines and other times interpreted in very modern and innovative ways. Very definitely, indigenous cultures across the province are experiencing a cultural renaissance, producing art at least as great as anything produced in the past. The art, in turn, illustrates the stories and histories of the people who make them, linked to their world view and the interrelationship between land and living things.

Canadian artist Emily Carr traveled the coast of British Columbia from 1912 to the 1930s to explore the way of life in Native villages. The villages, totem poles, big houses and canoes of the Kwakwaka'wakw, Haida, and Nuu-Chah-Nulth shaped her best work, becoming iconic images in her paintings. What she witnessed captured her heart and inspired some of her finest paintings - and much of what she saw then is still available for today's visitors to discover.

Further north and east in the province, the Sikani, Dene, Nlaka'pamux, Okanagan Secwepemc, and other nations have distinctly different ways of expressing their cultures and traditions. Traditionally, each expressed the landscape of their homeland, their dreams, and their experience through their clothing, basket making, weaving, painting, and jewelry. Today, many of these arts and crafts are thriving, with sculptors, jewelry designers, painters, and artisans producing world class art.

The influence of First Nations arts is ubiquitous throughout British Columbia. When visitors enter the Vancouver International Airport, most of the visual presentation is that of famous First Nations artists.

Totem poles adorn Stanley Park, and major museums and art galleries of the province chronicle the best historical and modern works, from beaded buckskin and woven baskets to large paintings and modern sculpture.

BC's Indigenous art can be viewed or purchased in numerous art galleries, cultural centers, and museums throughout the province, including the Ktunaxa Cultural Centre at St. Eugene Resort in Cranbrook, Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre in Osoyoos, the Museum of Northern BC in Prince Rupert, Khot-La-Cha Art Gallery & Gift Shop in North Vancouver, Xá:ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre in Mission, Quw'utsun' Cultural Centre & Conference Centre in Duncan and the U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay on Vancouver Island.

For more information on the array of Aboriginal arts and cultural experiences available in British Columbia, visit [www.aboriginalbc.com](http://www.aboriginalbc.com).

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