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Biennale kickoff event set

Public invited to meet, greet renowned artist Hugo Franca next week

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MARCH 20, 2014

DAVID BURKE DBURKE@SQUAMISHCHIEF.COM

Renowned woodworking artist Hugo Franca will be in attendance at a kickoff event next week for the Squamish portion of the two-year Vancouver Biennale initiative.

Local residents are invited to meet and greet the Brazilian artist and his team at a free public reception on Thursday, March 27, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Squamish Academy of Music, 38121 Second Ave.

Franca, whose artwork “re-imagines fallen trees in poetic ways, transforming them into beautiful sculptures for public enjoyment in harmony with the natural environment,” is preparing to begin creating a piece of art — most likely on what’s known as the “teardrop” property as Cleveland and Buckley avenues — said Krisztina Egyed, Vancouver Biennale Squamish liaison and arts activator.



Submitted photo

This example of Hugo Franca’s unique wooden pieces is on display at the Centro de Arte Contemporânea Inhotim in Brazil. A reception for the renowned artist is planned on Thursday, March 27, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Squamish Academy of Music, 38121 Second Ave.

Vancouver Biennale is a non-profit charitable group that celebrates art in public space, organizers said. The theme of the new Biennale initiative is Open Borders/Crossroads Vancouver.

“Each exhibition transforms the urban landscape into an open-air museum, creating globally inspired pieces cultural experiences where people live, work, play and transit,” organizers wrote. “The objective is to use great art as a catalyst to transformative learning and social action.”

Over the next two years, Squamish will join Vancouver, New Westminster, Richmond and North Vancouver as the sites of some 30 major public art installations. Three renowned artists — Franca, Vik Muniz and Konstantin Dimopoulos — will create works of public art that will put Squamish on the international artistic map, Egyed said.

A major artistic conference is planned during Vancouver Biennale. Those in attendance will be able to download a map and visit each of the installations.

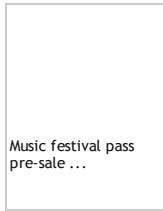
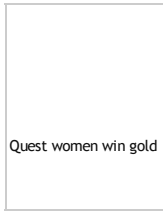
“All of those other communities’ participation will drive traffic here to Squamish,” Egyed said.

At its core, public art is a form of expression meant to spark creative ways of looking at the world and ultimately, help drive social change, Egyed said.

“I have always maintained that art is a perfect barometer to gauge our evolution as a society,” she said. “There is real social and economic value to powerful art. It has the ability to engage and make lasting and profound impacts on the imagination, which fuels our future.”

“The two-year Vancouver Biennale program is an unprecedented opportunity for our community to engage directly in an international event featuring installations of contemporary art by some of the

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- ☐ Dine by candlelight
☐ Play and listen to acoustic music
☐ Turn on all the lights and the car and let it idle
☐ Earth what?

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world's most renowned and innovative artists and thinkers of our time."

Muniz, whose fame was amplified in the 2010 documentary film *Waste Land*, about his work to showcase garbage pickers at Rio de Janeiro's most famous landfill, will be in Squamish in July to take part in the creation and installation of his public art piece, Egyed said. Volunteers will be needed to take part in the installation, she said.

In addition to the three major installations, up to 20 young "rising stars" from around the world will be in Squamish from May to August of both 2014 and 2015, "creating an unprecedented opportunity for cultural exchange crossing nations and artistic disciplines," Egyed said.

Dozens of local businesses and organizations have stepped up to support Vancouver Biennale's Squamish run, Egyed said. In particular, the local logging industry has been immensely supportive – the list of sponsors includes Squamish Days Loggers Sports Festival, JR Trucking, Garibaldi Forest Products, West Barr Contracting and A-J Forest Products, she said.

"In my experience in advocating for the arts over this past decade, the logging industry has really stepped up time and again to support these sorts of artistic initiatives," Egyed said.

The sponsors' list also includes the District of Squamish, Crumpit Woods, the Sea to Sky Gondola and Executive Suites Squamish.

For more information about Vancouver Biennale, visit www.vancouverbiennale.com



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