

EXTRAS

Audacious Art

VANCOUVER BIENNALE CREATES ARTISTIC LEGACY

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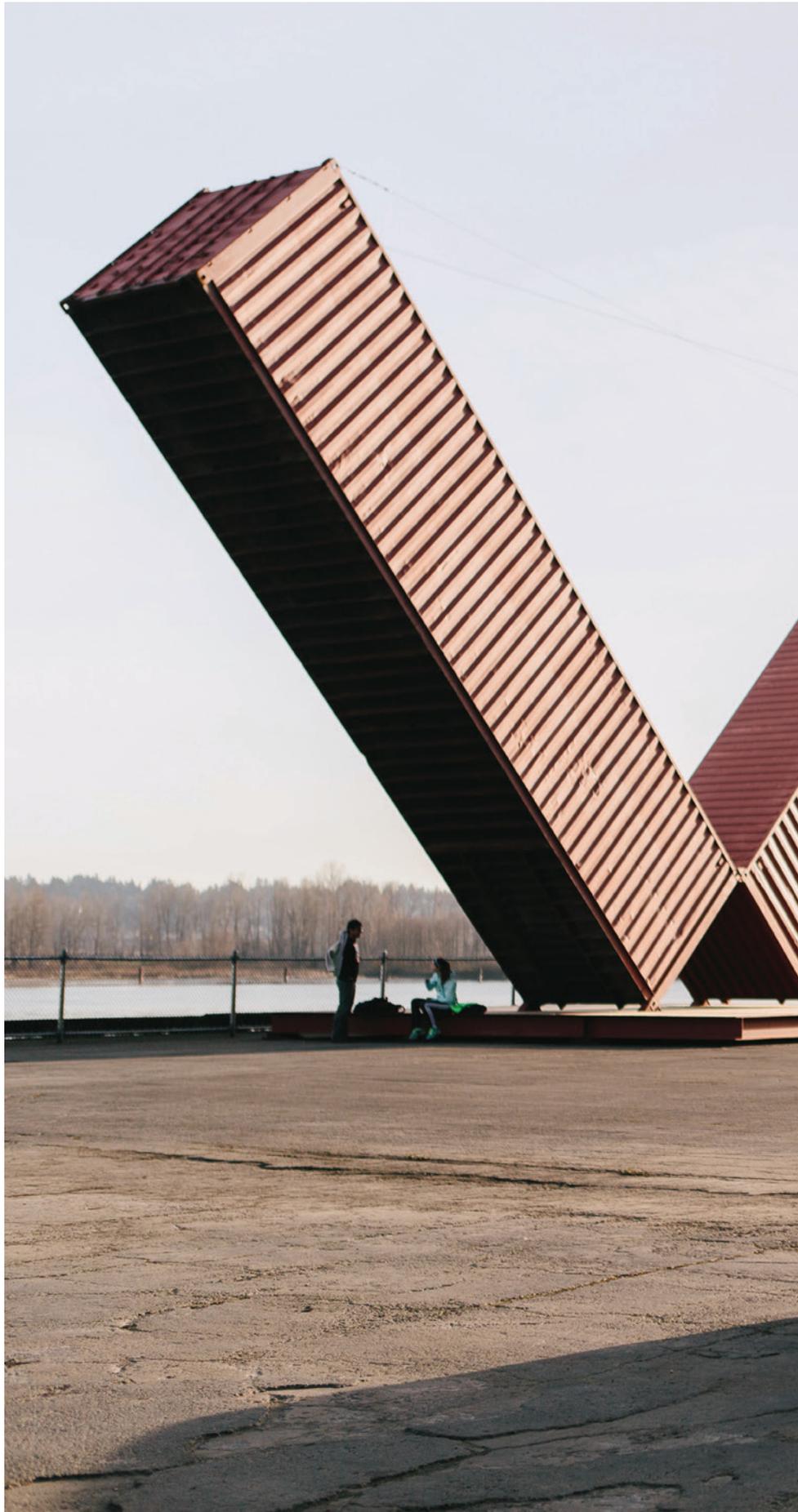


Car enthusiasts appreciate what makes something great is often not immediately tangible. Rather, it's the cumulative effect of its parts. Take an Audi, for example. That is such a sexy and luxurious package. Without its innovative engineering it wouldn't offer that remarkable ride.

Vancouver Biennale Founder and President Barrie Mowatt recognizes something similar about the intangibles in a city. "Back in the late eighties as Vancouver came onto the world stage with Expo 86, it became clear that we couldn't position ourselves as a world-class city with virtually no great art in public spaces," he explains. "Vancouver had the perfect waterfront location, lush setting and magnificent mountains backdrop. What it didn't offer was that cosmopolitan feeling you get in cities like Paris or New York."

To Mowatt, who had opened the Buschlen Mowatt Fine Art Gallery in 1979, it was a natural step to launch the vision of the Vancouver Biennale Open Air Museum. He is the founder of the Celebration of Hope Foundation, co-founder of Taste the Nation, and the Buschlen Mowatt Scholarship Program at Arts Umbrella. Biennale's genesis was a collaboration in 1998 with the Vancouver Parks Board to bring leaders in international sculpture for a four-month exhibition along English Bay.

From that original success, a non-profit charitable organization evolved to exhibit great art in public space, creating a catalyst for learning and community engagement. Biennale has a mission to make public art accessible and motivating to help create vibrant and inspired communities.





WOW Westminster in New Westminster's Pier Park hosts a 2016 Audi A7 next to the mighty Fraser River.

Cruise by Trans Am
Totem in Vancouver
near Science World.





Since its creation, Biennale has featured 91 outdoor sculptures and new media works by 78 participating artists from 25 countries and four continents.

Along the way, Mowatt left his gallery to focus the Biennale on establishing strong municipal partnerships, alliances with other arts organizations, international biennales, curators, auction houses and media. He wanted to extend the Biennale's audience and impact globally. Funded through grants and sponsorships, gifts in-kind, philanthropic donations and supplemented by the sale of art, the Biennale has facilitated the acquisition of over \$3 million worth of public art donated to host cities. This legacy is exemplified in the "only public art installation in the country nominated as one of the Great Places in Canada, the iconic **A-maze-ing Laughter**" in Morton Park by Yue Minjun of China. Another example is the whimsical **Jasper**, across from the Listel Hotel on Robson Street by New York artist John Clement.

Vancouver Biennale is unique in crossing multiple disciplines, featuring sculpture, new media, film, music, and performance. It literally transforms Vancouver's urban landscape into an Open Air Museum.

The most recent work, **WOW Westminster**, is the largest public art installation of the 2014-2016 Vancouver Biennale. Now the dominant view along the Fraser River and from the bridges at Westminster Pier Park in New Westminster, the 140-foot installation is comprised of four 40-foot shipping containers precariously cantilevered to form a towering 'W.' It is designed by Brazilian artist José Resende.

Marcello Dantas, the Biennale's senior curator, is credited with choosing the site and Resende. He says, "WOW Westminster is not only an interpretation of the economic activity of the Fraser, it's about capturing the energy and history of this transportation hub, the transformation of the City of New Westminster and its waterfront into a recreational arts and cultural playground."

Sure to resonate with car enthusiasts, **Trans Am Totem** by Vancouver artist



Marcus Bowcott, speaks to our consumer “out with the old, in with the new” culture in relation to its site, history and Vancouver’s evolving identity. Adds Bowcott, “The automobile holds a unique position in our culture. It’s a manufactured want and symbol of extremes; practicality and luxury, necessity and waste. We can see this in the muscular Trans Am, the comfortable BMW, and the workhorse Civic. Trans Am Totem also questions the cycle of production and consumption.”

Trans Am Totem is located at Vancouver’s Quebec Street and Milross Avenue, a site transformed for Expo 86 from an industrial zone to a hub of transportation interconnections. Historically, it was a shoreline of tidal flats and massive forest in the vicinity of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Watuth Nations. Inspired by that, Bowcott stacked the five cars on an old-growth cedar complete with a bear claw carving by Xwalacktun (Rick Harry) of the Squamish Nation. Bowcott and his wife Helene Aspinall worked two years on the scrap cars to reduce load, paint and wire them for solar lighting.

Human Structures is located in Hinge Park next to Vancouver’s Olympic Village. American artist Jonathan Borofsky explores the notion of humanity working together to build our world. The

series of brightly coloured and interconnected figures, conveys a sense of universal connectivity. Human Structures marks the artist’s first realization of multiple groupings. Through it he says he seeks to nurture a sense of public positivity, “As the central structure stretches up to the sky, two smaller configurations form preliminary foundations, alluding to a continuous cycle of growth.”

To plan your tour of public art, visit vancouverbiennale.com. We might suggest riding in an Audi A7 to make your tour that much more enjoyable. ◀◀

“Vancouver Biennale aims to create a legacy of one or two significant artworks per Biennale for partner communities. We want to ensure everyone has access to the OPEN AIR MUSEUM. The only way we can create this legacy is via the sale of the artwork. As in the case with the founders of Lululemon, Chip and Shannon Wilson, a benefactor or a corporation can buy the artwork and allow the Biennale to donate it to the respective city in their names.”