

NEWS RELEASE

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New banners look to the future of Nanaimo with colourful reflections of nature

2021 design values regional ecology with a message to conserve nature

Summary

Offering a creative take on planning for the future, the City of Nanaimo invited artists to imagine our community one hundred years from now, with the theme "Nanaimo 2121: one hundred years forward," as part of an annual call for street banner designs. Two vibrant designs by Becky Thiessen were selected for 2021 from a number of submissions. Rendered in bright contrasting colours with simple and striking graphics the banners offer two views of nature on city streets: an estuary sunset and cedar boughs. They encourage us to connect our urban spaces with some of the most cherished natural spaces, and convey a responsibility to consider our role in protecting our environment, whether urban or natural.

"When I think 100 years forward, I can't help but think 100 years back. Industry and increased settlement have made a significant impact on the natural environment in this region. Yet, people have lived in this area for thousands of years, in balance with the ecology. My banner imagery represents the idea of humans living in balance with their environment. When I imagine Nanaimo in 100 years, I hope that the reverence for the cedar tree remains and I hope the Nanaimo estuary can still claim to be one of the greatest natural resources in the region," says Thiessen.

Based in Nanaimo, Becky Thiessen balances her work as an artist with her work at VIU coordinating community-based research projects at the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute. A recent graduate of the Masters of Community Planning program, she has been educated on human ecology and community studies, and brings her varied skills together through community-engaged projects in the arts. This is her first public art project in the City.

The annual Street Banner Design program offers artists and designers an opportunity to submit proposals for original banner artwork that is hung on lamp standards on select routes. Banners are on display in the Arts District downtown, along Bowen Road, Third Street and other major routes, creating a vibrant visual presence from May to November.

Interested in info on future calls to artists? To subscribe to the Love Arts Nanaimo newsletter, visit www.nanaimo.ca/goto/loveartsnanaimo.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

After almost two decades in Winnipeg, Becky Thiessen has settled in her birth province of British Columbia and is calling Nanaimo home. As a recent graduate of the Master of Community Planning program at Vancouver Island University (VIU) she hopes to encompass all that she has learned to help create and design places that inspire creativity and community. Eighteen years of dynamic community development work has led to a unique set of leadership, facilitation, art and design skills. Her work has ranged from women's advocacy, family and community outreach, child and youth arts education and has taken her across Canada to the high Arctic and in various rural, coastal, northern and inner-city communities. She has worked as an Artist and an Arts Educator with organizations such as The Nanaimo Art Gallery, The Nanaimo Arts Council, The Winnipeg Art Gallery, Art City Inc, The Manitoba Arts Council, The Winnipeg Arts Council, and several other arts and community organizations. She works at VIU coordinating community-based research projects at the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute and arc: A Centre for Art, Research and Community. She is constantly envisioning ways where she can incorporate more art in her community.

Continued... New banners look to the future of Nanaimo with colourful reflections of nature

Strategic Link: Links to Livability, through supporting arts and culture as an integral part of everyday life.

Key Points

- New Street Banner Artwork, commissioned by the City of Nanaimo will begin appearing on City streets in May.
- In addition to adding vibrancy to urban space, the banner designs convey a key message of environmental conservation.

Quotes

"These two designs add vibrancy to our cityscape and encourage people to enjoy urban public space as much as we enjoy our parks and trails. The banners are a great reminder that while planning for the future of our city, we must always consider how we protect and value our natural surroundings."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

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