

Glenbow

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Renowned Artist Faye HeavyShield to Create New Four-Storey Art Installation as Part of Glenbow Commissions

New piece to debut in 2026; open call for three more artist commissions announced

CALGARY, AB – October 2, 2024 – Artist Faye HeavyShield has been commissioned to create a monumental new artwork as part of an art commission project from Glenbow. This new installation will be revealed when the museum reopens in 2026 at the JR Shaw Centre for Arts & Culture. HeavyShield is an internationally recognized artist celebrated for her incredible, site-specific installations and minimalist sculptures.

“Faye has an incredible talent for creating outstanding site-specific artworks that are responsive to their location,” says Melanie Kjørlien, COO and VP of Engagement at Glenbow. “When planning for new artworks and experiences at Glenbow, we knew she would create something incredible for visitors to enjoy that is situated in the centre of the reimagined Glenbow.”

Suspended below the new fifth-floor skylight and hovering above the main floor, HeavyShield’s artwork will be visible from floors one through four in the new vertical gallery. This four-storey gallery runs from the fifth-floor skylight to the main level and includes an oculus: an elegant, semi-circular architectural feature designed by American artist Maya Lin. With Lin’s oculus filtering sunlight from the skylight to the floors below, HeavyShield’s artwork will catch and reflect the natural light, sway gently with air currents in the building, and reflect her vision for the artwork to the viewer.

“This piece will be at the core of the building, and DNA is at the core of existence,” explains HeavyShield. “My vision is to create large DNA strands made from specially created beads.”

Drawing inspiration from the architecture of the building as well as Glenbow’s collections, HeavyShield has spent the past few months exploring traditional beadworks from Treaty 7 artists, gathering inspiration from historical and cultural beading practices.

“It’s been about sensing the history in these pieces and the people who made them,” says HeavyShield. “Calgary is a global place, a place for all people to celebrate their own culture. The vision the architects are bringing to the building and what Glenbow is bringing to the future, I feel honoured to be part of that process and that future.”

Recognizing the architectural design as part of her vision for this new work, HeavyShield says she is inspired by how open, welcoming, and bright the new space will be. Project architects DIALOG have envisioned a space where everyone is welcomed through a new entrance, windows that allow natural light throughout the building, and greater access for visitors to experience the full building.

“When Glenbow reopens to the community, it will be transformed,” says Robert Claiborne, partner and architect with DIALOG. “One of the most significant cultural spaces in our city will challenge us with new ways of seeing and interpreting the world. Glenbow will engage the community with collective experiences and cultural expression and will stimulate

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curiosity, raise awareness, and inspire new generations of visitors with the wonder that art and culture can make in their lives.”

This artist commission marks the first of many. On October 15, Glenbow will launch three open calls for artist submissions for other key spaces within the building. Artists will be invited to submit proposals for a wall applique for the interior entryway, a textile work for the new theatre, and a hanging installation for the atrium facing the corner of Stephen Avenue and 1 Street SE.

Faye HeavyShield’s installation, as well as the additional artist commissions, will debut at Glenbow’s new home, the JR Shaw Centre for Arts & Culture upon the museum’s reopening in 2026. The textile work for the new theatre, hanging installation for the atrium, and Faye HeavyShield’s artist commission are made possible thanks to a \$1 million gift from the Fischer-Cuthbertson Family. HeavyShield’s artwork will hang in the new vertical gallery, which will be named in recognition of a \$1 million gift from Irfhan Rawji. When the museum reopens, general admission will be free for everyone thanks to the JR Shaw Free Admission Endowment, donated by the Shaw Family Foundation. More information and how to apply to the artist open calls is available at glenbow.org.

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About Glenbow

Founded in 1966 as an independent, non-profit museum, archive, and gallery, Glenbow cares for an extraordinary collection of more than 250,000 works of art and historical belongings – from Canada and cultures around the world – on behalf of the people of Alberta. *Glenbow Reimagined* is a project to renovate the museum’s 50-year-old building and provide a vibrant, thriving cultural resource in the heart of Calgary, committed to expanding the accessibility and impact of arts and culture. Glenbow’s main building is closed as it renovates to become the JR Shaw Centre for Arts & Culture. While renovations are underway, visitors can experience exhibitions at the museum’s satellite gallery, Glenbow at The Edison.

About Faye HeavyShield

Faye HeavyShield (b. 1953) entered the contemporary art scene in Canada in 1983 while studying at the Alberta College of Art and Design (now Alberta University of the Arts) in Calgary and has since inspired several generations through her work as an artist, mentor, and writer. A member of the Kainai (Blood) Nation, part of the Blackfoot Confederacy, HeavyShield was raised on the Blood Reserve in the foothills of Alberta, where she continues to live and work. HeavyShield’s work grows out of her experience as a Blood woman, influencing her minimalist aesthetic. She has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including *Nations in Urban Landscapes* at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver; *blood* at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery; *Land, Spirit, Power* at the National Gallery of Canada; *Confluences* at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation; and *Hearts of Our People: Native Women Artist* at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Her work is found in the collections of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Glenbow, Heard Museum,

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Kelowna Art Gallery, MacKenzie Art Gallery, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, National Gallery of Canada, and Nickle Galleries.

About DIALOG

Driven by its core values, DIALOG is committed to changing the world through great design. A multidisciplinary, B Corp design practice comprising architects, urban planners, interior designers, structural, mechanical and electrical engineers, landscape architects, and sustainability and building performance consultants, DIALOG has over 600 employees across North America. Focusing on large, complex design projects, DIALOG's portfolio spans civic & culture, education, healthcare & wellness, hospitality, government, mixed-use, office & workplace, sports & recreation, bridges & urban infrastructure, renewal, science & technology, transit & aviation, residential, retail, and urban planning & policy. The practice has studios in Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and San Francisco. DIALOG is a proud Partner of the World Economic Forum.

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