

Good evening everyone,

Before we begin our event today, we want to acknowledge where exactly we are tonight, which is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. These Nations have nurtured and cared for these lands for since time immemorial, maintaining their profound connection to this place despite the enduring impacts of colonialism. We wouldn't be here without the resistance of Indigenous peoples, whose wisdom and teachings have endured for centuries—not the false multicultural narrative pushed by the settler colonial state.

The conversations we are about to embark on tonight are not just about commemorating our histories and our futures, they are also about sitting with the complicity we carry as uninvited settlers here on Turtle Island. Complicity that enrages us to be co-resistors embedding us into the very narratives of resistance. Colonialism is a purveying entity that isn't confined to one place, and we see its ongoing impacts woven into the structures and narratives that shape our contemporary world, from here in Turtle Island to Palestine and many more countries, where struggles for self-determination persist.

As speakers today we acknowledge our limitations in fully understanding or representing the complexities of oppression and violence experienced globally, but we stand firm in recognizing the interconnectedness of these struggles and our collective responsibility to resist injustice wherever it exists. These shared fights remind us all that solidarity must extend across borders, and that liberation is a global cause. We are called to recognize this, to resist systems of oppression that perpetuate harm and reimagine our worlds. Whether it's here in the so-called lands of Canada or not, this fight for justice is a collective one. So tonight, as we contemplate our histories and our dreams, let us confront these realities and responsibilities together on the land we occupy today.

As South Asian Canadians, we acknowledge that we are not guests on these lands but uninvited settlers who have been positioned within the broader colonial project. We recognize this land was unlawfully taken and violently claimed by colonial powers. Though we ourselves come from colonized lands, we acknowledge the complexities of being racialized settlers. We are tied to the pain and rage that colonization has left us with, and no matter what level of "excellence" we achieve, we will always be brown bodies. It is within this context that the South Asian Canadian Museum will exist, and therefore we must grapple with these realities. Without genuine and meaningful critical reflection, such a space risks being just another colonial institution that perpetuates

settler-heritage narratives. We should instead strive to address, complicate, and unravel the complexities of displacement, diaspora, and solidarity.

These conversations are crucial for reimagining a space that genuinely reflects and remains accountable to both South Asian Canadian and Indigenous communities. And so, we ask you to reflect not only on your complicitness in the violence that Indigenous people continue to endure, but also on their ongoing resistance to the settler colonial project #LandBack.

Finally, it is with extreme humility that we express our gratitude to the original stewards of these beautiful lands and waters, whom we've had the privilege to learn from, to be in community with, and to fight alongside. As co-resistors – those who resist colonial oppression – we commit to fighting for Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

Thank you so much for being here with us today 😊