

EXHIBITION, FILM, AND NEW MEDIA REVIEWS

BC Museums Association Podcast BC Museums Association

Podcast. <https://bcmapodcast.podbean.com/>

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ONE OF THE MUSEUM sector's perennial challenges is sustaining a sense of community and connectivity, given that workers are widely scattered, professional expertise spans many specialist areas, needs and interests are diverse, and opportunities to gather are few, particularly when Covid restricts travel. At the same time, museum specialists are challenged to keep pace with new concepts and skills that are reshaping practice. The Podcast Series hosted by the British Columbia Museums Association (BCMA) offers an engaging way to get to know colleagues, strengthen a sense of community, and build expertise by showcasing the experiences of people engaged in cultural activity across the province.

Over the past three years, in almost one hundred episodes that range in length from micropodcasts of less than two minutes to interviews of up to one hour, BC museum professionals and other specialists talk about their work, their accomplishments, and the issues that concern them. Topics range from brief "You Need to Know" technical series, to profiles of museums, to conference overviews, to an engaging discussion of the cultural heritage tensions highlighted in a popular TV show. A periodic MuseNews podcast provides a synopsis of museum-related activities.

The first two episodes in the recently announced Climate Action and Leadership Series are excellent examples of ways in which BCMA podcasts address challenging issues. The series explores multilayered questions that weave together in contemporary museum discourse as

museums recognize their obligation to work towards resilience in the face of the growing climate crisis. A powerful thread of the first podcast with Dr. Diondre Smiles, an Indigenous geographer with the University of Victoria, concerns ways in which Indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing, steeped in generations of knowledge production but also focused on the future, enable museums to move beyond inclusion to shaping meaningful approaches to climate justice. The wide-ranging conversation with Dr. Smiles makes accessible complex academic thinking about the consequences of settler colonialism for Indigenous Peoples and the environment, and reflects on museums' capacity to address repatriation and environmental and cultural stewardship as critical elements in climate action.

The second Climate Action Podcast, with Lauren Ball and Chantal MacDonald who work together on the Bateman Foundation's *Value Nature* Podcast Series, also focuses on ways in which museums and their communities can – and must – grapple with such hard and complex realities as the repression of Indigenous Peoples and the exploitation of environmental resources. They go beyond discussing these inequities to encouraging action on multiple fronts, seeing cultural institutions as catalysts for meaningful and creative change. And they call for an evolution in museum practice to better position museums to play new roles.

Voices in the BCMA Podcast Series are passionate, thoughtful, energetic, hopeful, and caught up in the stories that they're telling and the ideas that they are setting out. Clearly, podcasts have the advantage as a low-cost way of sharing knowledge that provides the listener with an accessible, portable, and time-efficient way to gain access to information on demand. And the informal, narrative approach to delivery is more intimate and engaging than reading content in a book or on a website. If there is a downside, it is the difficulty of capturing the wealth of ideas that weave together for future reference. But the BCMA adds lists of references for study – and of course listeners can always revisit podcasts to refocus on sections that have captured their interest.

BCMA is not alone in using podcasts to explore the museum landscape. This medium has been widely adopted to both expand the reach of museums and to share the insights of museum professionals. A scan of "A Directory of Podcasts by Cultural Nonprofits" (<https://www.betterlemonaudio.com/nonprofitpodcasts>) demonstrates the scope of this medium and also suggests that the BCMA Podcast Series could – and should – take its place alongside podcasts produced by colleagues around the world.

Mission Transition: Clean Energy and Beyond (Seasons 1 and 2)

Sierra Club BC

Hosted by Susan Elrington and Caitlyn Vernon

Podcast. <https://sierraclub.bc.ca/podcast/>

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IN 2018 AND 2019, SIERRA CLUB BC, through the leadership of Caitlyn Vernon and former CBC host and broadcaster Susan Elrington, released an episodic educational podcast resource called *Mission Transition: Clean Energy and Beyond*. This podcast not only provides insights into and critical reflections on current environmental (and particularly sustainable energy-related) initiatives but does so in an accessible, easy-to-understand, and celebratory way.

It is the breadth of the program that I was so struck with when listening to both seasons. In a world that has changed substantially with the global pandemic that has occurred since the podcasts were originally released, you might ask: How relevant are these episodes? Other than an occasional reference to pre-pandemic housing prices, provincial or federal incentive programs, or lack of charging infrastructure for electric cars, they continue to maintain relevancy. This podcast should be seen as an excellent introductory resource for educators, instructors, and homeowners interested in learning more about the complexity of energy production, use, and distribution in and around British Columbia.

Elrington and Vernon explore a myriad of topics in the transition to a new clean energy economy: jobs, technology, policies, energy production, land, and Indigenous sovereignty. They artfully weave these topics together so that learning can take place over a longer multi-episodic arc as well as through quick (each episode is approximately twenty-two minutes) insights into one topic. In addition, they have released full recordings of some of Elrington's interviews as bonus episodes for listeners who want to take a deeper dive into the topics. Over the course of two seasons, the holistic analysis of energy use, distribution, access, and innovation within British Columbia not only explores what is happening in the province currently but also looks forward to the potential for a clean energy economy:

When we set out to do a series on the clean energy economy, we figured we would encounter a fair amount of resistance to the idea – from workers who worry about losing well-paying jobs to small

business owners who worry about the cost of converting to clean energy. But we were wrong. Everywhere we went we found people who were embracing clean energy and who were at least curious about how a new economy would work and what their place in it would be (Trailer, 1:03).

Some of the highlighted episodes from 2018 include: “Building Smarter,” which explores new technologies and building science related to reducing carbon and other impacts; “Jobs in Clean Energy,” which challenges assumptions about the process of transitioning to a clean energy economy; and “First Nations Leading the Way,” which highlights several First Nations community efforts and ingenuity in creating their own power. The political examination in the episode “Who Owns Our Power” is an essential piece that unifies and culminates much of the first season.

In the 2019 episodes, Sue and Caitlyn continue to focus on complexity, hope, and agency in transitioning to a cleaner energy economy, with episodes like “What Is Clean Energy,” “Taking Back Our Power,” “Rethinking Land,” and “Riding into the Future.” Themes in these episodes deal with transportation systems, property ownership, land rights and sovereignty over energy production and land and their intersections with Indigenous sovereignty movements, and the responsibility of government systems in adapting to the climate crisis.

Whether you live in rural British Columbia, work for any level of government, own a business in an urban centre, or identify as Indigenous, *Mission Transition* provides an excellent primer on the overlapping and interwoven topics relating to energy within the province. The research and interviews are well balanced among resource industry, non-governmental, and governmental sources. They are also spread geographically across the province, providing insights beyond those of the usual suspects within this field. While listening to this series, the academic in me yearned for a season three that might tackle some of the theoretical innovations in energy studies, such as energy justice, renewables forecasting, consumer responses, net energy, and lifecycle analysis. But perhaps that is the point of the podcast, to make these seemingly complex thoughts more digestible and to help everyone elevate their energy literacy.

The critical, yet not criticism-heavy, approach of *Mission Transition* leaves listeners with new information and, more important, new ways in which to engage in supporting energy alternatives within British Columbia. I highly recommend this resource.