



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Indian Summer Festival Launches Public Art Street Banner Project with Punjabi Market**

***banners feature artwork by Musqueam (Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) artist, Debra Sparrow (θəliχʷəlʷət) and ISF2021 Featured Artist, Jag Nagra from the Punjabi Market Regeneration Collective***

**Vancouver, BC (April 12, 2021)** – Vancouver’s Punjabi Market plays host to an exciting new visual art project and collaboration featuring colourful street banners that line the area. Curated by the Indian Summer Festival, in partnership with the Punjabi Market Regenerative Collective, banners feature stunning artwork from Musqueam (Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) artist, Debra Sparrow (θəliχʷəlʷət) and Jag Nagra, artist and Collective member. The project looked at the idea of place and placemaking in the context of the Punjabi Market being located on unceded, ancestral Musqueam territory and marking 51 years of existence as an important hub for the South Asian community.

The Indian Summer Festival asked the two accomplished artists to respond to the Punjabi Market’s call for ideas to celebrate cultural traditions in the community. The resulting street banners are installed on Main Street between 48th and 52nd streets, and will adorn the neighbourhood from April 12, 2021, until 2023. The Musqueam Nation’s banners are installed on the first and last poles on the street as an ‘embrace’ of this project and the Punjabi Market.

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Roadways in our world today

Replace the rivers that were the roadways of the past

Where people congregate for food and gatherings

In Musqueam, the old people tell a story

Of a two-headed serpent making its way through the waterways

Leaving behind lilies...

Over the last two centuries, the story has disappeared deep into the bottom of the river

Only to reemerge in a vision by Isaiah Sparrow after the story was related to him

It is an honour to have such a young man following his history

Bringing back stories that are never ending and important for the places we live.

The geometric designs reflect the blanket patterns woven by Musqueam women,

And are as old as time...

The modern designed birds are filled with Salish elements

Like us, in this modern day world we adapt to.

The colours are in keeping with Jag Nagra

And her amazing reflection of her history,

Both as ancient as time

We walk together on this land

<<<<

- **Debra Sparrow**

“The two banners I designed comprise of a phulkari pattern and a peacock,” says Jag Nagra, artist and member of the Punjabi Market Regeneration Collective. “Phulkari is traditional embroidery from the Punjab region of India where individual stitches create bold, colourful patterns. And much like the phulkari, what makes up a community is the weaving of individuals. Thread by individual thread is intertwined to tell a story, one that connects us all.”

The Punjabi Market Regeneration Collective expressed their appreciation for Indian Summer Arts Society in helping to enable the realization of this art installation. “Thanks to the coordination, support and partnership of Indian Summer Arts Society, we’ve been able to collaborate on new banners to liven up the street and give the neighbourhood a refreshed visual identity. The Indian Summer Arts Society played an important role in facilitating meaningful relationships and we are deeply honoured by the embrace of the Musqueam Indian Band and by the inclusion of Debra Sparrow’s artwork alongside Jag Nagra’s. This is the first time in Punjabi Market’s 51 year history that the Musqueam Nation’s flag has flown in the market. Tangible changes like this help honour the past, celebrate the present and give hope for the future”, said Pall Beesla on behalf of the Punjabi Market Regeneration Collective board

“The City of Vancouver is pleased to support the history and future of this key neighbourhood and market, which has been home to one of Canada’s largest South Asian communities for many years,” says Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts Culture & Community Events, City of Vancouver. “By supporting the anniversary celebrations and the Punjabi Market Regeneration Collective, conducting a review of public realm improvements, and considering opportunities to envision the future of the market, we can ensure the market continues to be a vibrant part of the city and affirm that this is an area with historic significance and present-day importance.”

#### **About Debra Sparrow**

Musqueam (Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) artist Debra Sparrow (θəliχwəlʷət) has been inspirational to many, as a knowledge keeper and sharer of her people’s culture. She has deepened the public understanding of the visual culture of the people who have stewarded these lands and created on them for thousands of years and in the present. Some years ago, she set out to ‘blanket the city’, using the visual language and weaving traditions of her people in large-scale public art projects. Her work can be seen on the pillars under Granville Street Bridge, Biltmore Hotel, the Royal BC Museum and the Vancouver International Airport.

[www.indiansummerfestival.ca/profiles/debra-sparrow/](http://www.indiansummerfestival.ca/profiles/debra-sparrow/)

#### **About Jag Nagra**

Jag Nagra studied Graphic Design and went on to pursue Illustration. She has created assets for clients such as Microsoft, and her artwork has been featured in Vogue Magazine, Teen Vogue, The Dieline and BuzzFeed. She currently serves as the Creative Director of the [Punjabi Market Regeneration Collective](#). Jag is passionate about community development and ending the stigma against LGBTQ+ people within the South Asian community. <https://www.jagnagra.com>

#### **Additional Information:**

##### **About The Punjabi Market**

Since the first shop opened in 1970, the commercial area on Main Street between 48th and 51st has been home to the Punjabi Market, the first in Western Canada. With the growth of the South Asian community in South Vancouver, Punjabi Market quickly became the heartbeat of the neighbourhood. More than just a market, the community of shops, restaurants and grocery stores provides a connection to homelands across South Asia and a place to learn more about these diasporas in Vancouver. Every year, tens of thousands of people congregate in the Punjabi Market to celebrate the Vaisakhi Parade, one of Vancouver’s landmark events.’

##### **About Indian Summer Festival**

Established in 2011, Indian Summer Festival is a multi-disciplinary arts festival produced by Indian Summer Arts Society, a not-for-profit charitable arts organization based in Vancouver, Canada. This year’s festival runs

from June 17<sup>th</sup> to July 17, 2021, with more programming information to be launched soon. Its mission is to offer daring, multi-arts events that bring together diverse artists, audiences, and artists in a global dialogue and citizenship spirit.

**For monthly festival highlights, full event lineup and access to events, please visit [indiansummerfest.ca](http://indiansummerfest.ca)**

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