

## **MAJOR SYMPOSIUM ON CULTURAL MAPPING COMES TO COURTENAY IN JULY** **Early bird registration underway now - up to June 30, 2016**

What role can cultural mapping and cultural development play in the sustainability of small cities?

This question lies at the heart of 'Where is Here', a major symposium taking place at the Native Sons Hall and Comox Valley Art Gallery in downtown Courtenay July 20 to 22.

The symposium will draw more than 25 presenters from international to local. Activities will include keynote speakers, panel discussions, an art program organized by CVAG, and a post-symposium hike to the summit of Mount Washington.

Keynote speakers include:

- Nancy Duxbury, a cultural mapping specialist based in Coimbra, Portugal;
- William Garrett-Petts, a small cities cultural development specialist working out of Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops; and
- Stuart Poyntz, a communications professor at Simon Fraser University who specialized in community media.

"The speakers will illuminate various roles for cultural mapping in relation to small city development," says symposium organizer Sharon Karsten. "They will also highlight new possibilities for mapping in a rapidly-evolving technological landscape."

In addition to the keynote speeches, a series of panel discussions will explore cultural mapping from a number of angles.

"The goal is to unpack the practice of cultural mapping as it is intertwined with social justice, creative practice, municipal planning and acknowledgement of sacred space," says Karsten.

Audience interaction will be welcomed and encouraged.

An interdisciplinary art program that explores the role of cultural and creative practice in mapping and unmapping space and territory will take place each evening during the symposium and during regular hours at the Comox Valley Art Gallery as part of the group exhibition MAP.

There will be a July 20 welcoming ceremony and reception at CVAG, where work made by artists-in-residence Barbara Meneley, Joanne Bristol and Clive Powsey will be on display.

A site-specific performance and installation tour is scheduled for the evening of July 21, featuring work by Karver Everson, Andy Everson and George Littlechild.

The symposium closes with a celebration and video screening presented by CVAG on July 22. The program will feature new works by Liz Carter, Steven Thomas Davies, and Lindsay Delaronde, with guest curator Toby Lawrence.

A post-symposium event called *Talk, Walk and Make*, organized by the North Island College Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, will take place Saturday July 23. This event includes a group hike to the summit of Mount Washington, an artist-talk by Comox Valley artist Clive Powsey and a reception for *Walking as Mapping* - an exhibition produced by North Island College Fine Art students and faculty.

The symposium is organized by a team of researchers from Vancouver Island University in partnership with the Comox Valley Art Gallery, Downtown Courtenay Business Improvement Association, North Island College School of Fine Art and Design, and the City of Courtenay.

There are varied registration fees for the symposium, but all of the art events are free and open to the public.

Registration for the symposium is now open, and is found at: [www.whereishereculturalmapping.com](http://www.whereishereculturalmapping.com). The early-bird rate is in effect to June 30.

For more information, call Sharon Karsten at (250) 650-3794 or [sharonkarsten@live.com](mailto:sharonkarsten@live.com).