

November 20, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS' 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
AT BILL REID GALLERY OF NORTHWEST COAST ART**

Eminent French anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, will be 100 years old on Friday, November 28, 2008. Professor Lévi-Strauss is an Honorary Director of the Bill Reid Foundation and, on that day, the Foundation, together with the Consulate General of France, will celebrate his centenary with a special program developed in his honour.

Anthropologist Dr. Martine Reid, Honorary Chair of the Bill Reid Foundation and long-time friend of Mr. Lévi-Strauss explains: *“Lévi-Strauss’ enthusiasm and passion for the Aboriginal art of the Northwest Coast, past and contemporary, have indelibly influenced its destiny, which is still unfolding. Had Lévi-Strauss not existed, the Raven would have invented him”*.

Throughout his scholarly explorations, Lévi-Strauss paid the most eloquent homage to the art of the Northwest Coast, which he profoundly admires, classifying it among the four or five great artistic traditions of human history. A friend of Bill Reid since 1973, and a great admirer of his works, he claimed that Bill Reid’s creations brought Northwest Coast Art *“into the world scene: into a dialogue with the whole of mankind”*. In 1989, he requested the works of Bill Reid be represented alongside the significant collected works from the past in *Les Amériques de Claude Lévi-Strauss*, an exhibition held at the Musée de l’Homme to honour him. It was paramount to Lévi-Strauss that Northwest Coast Art be represented as a living art form, thereby marking a decisive turning point in the history of this institution, and of Haida culture and art. For the first time, contemporary Aboriginal Art would be on view at the Musée de l’Homme. Bill Reid accepted and asked that “Lootaas”, his 50-foot red cedar dugout canoe, be part of the exhibition. In 1989 the “Lootaas” and its contingent of 25 paddlers, Chiefs and artists, paddled up the Seine River from Rouen with Lévi-Strauss on board and made a dramatic entrance into Paris. The dreams of both Lévi-Strauss and Reid came true on that day.

French television producer Frédéric Mitterrand captured Lévi-Strauss, Bill Reid, and the Haida on film, in a one-hour televised program to be shown for the first time ever outside of France during the Tribute.

The program will be conducted by Haida Master of Ceremonies, Miles Richardson III, and will also include readings by Vicki Gabereau and Christopher Gaze of excerpts of Lévi-Strauss’ writings about the Aboriginal Arts of the Northwest Coast and Bill Reid.

Please join us to celebrate this remarkable scholar, thinker, mentor, prolific writer, and above all, great friend and supporter of the Aboriginal Northwest Coast culture and art.

The celebration of Claude Lévi-Strauss’ 100th Birthday will take place on Friday, November 28, 12 noon – 2pm at the Bill Reid Gallery, 639 Hornby Street. Admission is free.

For further information call
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