

Township of  
Langley



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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **MUSEUM CELEBRATES WORLD REFUGEE DAY AND OPENS SYRIAN ART EXHIBIT**

The strength, courage, and perseverance of millions of refugees will be commemorated on World Refugee Day, Wednesday, June 20. To mark the day, the Langley Centennial Museum, in partnership with the Immigrant Services Society of BC, will hold a free, culturally celebratory event that is open to all.

Hand-in-hand with World Refugee Day, the Museum's newest exhibit will also open June 20.

Created in the midst of a conflict that has gripped the entire world, **Behind the Lines: Contemporary Syrian Art** is a travelling exhibition featuring the works of 19 Syrian artists. Paul Crawford, Director/Curator of the Penticton Art Gallery, and Humam Alsalim, founding member of SYRIA-ART and Curator of the Cyrrus Gallery in Damascus, began organizing the exhibition in 2015 and it has since travelled to Whitehorse, Calgary, and Vancouver Island.

The Langley Centennial Museum, located at 9135 King Street in Fort Langley, is the first of two stops in the Lower Mainland.

"This powerful exhibition provides a unique window into the lives and minds of those affected by the devastating war through their art," said Kobi Christian, Arts and Heritage Curator for the Township of Langley. "When the exhibition was planned in 2015, most of the artists featured were still living in Syria; many lived in Damascus, while a few had fled Syria altogether. The works all reference the devastating situation in Syria or are informed by it. This exhibition is meant to build a greater understanding of the Syrian people, their art, rich culture, history, and the turmoil their country is undergoing."

The World Refugee Day event, in conjunction with the exhibition opening, will take place from 6:00 to 9:00pm, and registration is not required.

The event will feature a gathering of communities, encompassing music, henna painting, dancing, and a variety of activities for children. It will also include music from Farooq Al-Sajee, accompanied by an oud. The oud is a popular instrument in Middle-Eastern music. It derives its name from the Arabic word for 'wood', which refers to the strips of wood used to make the instrument's rounded body. The event will also host a weaving demonstration and authentic Syrian cuisine.

The formal opening of **Behind the Lines: Contemporary Syrian Art** begins at 7:00pm.

For more information on the World Refugee Day event and **Behind the Lines: Contemporary Syrian Art**, contact the Langley Centennial Museum at [museum@tol.ca](mailto:museum@tol.ca) or 604.532.3536.