



August 31, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Popgun Media

On behalf of the U.B.C. Museum of Anthropology, I am very pleased to offer this strong letter of support for Popgun Media, a Vancouver company specializing in multimedia and web production. Under the talented direction of Darren Card and Kyle McIntosh, with project management by Susanne Hendrickson, Popgun Media makes a unique contribution to a burgeoning industry in Western Canada, bringing experts together to create new media experiences of exceptional quality and style.

In 2001, I and three other staff members at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) contracted Popgun Media to produce a virtual exhibition on the carving and raising of a totem pole by renowned Haida artist Jim Hart. The raising had taken place on October 1, 2000 and the events leading up to and including that day were documented in more than 1000 photographs, and 6 hours of audio and video footage – all in raw state. Out of these materials, Darren Card and Kyle McIntosh created an extraordinary, award-winning site (www.moa.ubc.ca/billreidpole), which continues to receive accolades for its elegance, originality, ease of navigability, and educational value. (Since it was officially launched on June 21, 2002, National Aboriginal Day, the site has won a B.C Museums Association Award of Merit 2002, and has been nominated for a Virtual Museum of Canada Digital Marketing Award and a Webby Award in the category of Education.)

Achievement of this project required not only technical expertise, but a high level of sensitivity to issues of First Nations heritage and cultural copyright. Darren and Kyle were exemplary on both counts: bringing professional expertise to all aspects of the production (project management, content development, website design and programming, etc), and immersing themselves in the history of the Jim Hart pole, so as to better understand and represent its significance. They also worked closely with Jim Hart himself, as well as Museum staff, to ensure the project's integrity throughout.

In the four months it took to create "The Respect to Bill Reid Pole" virtual exhibition, Popgun Media was never less than completely professional in their work: on budget, on time, respectful of others' contributions to the project, and perfectionists in every way. It is largely due to their extraordinary care and attention to detail – as well as technical expertise – that the Museum of Anthropology and, indeed, Jim Hart and the Haida Nation, have such an exhibition to be proud of.

In 2002, the Museum of Anthropology commissioned Popgun Media to produce "The Spirit of Islam: Experiencing Islam through Calligraphy," a virtual exhibit based on a physical exhibit of the same name created at MOA in 2001. Available at www.moa.ubc.ca/spiritofislam, this site has received high praise not only from the teaching community, for whom the exhibit was developed, but from members of Vancouver's Muslim community, whose vested interest in the project set standards extraordinarily high. ("The Spirit of Islam" virtual exhibit has recently been augmented with an online curriculum, which Popgun Media also created. This curriculum was launched in May 2004.) In 2002, The Museum was also privileged to work with Darren and Kyle on a joint initiative with the Musqueam Indian Band, resulting in another virtual exhibit entitled, "Weavers at Musqueam." Like the other two sites, this one is beautifully designed, sensitively presented, and accessible on multiple platforms to engage both sophisticated and novice web users.

In May of 2003, the Museum launched its fourth major project with Popgun Media, which was to completely redesign the Museum's main website. Including text, images, and an interactive tool allowing MOA staff unprecedented freedom to instantly change, amend, add to, or delete information, the web now attracts approximately 80,000 visits per month – making it one of the most successful Museum sites in Canada.

Darren and Kyle are true professionals, whose creative talents and commitment to excellence continue to grow. We're lucky to have been able to work with them on so many successful projects to date, and look forward to many more in the future.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Webb
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