



The Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society (VAHMS) organizes **explorASIAN**, an annual festival celebrating National Asian Heritage Month in the month of May. This festival creates greater public awareness and appreciation of the rich diversity of the Pan-Asian communities in Metro Vancouver.

***Our Vision** is to build a community where Pan-Asian arts, culture, and contributions are lived, shared and celebrated as an integral part of the harmonious diversity of Canada.*

For the past 20 years **explorASIAN** has been a platform showcasing the arts and culture emerging out of our Canadian Pan-Asian communities. In the early years, VAHMS' support was required to assist the artists in producing their events. Many professional arts organizations had their beginnings at this time.

**explorASIAN 2017** continues to evolve in order to meet the needs of our multicultural society. VAHMS is currently placing a major focus on cultural integration in response to the growing and increasingly institutionally complete ethnic communities—"silos"—that often discourage the integration of individuals into the mainstream. For example, we are developing an exciting new project: "Following the Silk Routes and Beyond in Vancouver, Canada". We will work with the immigrant service sector to implement this project and anticipate many spin-off activities from this concept that will bring together the diverse Pan-Asian cultures of Vancouver.

*We know that artists are passionate and freely express themselves through their chosen art form.*

For newcomers, **explorASIAN** provides an introductory experience to Canada's multicultural society; for the general public the festival is a window into Pan-Asian communities to further our understanding and appreciation of our diverse cultures. **explorASIAN** provides Pan Asian artists the opportunity to collaborate with diverse artists beyond their own ethnic community and to access mainstream cultural institutions for future programming.

*We partner with arts and cultural organizations and the media to achieve a culturally-integrated festival model that builds bridges and facilitates cross-cultural collaboration among mainstream institutions, Canadian Pan-Asian artists, newcomers, ethnic communities and the general public.*

Each year, the festival puts a spotlight on a Pan-Asian community to strengthen our diverse multicultural Canadian identity. For 2017, the 21st anniversary of **explorASIAN** we are partnering with the growing mixed Asian heritage community in Canada.

VAHMS has in place a strong leadership team of committed, hands-on group of board directors and advisors with the expertise to support this goal.