

MEDIA RELEASE  
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## **THE KAY MEEK ARTS CENTRE OFFICIALLY OPENS THE FARIS FAMILY COURTYARD**

**Monday, July 5, 2021, West Vancouver, B.C.** – There was added significance when the Kay Meek Arts Centre held the official dedication and opening of its new Faris Family Courtyard on Friday, July 2. Situated in front of the lobby and occupying the centre of the re-landscaped courtyard is ‘Sit With Me, Share With Me’—a sublime new work of public art by the internationally renowned sculptor Marie Khouri. Fashioned from white Carrara marble sourced and shipped from Italy, ‘Sit With Me, Share With Me’ is composed of two bench structures into which Khouri has gracefully incorporated the Arabic letter ‘Y’, in tribute to one of the great benefactors of the Vancouver arts and culture landscape—Yulanda Faris. Yulanda’s daughter Reema was present at the opening, which fell, poetically enough, on her mother’s birthday.

“I’m thrilled to see Marie’s sculpture in place. It means so much to me to have such a beautiful commemoration of my mother’s spirit captured in this way and placed here for everyone to savour and appreciate.” Reema Faris

The new courtyard reflects an extremely generous donation by Reema Faris to the Kay Meek Arts Centre’s ambitious capital campaign, launched in 2018 to address accessibility and other structural issues and upgrades to the 15-year-old facility. Key to the plan was the improvement of exterior spaces, pathways, and landscaping. Moreover, the Faris Family Courtyard and Khouri’s resplendent sculpture in particular speak to the Faris family’s lifelong commitment to the arts—a 40+ year passion for Yulanda, who passed away in 2015—while also projecting inside a common space the core values of diversity, access, and community that define the Kay Meek Arts Centre.

The event was made even more auspicious with the news, received just prior to July 2, that the French government had awarded its Chevalier de l'ordre du Merite to Marie Khouri. In her submission to the Arts Centre, which held a juried competition to commission its first public artwork, Ms. Khouri imagined “Kay Meek and Yulanda Faris enjoying each other’s company, sitting across from each other conversing about the future of culture in our community.” Two years later, the undulant handcrafted form of the finished sculpture is a seductive call for all to sit, speak, and share.

The Faris Family Courtyard at the Kay Meek Centre for the Arts is now open to the public.