



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bata Shoe Museum Launches New Virtual Exhibition Exploring Canadian Figure Skating

February 22, 2022 (TORONTO): The Bata Shoe Museum is delighted to announce the release of its newest online exhibition ***Boots & Blades: The Story of Canadian Figure Skating***. Developed with funding from the Digital Museums Canada investment program, *Boots & Blades* explores both the artistry and athleticism of this thrilling sport, from its early beginnings in the 1600s to the present in Canada.

"It was a pleasure to support the Bata Shoe Museum on the creation of the *Boots & Blades* online exhibit," says Debra Rohac, Program Officer, Digital Museums Canada. "I hope every visitor enjoys this vibrant history of figure skating in Canada as much as I do! Tighten your laces and enjoy."

Project Lead Suzanne Petersen and Creative Producer Astra Burka, with partners Skate Canada, Canada's Sports Hall of Fame and a team of advisors, including Joyce Hisey, Carole Pixley, Maria Jelinek, Elizabeth Knebli, Wilf Langevin, Yvonne Butorac and Ann Shaw, produced this interactive retrospective experience to appeal and delight audiences of all ages.

"Coming from a figure skating background, I always wanted to give back to the sport," says Astra Burka, Creative Producer and Concept Creator. "In collaboration with the Bata Shoe Museum, this digital skating exhibition is the perfect platform to explore, discover and be curious about a very Canadian sport."

Designed by award-winning Akufen Studio in Montreal, over 390 artefacts, representing 400 years of history have been selected to tell the myriad stories of figure skating, drawing on collections from the Bata Shoe Museum, Skate Canada, Canada's Sports Hall of Fame and private collectors. In addition to historical pieces, visitors can also see figure skates worn by skating greats Sonja Henie, Petra Burka, Denise Biellmann, Kurt Browning, Brian Orser, Jamie Salé and David Pelletier.

"Producing this exhibition on the history of figure skating was an excellent opportunity to do further research on the substantial collection of skates in our holdings," says Suzanne Petersen, Collections Manager & Registrar of the museum. "In gathering the history, we spoke to designers, craftspeople, enthusiasts and champions."



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The interactive virtual exhibition is divided into seven parts: Age of Discovery (1600 to 1860); Innovation (1860 to 1920); Form Follows Function (1920 to 1945); Age of Internationalism (1945 to 1965); Artistic Revolution (1965 to 1985); Athleticism Meets Artistry (1985 to 2005); and Globalization (2005 to 2022). Using text, photographs, images, video, audio and user interface technology, audiences will not only be inspired by the athleticism and endurance expressed by the athletes, but also the incredible innovation and creativity illustrated through boots, blades, movement, music and costume. With a strong educational component and connection to the school curriculum, the virtual exhibition also offers school age children the opportunity to learn about the making of this captivating sport that plays such a prominent role in Canadian life.

A fascinating interactive experience that draws on all of the senses, *Boots & Blades: The Story of Canadian Figure Skating* is essential for anyone who has ever skated, has wanted to skate or who has been in awe of this sport. *Boots & Blades: The Story of Canadian Figure Skating* is now live and ready to be explored ~ www.bootsandblades.ca.

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ABOUT DIGITAL MUSEUMS CANADA

The Digital Museums Canada investment program helps build digital capacity in Canadian museums and heritage organizations and gives Canadians unique access to diverse stories and experiences. Digital Museums Canada is managed by the Canadian Museum of History, with the financial support of the Government of Canada.

ABOUT THE BATA SHOE MUSEUM

With an international collection of 15,000 shoes and related artefacts, the Bata Shoe Museum celebrates 4,500 years of footwear history in four distinctive rotating galleries. Through the creation of its innovative exhibitions, the BSM strives to enlighten and entertain visitors of all ages. *For every shoe there's a story ~ discover thousands at the Bata Shoe Museum*. Further information is available at batashoemuseum.ca or across our social media platforms @batashoemuseum.

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