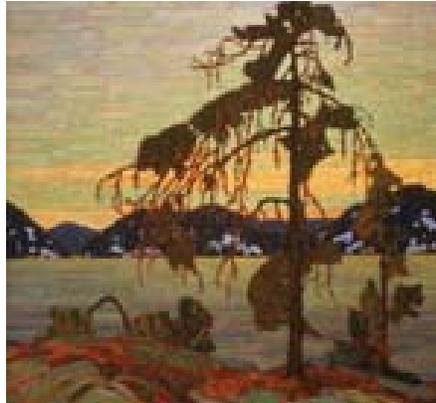


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## Tom Thomson – A Canadian Legend

Opens October 5, 2002



Tom Thomson, *The Jack Pine*, winter 1916-17, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

**Vancouver, BC** – The first major retrospective in over thirty years of Canada’s legendary landscape painter, *Tom Thomson*, opens at the Vancouver Art Gallery on October 5, 2002. The exhibition explores Thomson’s status as a Canadian cultural icon – from his artistic development to the posthumous formation of a mythology around his life and death.

Tom Thomson defined a quintessentially Canadian landscape. His vision of the land had an enormous impact on early modernism and a fundamental influence on the artists who subsequently formed the Group of Seven. His main subject matter, the northern wilds of Ontario, explores notions of the unadulterated wilderness and man’s encroaching footprints on the landscape.

The Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Kathleen Bartels, said: “Thomson is arguably the most influential Canadian artist of the early twentieth century. His work is highly significant to the history of painting in this country and the Vancouver Art Gallery is privileged to be the only Gallery in western Canada to present *Tom Thomson*.”

*Tom Thomson* includes over 140 paintings and covers all periods of his exceptional, though brief, career. This retrospective incorporates all his major canvases, encompasses his painting techniques and use of pigments, surveys his work as a commercial designer and explores his links to the Arts and Crafts movement. In addition, the work of Thomson’s associates are included, enabling viewers to contextualize Thomson’s artistic production.

“This is a rare opportunity for Vancouver audiences to view the most comprehensive collection of Thomson’s work ever assembled,” said Ian Thom, Senior Curator Historical, Vancouver Art Gallery. “His (Thomson) vision of the landscape became a legacy for Canadian artists. Tom Thomson created a unique visual imagery that remains a strong part of our cultural identity”.

Since his death in 1917, fact and fiction have created a mythic figure of Thomson. The exhibition goes beyond his artistic development as a painter and looks also at the life of this iconic Canadian. It explores his development from commercial artist to landscape painter, the period in which he lived and the continuing mystery of his untimely death.

*Tom Thomson* opened at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa in June 2002. When it closes at the Vancouver Art Gallery on January 5, 2002, it will travel to the Musée du Québec, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. A major new publication – *Thomson* – has been released to coincide with the exhibition. *Tom Thomson* was curated by Charles C Hill, Curator, Historical Art, National Gallery of Canada, Andrew Hunter, independent curator and Dennis Reid, Chief Curator, Art Gallery of Ontario. In Vancouver the exhibition is co-ordinated by Ian Thom, Senior Curator, Historical, Vancouver Art Gallery.

Organized by the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario, and circulated by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

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- Available on the Vancouver Art Gallery’s FTP site <ftp://ftp1-vag@vanartgallery.bc.ca>  
Contact 604 662 4722 or [media@vanartgallery.bc.ca](mailto:media@vanartgallery.bc.ca) to request password access.
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