

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, March 29, 2005

**Vancouver earns reputation as
“Canada’s indisputable art-world hothouse”**

Vancouver, BC – The Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Kathleen Bartels, will present the Gallery’s achievements for 2004 at the 28th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, March 30—a year that reflected Vancouver’s reputation, as described by Time Magazine, “as Canada’s indisputable art-world hothouse.” The Chair of the Board of Trustees, George Killy, will also announce the 19th consecutive year in which the institution maintained a balanced budget. This is a record among Vancouver cultural organizations.

“In 2004, the Vancouver Art Gallery broke new ground with significant acquisitions, most notably the \$2-million Beck and Gruft acquisition of 339 photographs, and exhibitions like *Massive Change: The Future of Global Design*,” said Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery Kathleen Bartels. “The exhibitions and projects in 2005 will continue this trend, demonstrating leadership and innovation by this institution. We have a wide range of exhibitions in 2005 that will showcase art by celebrated contemporary artists, such as Wang Du and Franz West, and the much loved historical masters Rodin and Picasso.”

In 2004, the Vancouver Art Gallery solidly reinforced its position as one of the foremost contemporary art institutions in North America with the groundbreaking exhibition *Massive Change: The Future of Global Design*, new collaborations such as *Baja to Vancouver: The West Coast and Contemporary Art* and significant acquisitions. As one of Canada’s leading arts organizations, the Gallery presented important exhibitions, as well as contributing significant new scholarly research and offering visitors a broad spectrum of art and ideas to explore.

During 2004 the Gallery also received an unprecedented gift of \$2-million (CDN) from the Audain Foundation. The gift, from businessman and arts patron Michael Audain, to the Gallery’s permanent Endowment Fund provides a stable financial base for long-term planning. The Gallery’s Endowment Fund was established in 1998 with the goal of creating a permanent and predictable financial resource from which to fund the Gallery’s various initiatives. The Audain gift brought the total value of the Fund to more than \$4.5million (CDN). Investment income from this gift enabled the Gallery to establish an endowed curatorial position, titled the ‘Audain Curator of British Columbia Art’, to increase research and scholarship into the art of British Columbia.

Over the course of the year, the Gallery acquired 429 new works including painting, sculpture and photography. These include 339 photographs from the Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruft collection. Assembled with great insight and dedication over the past thirty years, their collection of historical, modern and contemporary photography is outstanding in breadth and quality, dating back to the medium's invention in the mid-nineteenth century and encompassing significant works by contemporary artists from Vancouver, the U.S. and Europe. Gruft and Beck's enormous generosity in making this acquisition possible solidifies the Gallery's position as one of the foremost public collections of photography in the country.

Many other outstanding historical and contemporary works were donated, including works by Robert Arndt, Emily Carr, Vija Celmins, Sarah Charlesworth, Jasper Johns, Landon Mackenzie, David Milne, Robert Rauschenberg, Gerhard Richter, Jack Shadbolt, Laurie Simmons/Alan McCollum, Brandon Thiessen, Andy Warhol and Lawrence Weiner.

A full list of exhibitions and publications produced by the Gallery during 2004 is attached. Moving into spring 2005, the Gallery will showcase a notable program of art exhibitions including:

- *Real Pictures: Photographs from the Collection of Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruft* (ends May 26, 2005);
- *Rodney Graham: A Little Thought* (ends May 8, 2005);
- *Franz West* (May 28 – September 5, 2005);
- *Wang Du: Parade* (May 28 – September 5, 2005);
- *Body: New Art from the UK* (May 28 – September 11, 2005);
- *Theodore Wan* (May 28 – September 11, 2005);
- *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation* (June 18 – September 18, 2005); and,
- *Picasso* (October 15, 2005 – January 8, 2006).

The Vancouver Art Gallery, founded in 1931, is one of the leading Canadian art museums. Reflecting Vancouver's prominence over the past decade on the international stage as a major centre for contemporary visual art, the Gallery is committed to presenting groundbreaking work by contemporary artists from such disciplines as architecture, design, performance, photography, film, video and the newest forms of digital expression, as well as the best of the traditional disciplines of painting, sculpture and drawing.

-end-

Media Contacts: Julie-Ann Backhouse or Sue Lavitt, Vancouver Art Gallery, 604 662 4722

EXHIBITIONS 2004

The past year was marked by a series of critically acclaimed exhibitions that reflect the Gallery's significant role as an innovative force in the field of contemporary art. The Vancouver Art Gallery's 2004 exhibitions program ranged from politically driven images of war to the colorful pop culture of Andy Warhol, and the visionary *Massive Change: The Future of Global Design*, a collaboration by the Gallery with acclaimed designer Bruce Mau. 2004 also included major collaborations with U.S. institutions as well as exhibitions focused on the art and artists of Canada.

The Divine Comedy: Francisco Goya, Buster Keaton, William Kentridge January 24 – April 25, 2004

Organized by Vancouver Art Gallery in association with Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth and curated by Trevor Smith, Curator, New Museum, New York (formerly of the Art Gallery of Western Australia). This exhibition explores the relationship between comedy and violence, laughter and tears through the work of three artists from dramatically different historical periods and artistic backgrounds. Black comedy, absurdity and satire are threads that connect the work of these disparate figures and serve as filters through which each expresses their relationship to a tumultuous world.

Canvas of War: Masterpieces from the Canadian War Museum February 21 – May 16, 2004

Organized by Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa and curated by Laura Brandon, Curator, Canadian War Museum. This exhibition demonstrates the importance of Canada's war art programs in representing Canada's major contributions in the first and second world wars. The wars shaped Canadian social, political and personal identity for generations to come. The exhibition presented a wide range of perspectives on military conflict as well as showing the daily experiences and effects on the lives of those who served and lived through these wars. The exhibition reach beyond merely illustrating military experience and provided a unique history of Canadian painting.

Determined Pursuit: Highlights from the Longstaffe Collection February 28 – May 16, 2004

Curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director, Vancouver Art Gallery. This exhibition highlighted the significant gifts to the Gallery that J. Ron and Jacqueline Longstaffe made over the past three decades. Starting in 1978, Mr. Longstaffe donated a total of over 800 works to the Gallery. The donation has profoundly influenced the content and size of the Gallery's permanent collection, especially in modern and contemporary Canadian art, as well as American and European graphics. The collection is particularly significant in that it places British Columbia artists in a national and international context, revealing the similarities and differences in the approach to modern ideas that prevailed over the second half of the 20th century, notably abstraction and Pop Art. Artists included in the exhibition ranged from Joseph Albers and Joan Miró, to Francis Bacon and Agnes Martin.

NEXT: Robert Arndt February 21 – May 16, 2004

Organized by Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Melanie O'Brian, Assistant Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery (currently Director/Curator, Artspeak Gallery, Vancouver). The Vancouver Art Gallery commissioned a new work by Robert Arndt for the NEXT series, investigating the gallery as a type of theatre within which art events are "staged." Arndt's installation consisted of a projected film and accompanying photographic documents that centre around the re-presentation of lines from Elia Kazan's 1954 film *On the Waterfront*, starring Marlon Brando, to reflect a moment between regret and realization.

EXHIBITIONS 2004

A Modern Life: Art and Design in British Columbia 1945-1960

May 15 – October 11, 2004

Organized by Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Ian Thom, Senior Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery and Alan Elder, Curator of Canadian Crafts, Decorative Arts and Design at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa. *A Modern Life* reflects on the post-war period in British Columbia when local craftspeople, architects, designers and artists were in dynamic engagement with one another. Consisting of two sections relating to Geometric Abstraction and Organic Form, the exhibition draws extensively from the painting collections of the Gallery and included a number of outstanding works of design borrowed from private and public collections.

Baja to Vancouver: The West Coast and Contemporary Art

June 5 – August 29, 2004

Organized by Vancouver Art Gallery, Seattle Art Museum, CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco and Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego and curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director, Vancouver Art Gallery; Lisa Corrin, Deputy Director of Art, Seattle Art Museum; Ralph Rugoff, Director and Matthew Higgs, Curator, Wattis Institute, California College of Arts, San Francisco; Toby Kamps, Curator of Contemporary Art, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. This exhibition surveyed recent representational art from the states and provinces comprising the West Coast of North America and presented work made in the last 2-4 years by 33 emerging and established artists. This region, from Baja California, Mexico to Vancouver, Canada, is internationally recognized as an important locus of artistic production, home to many artists, artistic communities and art schools. The art in *Baja to Vancouver* not only embodies a range of West Coast sensibilities, it offers revealing portraits of the people and places on the western rim of North America and presents evidence that the West Coast is a unique cultural region.

Andy Warhol: Prints and Drawings from the Warhol Museum

June 5 – September 6, 2004

Organized by Vancouver Art Gallery in collaboration with The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh and curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director; Ian Thom, Senior Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery; and the staff of The Andy Warhol Museum. This exhibition featured over 200 works on paper from rarely seen early drawings to iconic prints of Chairman Mao, Marilyn Monroe and Liz Taylor, and offering a look at the artist's transformation from commercial illustrator to Pop artist. While Warhol changed the way we look at everyday life, he also challenged preconceived notions about the nature of art and the role of the artist. His work continues to offer a contemporary commentary on our obsession with stardom and the marketplace. A significant number of works for the exhibition are from the Gallery's Permanent Collection.

Massive Change: The Future of Global Design

October 2, 2004 through January 3, 2005

Organized by the Gallery in collaboration with Bruce Mau Design and the Institute without Boundaries, and co-curated by Bruce Mau and Bruce Grenville, Curator at Vancouver Art Gallery. This groundbreaking exhibition investigated the capacity, power and promise of design. *Massive Change* took a radical look at how rapidly evolving technologies have created the potential for design to affect change on a global scale and how this has placed us at the beginning of a new, unprecedented period of human possibility. *Massive Change* has commenced a three-year international tour and is currently on display at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto until May 29.

EXHIBITIONS 2004

Eyes of Laura

October 2004 – October 2005

Curated by Bruce Grenville, Senior Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery. This is the third in a recent series of public art commissions for the Vancouver Art Gallery. *Eyes of Laura* is a web-based project by Berlin-based, Canadian-born artist Janet Cardiff. This experimental work is based on a complex, real-time narrative that unfolds over the period of a year on the grounds of the Gallery. At the centre of the project is a security camera installed on the Gallery's roof. In Cardiff's fictional narrative, a Security Guard secretly shares access to this camera through a private/unofficial web site, which can be accessed by online visitors through a web interface. Periodically, this control is surreptitiously usurped by the artist in order to insert staged performances that have been pre-taped. As it blurs private/public space and virtual/real experience, this project confronts the complex influence of technology on the imagination.

The Shadow of Production: Work from the Collection

October 30, 2004 – January 16, 2005

Curated by Grant Arnold, Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery. Drawn from the Gallery's collection, this exhibition presents ideas about work and leisure, featuring modern and contemporary painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography and video. Artists represented in the exhibition include early 20th century figures who celebrated the value of labor in their depictions of resource extraction, evincing an almost mystical optimism toward the dynamism of modern life. This confidence in technological progress is countered by contemporary works that highlight the dystopian aspect of industrialization, use standard industrial materials, address issues of gender in relation to production, or engage with money – the fuel of production.

Emily Carr: Art, Place, Culture

February 22, 2003 – Spring, 2006

Curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director; Ian Thom, Senior Curator; Cheryl Meszaros, Head of Public Programs, Vancouver Art Gallery. In order to address the full spectrum of Emily Carr's career and importance, this long-term installation presents the breadth and depth of the most significant aspects of the artist's practice. Through an examination of the themes of art, place and culture the exhibition provides a multi-layered investigation into Carr's primary significance as an instigator of west coast modernism. Viewers can see who Emily Carr was, how her career developed and the legacy she left behind, as well as understand her profound relationship to the land.

PUBLICATIONS

Catalogues and brochures that were published in 2004 include:

- *The Divine Comedy: Francisco Goya, Buster Keaton, William Kentridge*, a 20-page catalogue with an essay by Trevor Smith
- *NEXT: Robert Arndt*, a full-color brochure with an essay by Melanie O'Brian;
- *Baja to Vancouver: The West Coast and Contemporary Art*, a 150-page catalogue, co-published with CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego and Seattle Art Museum;
- *Rodney Graham: A Little Thought*, a 208-page catalogue, co-published with the Art Gallery of Ontario and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles that includes 155 color and 70 black and white images, essays by Grant Arnold, Jessica Bradley, Cornelia Butler, Lynne Cooke, Diederich Diederichsen, Sara Krajewski and Shepherd Steiner.
- *Robert Smithson in Vancouver: A Fragment of a Greater Fragmentation* an 88-page catalogue that includes 12 color and 62 black and white images, and essays by Grant Arnold, Christos Dikeakos, Rodney Graham and Robert Lindsley; and
- *A Modern Life: Art and Design in British Columbia, 1945-1960* a 180-page catalogue, co-published with Arsenal Pulp Press, that includes 80 color images of most works in the exhibition, essays by Rachelle Chinnery, Allan Collier, Alan C. Elder, R.H. Hubbard, Sherry McKay, Ian M. Thom and Scott Watson.