

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Major Awards in British Columbia Visual Arts Announced

***Liz Magor to receive Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts
Kathy Slade and Mark Soo to receive VIVA Awards***

VANCOUVER, BC — British Columbia's most prestigious annual awards for the visual arts, the **Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts** and the **VIVA Awards**, will be presented at the **Vancouver Art Gallery** on **May 11, 2009 at 7pm**. The sixth annual Audain Prize, awarded by the **Audain Foundation for the Visual Arts**, will go to renowned sculptor **Liz Magor**. Vancouver artists **Kathy Slade** and **Mark Soo**, are the 2009 recipients of the **VIVA Award** prizes granted annually by the **Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation**.

Born in 1948, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, **Liz Magor** studied at the University of British Columbia and the Parsons School of Design, New York. Since her first solo exhibition in 1977, **Magor** has established an international reputation, representing Canada at the Venice Biennale in 1984 and Documenta VIII in Kassel, Germany in 1987. Her work has been exhibited extensively throughout Canada, including exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery, National Gallery of Canada and Art Gallery of Ontario. In 2001, she received the Governor General's Award for Visual Arts. The artist lives in Vancouver and teaches at Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

Vancouver artist **Mark Soo** works in a variety of media, often incorporating humour and manipulating images to prompt awareness of the psychological and physiological aspects of light and colour. Born in 1977 in Singapore, Soo graduated from the Emily Carr University of Art + Design in 2001. The artist has been included in international exhibitions in Manchester, Melbourne, New York and Toronto, and in 2006 was the focus of a solo exhibition at Vancouver's Artspeak Gallery. In 2008 Soo's photo-based artwork, *That's That's Alright Alright Mama Mama* was the first work selected for purchase by the Vancouver Art Gallery for its Audain Emerging Artists Acquisition Fund. Soo is currently presenting an audio-based work in the Vancouver Art Gallery group exhibition *How Soon Is Now Contemporary Art From Here*.

Vancouver artist **Kathy Slade** is celebrated for her artworks that mix conventions of high and low culture in a practice that includes video, photography, embroidery and sculpture. Born in 1966 in Montreal, Slade graduated from Simon Fraser University in 1990 and has since exhibited her work in locations across Canada and in China, Ireland, Sweden and the United States. The artist is currently displaying her sculptural work *Black Pom-pom*, an enormous pom-pom displayed on the gallery floor, as part of the exhibition *How Soon Is Now*. Humorous and deceptively simple in form, the work is an excellent example of Slade's practice, with its clever references to the histories of Minimalist sculpture and textiles, playing on the gendered associations of both traditions.

The Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts is funded by the Audain Foundation and granted annually to a senior British Columbia artist, selected by an independent jury. The award was increased in 2008 to \$30,000. Over the last 20 years, Michael Audain, Chairman of Polygon Homes Ltd., has been a leading supporter of the visual arts in British Columbia. He currently serves as Chair of the National Gallery of Canada, the Vancouver Art Gallery Foundation, and the Audain Foundation for the Visual Arts. Previous winners of the Audain Prize include Jeff Wall (2008), Gordon Smith (2007), Eric Metcalfe (2006), E.J. Hughes (2004) and Ann Kipling (2003).

Provided by the **Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation**, the VIVA Awards are presented annually to celebrate exemplary achievement by British Columbia artists in mid-career. The Awards were founded by British Columbia painter Jack Shadbolt and his wife Doris Shadbolt, whose significant work as a curator and writer helped to elevate British Columbia art on a national and international level. Created to nurture the advancement of the visual arts in British Columbia and their appreciation by the public, the award grants \$12,000 annually to practicing artists in mid-career. Since its creation in 1988, 38 VIVAs have been granted in a program that continues in memory of the founders.

The May 11th event is open to the public. To RSVP, please phone 604-662-4747.

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The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by: its members; individual donors; corporate funders; foundations; the City of Vancouver; the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and Gaming Revenues; the Government of Canada through the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage.