

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Baja to Vancouver: The West Coast and Contemporary Art

June 5 to August 29, 2004



Image: **Shannon Oksanen/Scott Livingstone**, *Vanishing Point* (production still), 2001

Vancouver, BC – Four institutions and 33 artists from across 2,400 miles have come together in *Baja to Vancouver: The West Coast and Contemporary Art (B2V)*. *B2V* features both established and emerging figures on the contemporary art scene from Tijuana, Baja California to Vancouver, British Columbia and presents over 50 works, including several new pieces commissioned especially for the exhibition. The exhibition highlights diverse cultural landscapes—representations of life as it is lived along the western edge of North America—and presents some of the most defining artists of the region.

Although Los Angeles and, more recently, Vancouver have become internationally recognized art centres, the West Coast of North America has never before been the subject of a major exhibition. Unlike regional biennials, *B2V* focuses on representational artworks that respond to and engage with the West Coast's physical and social landscapes. *B2V* presents recently made work (produced within the last two to four years) in a wide range of media, including painting, sculpture, installation, photography, drawing, video, text pieces and web-based works. The exhibition includes established artists such as Stan Douglas, Liz Magor, Roy McMakin and Marcos Ramírez ERRE and emerging artists such as Chris Johanson and Michele O'Marah.

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“The west coast of North America is a vital region for contemporary art,” said Chief Curator/Associate Director, Daina Augaitis. “Tijuana, Los Angeles, Vancouver and all the sprawling cities between are home to today’s hottest artists.”

The artists in the exhibition are interested in popular forms and genres, from landscape and portraiture to vernacular signage and music videos. Their work reinterprets myths and re-examines histories related to West Coast cultures as diverse as the First Nations of British Columbia and the contemporary youth tribes of Los Angeles and San Francisco. The exhibition invokes patterns of immigration in the region as well as utopian visions of the "good life" and the unique topography of West Coast cities—part urban, part suburban and part wilderness. The art in *B2V* not only embodies a range of West Coast sensibilities, it also offers revealing portraits of the people and places on the western rim of North America.

“The opportunity to work collaboratively on this exhibition has generated growing partnerships between the Vancouver Art Gallery and other major art institutions on the west coast,” said Director Kathleen Bartels. “But more importantly, it has enabled us to present the work of Vancouver artists to new audiences in the United States.”

Ten Vancouver-based artists are represented in this exhibition—Stan Douglas, Brian Jungen, Tim Lee, Scott Livingstone/Shannon Oksanen, Ken Lum, Liz Magor, Steven Shearer, Ron Terada and Althea Thauberger. Their work has been particularly well received and positively reviewed within the context of this exhibition. Other west coast artists in *B2V* include: Michael Brophy, Delia Brown, Brian Calvin, Russell Crotty, Roman de Salvo, Trisha Donnelly, Sam Durant, Thomas Eggerer, Kota Ezawa, Harrell Fletcher/Miranda July, Evan Holloway, Chris Johanson, Matt McCormick, Roy McMakin, Mark Mumford, Michele O’Marah, Marcos Ramírez ERRE, Glenn Rudolph, Catherine Sullivan, Larry Sultan, Torolab (Raul Cardenas-Osuna, Marcela Guardiania de Cardenas, et al.) and Yvonne Venegas.

The *B2V* curatorial team worked collaboratively for two years on this exhibition and it consists of Ralph Rugoff, Director, and Matthew Higgs, Curator, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts; Toby Kamps, Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; Lisa Corrin, Deputy Director, Seattle Art Museum; and Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director, Vancouver Art Gallery.

In conjunction with this exhibition, the Vancouver Art Gallery will host a symposium on Saturday, June 5, from 12.00 to 6.00pm at UBC Robson Square. *About Place: Art on the West Coast* will be a day of discussion with artists, writers and curators of *B2V*. The symposium will include discussions about: landscapes and urban centres; borders and networks; utopias and revolutions; locals and immigrants; art and popular culture.

B2V is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring the artists and their works. In addition to a lead essay by Ralph Rugoff and entries by the other curators, the publication includes essays by Matthew Coolidge, Director of the Center for Land Use Interpretation, Los Angeles; Douglas Coupland, an artist, novelist and cultural essayist based in Vancouver; Lisa Robertson from Paris writing as the Office of Soft Architecture; Matthew Stadler, a Portland-based novelist and literary editor of NEST magazine; and Torolab, a Tijuana-based architecture and design consortium, on the themes of art and life on the West Coast of North America.

This exhibition has been collaboratively organized by the Seattle Art Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; Vancouver Art Gallery; and CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts. Partial funding for the tour provided by the Peter Norton Family Foundation and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada. The exhibition is currently on show at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego and will travel to the CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco in September 2004. B2V opens in Vancouver on Saturday, June 5 and runs until Sunday, August 29, 2004.

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- When:** June 5 to August 29, 2004
- Where:** Vancouver Art Gallery
750 Hornby Street
Vancouver BC V6Z 2H7
www.vanartgallery.bc.ca
- Hours:** Open every day
Monday to Sunday & Holidays 10am to 5.30pm
Thursdays 10am to 9pm
- Admission:** Adults \$15.00, Seniors \$11.00, Students \$10.00, Children (12 & under) Free
Family \$40 (2 adults, 2 children, 13 years +), Thursday evening suggested donation \$5.00
- Media contact:** Julie-Ann Backhouse
Communications Specialist
604 662 4722
- Images:** Digital images for professional media use only are available at the Vancouver Art Gallery's FTP site <ftp://ftp.vanartgallery.bc.ca>. Contact 604 662 4722 for password access.

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