

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Vancouver Art Gallery Exhibition Illuminates the Artistic Process of The Group of Seven

VANCOUVER, BC — The **Vancouver Art Gallery** exhibition ***Dawn: Sketches and Paintings by the Group of Seven*** provides a glimpse into how Canada's renowned Group of Seven captured the nation's rugged wilderness in paint and created a revolution in Canadian art. Comprised of 50 oil sketches and 10 paintings from the Gallery's permanent collection, the exhibition presents an exciting look at works produced by the Group during their treks into the nation's backcountry alongside the full-scale paintings for which they are best known. On view from **September 19, 2009 to January 17, 2010**, *Dawn* includes works by all seven original members of the Group, including **Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Franklin Carmichael, Francis Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. MacDonald** and **Frederick Varley**.

"Armed with paints, brushes and small panels, The Group of Seven set off into Canada's wilderness to capture the landscape with extraordinary immediacy," said **Ian Thom**, senior curator of historical art. "The painted sketches they produced represent the artists' direct connection with and contemplation of nature. When looking at this work together with finished large-scale paintings one can witness the artists' process and get a palpable sense of their experience of the environment around them."

The Group of Seven have left an indelible mark on Canadian culture. The landscapes depicted in their paintings—mountain peaks, desolate lakes, unassuming villages, industrial settlements and decaying forests—have come to represent quintessential visions of Canada. Despite differences in ideology and application, the artists collectively set out to respond to the environment around them in order to articulate the distinctive qualities of their country. They did not aim to depict the land in realistic terms. Instead, they chose to reflect an emotional response to the breath and drama of the Canadian landscape and the character of the nation's people.

Working directly from the dramatic scenery they explored, the artists captured the landscape in small scale paintings rendered on board. This on-the-spot process fostered experimentation with new subjects, colours and techniques, resulting in a wide range of styles and the incorporation of a variety of influences outside traditional Canadian artistic practice. Originally intended as studies for later elaboration on larger canvases, the Group's sketches stand on their own as tremendous examples of the artists' expressive talent. Presented together with a selection of the



Francis Hans Johnston
Landscape; Warm Morning, 1922
oil on wood panel
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of Mrs. Marguerite Horn



Franklin Carmichael
Wild Cherry Blossom, 1938
oil on paperboard
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Gift of James and Barbara Mastin

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Gallery's paintings by the Group, these studies provide an intimate look into the how the artists created some of the most iconic images of the Canadian wilderness ever produced.

Dawn: Sketches and Paintings by the Group of Seven is organized by the **Vancouver Art Gallery** and is curated by **Ian Thom**, senior curator of historical art.

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