

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**VANCOUVER ART GALLERY TO PRESENT  
*ARTHUR ERICKSON: CRITICAL WORKS*  
May 27 to September 10, 2006**

**VANCOUVER, BC** – **Arthur Erickson** is one of modern architecture’s central figures. Beginning **May 27, 2006**, the **Vancouver Art Gallery** will celebrate his legacy with the landmark career retrospective ***Arthur Erickson: Critical Works***. From Simon Fraser University, which first brought him international recognition in 1963, to more recent projects, the exhibition explores Erickson’s ideas of landscape, public space and social value that have made him one of Canada’s preeminent architects.

“The 75th anniversary of the Gallery is the perfect time to celebrate our long and fruitful relationship with Arthur Erickson.” said Kathleen Bartels, director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. “It is a relationship that began in 1941, when one of his paintings appeared in the Gallery’s *10th Annual BC Artists Exhibition*, and has continued through two solo exhibitions of his architectural work and the Gallery’s relocation to Arthur’s redesigned courthouse building in 1983. We are thrilled to share the achievements of this British Columbian, whose reputation is global and contribution to the field of modern architecture is historic.”

Organized for the Vancouver Art Gallery by guest curator Nicholas Olsberg, former director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, *Arthur Erickson: Critical Works* will present 12 major Erickson projects from the past 40 years through a broad array of photographs, architectural drawings, models and films. To communicate the function and meaning of Erickson’s buildings, the exhibition will employ various innovative installation techniques. Time-lapse video of several of the architect’s projects will be presented in the exhibition space to demonstrate how people interact with the structures, and how the buildings’ aesthetic qualities are transformed by shifting light. As well, key drawings will be enlarged – some to 25 feet – in order to convey the monumental scale of Erickson’s projects.

“The chief aim of this exhibition is to recreate the visceral experience generated when entering one of Erickson’s buildings,” said Olsberg. “We want to communicate the voice of Erickson’s designs and reveal the poetry they add to everyday life.”

**Arthur Erickson: Critical Works** is comprised of three sections, each representing a central idea to Erickson's work. The first, *Infinity*, examines Erickson's smaller-scale projects and his ability to shape sites and constructed forms to awaken a sensation of the surrounding landscape and the world beyond. The second section, titled *Affinity*, explores how Erickson has added to the urban fabric, while varying and intensifying the visual and physical experience of moving through a city's geography. The third section, *Compression*, is made up of exploratory projects in which Erickson sets up social and physical geographies to operate as model communities and ideal landscapes, ranging from a mountaintop campus to a new conception of the urban village. All the projects featured in the exhibition are based on the use of reinforced concrete – Erickson's primary building material. The exhibition will reveal how the architect gives concrete its force and beauty through contrast, by placing its density and finish against the light sheen of steel, the reflectivity of glass, the tracery of frames, the density of vegetation and the reflective variability of water.

**Arthur Erickson: Critical Works** delves into some of Erickson's most intriguing designs, including those for Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia (1963); MacMillan Bloedel Building, Vancouver (1965); University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta (1968); Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver (1972); Helmut Eppich House, West Vancouver (1972); Robson Square, Vancouver (1973-79); Bagley Wright House, Bainbridge Island, Washington (1979); NAPP Laboratories, Cambridge, England (1979); Puget Sound House, Puget Sound, Washington (1983); Canadian Chancery, Washington, DC (1983); Waterfall Building, Vancouver (2002); and Museum of Glass, Tacoma, Washington (2002).

Erickson was born in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1924. During his youth, he became closely connected to members of Vancouver's artistic community, including Group of Seven painter Lawren Harris and artist/architect B.C. Binning. He burst onto the international architecture scene in 1964 with the widespread publication of photographs of his houses for David Graham and Gordon Smith as well as his designs for the new Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. A rapid succession of Erickson's public projects continued to garner international recognition, including the keynote pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal, the University of Lethbridge, Alberta in 1968 and the prize-winning Canadian Pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka. After 1972, a second series of important projects commenced, including the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in 1972 and Vancouver's massive Robson Square project in 1979. In 1980, Erickson won the contract for the downtown Los Angeles redevelopment project known as California Plaza and expanded his firm, already established in Canada and Saudi Arabia, to include offices in the United States.

*Arthur Erickson: Critical Works* is sponsored by Concord Pacific. The exhibition is accompanied by an extensively illustrated monograph on Erickson's work co-published by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Douglas & McIntyre.

Presenting sponsor:



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