

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2010

Vancouver Art Gallery Presents First North American Survey of Recent Work by Amsterdam-based Video Artist Fiona Tan

Media Preview with artist in attendance, Thursday, May 6 at 9AM

VANCOUVER, BC – *Fiona Tan: Rise and Fall* presents the compelling recent work of Amsterdam-based video artist **Fiona Tan**, providing the first opportunity for North American audiences to view an important body of her recent works. The exhibition, on view at the **Vancouver Art Gallery** from **May 8 to September 6, 2010**, includes six new video works and a selection of related drawings and photographs completed over the past four years. Curated by Vancouver Art Gallery senior curator **Bruce Grenville**, ***Fiona Tan: Rise and Fall*** is co-organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Aagaurer Kunsthhaus, in Aarau, Switzerland, where the exhibition debuted.

“In the past ten years, Fiona Tan has attracted the attention of the international art community and, after her successful showing as the Dutch representative at the 2009 Venice Biennale, she hardly requires an introduction,” said Vancouver Art Gallery director, **Kathleen Bartels**. “Tan’s inventive video and film installations that address the formation of individual and collective identity and the processes of representation have earned her a prominent position among artists working with film and video today.”

Fiona Tan: Rise and Fall marks a new trajectory for the artist and documents an important stage in her career. While much of Tan’s early work focused on the use of found archival images, her recent projects involve the use of actors and location shooting. These new works address her long-standing interest in the documentary image, both personal and public, and the role of memory and forgetting in the construction of identity. These ideas are represented in works that range in size and media, from framed photographs and drawings to monitor-scaled digital installations and theatrically-scaled projections.

An integral component of *Fiona Tan: Rise and Fall* is a new two-channel film installation commissioned by the Vancouver Art Gallery for the exhibition. This new work, titled *Rise and Fall*, 2009, was filmed in Niagara Falls, Belgium and the Netherlands, and constructs a narrative of isolation, loss and dislocation. Examining the retrospective gaze and its relationship to the images we carry within ourselves, the artist uses a double projection, to present an older woman reminiscing about her young life. Moving back and forth between present and past, the viewer is simultaneously shown footage of flowing water – an evocative metaphor for the flow of memory and time.

“Again and again Fiona Tan shows us that, like the waters that figure so prominently in her videos, neither past nor present are static entities,” said **Bruce Grenville** about the artist’s major themes. “Her eloquent work shows that these states remain in constant and meaningful contact with one another and are always in flux.”



The Changeling, 2006 (still)
two-channel digital installation
12 minutes
Courtesy of the Artist and Frith Street Gallery, London

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
750 Hornby Street, Vancouver
www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

MEDIA CONTACTS
Andrew Riley
Public Relations Manager
604-662-4722
ariley@vanartgallery.bc.ca

Dana Sullivant
Director of Marketing and Communications
604-662-4721
dsullivant@vanartgallery.bc.ca

The earliest work in the exhibition is *The Changeling*, 2006, a two-channel digital installation comprised of a found cache of old portraits of Japanese schoolgirls. One screen shows a constant stream of nearly 200 individual portraits, while the other displays a single picture accompanied by a monologue of an anonymous woman's reflections on her life. Tan's *A Lapse of Memory*, 2007, uses the Royal Pavilion, in Brighton, England, a building that fuses Eastern and Western design motifs, as a location to create a portrait of a man lost in fragmentary memories, whose confused identity presents a combination of Eastern and Western cultural heritages. *Island*, 2008, emerged from Tan's yearly excursion to Gotland, an island off of the east coast of Sweden. Made up of stark black and white shots traversing an austere landscape void of humanity, the film's voice-over narration recounts a woman's experience and memories of an island.

Inspired by 17th century Dutch portraits in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, *Provenance*, 2008, consists of six filmed portraits of contemporary residents of Amsterdam selected from Tan's own social circle – friends, family and acquaintances. Hung vertically like paintings, Tan's video portraits offer viewers intimate encounters with the lives of filmmaker Kees Hin, Tan's mother-in-law Marry Knol, local shopkeeper Najet Olmez and his son Tunahan, Tessel Schole in the guise of Rembrandt's daughter Cornelia van Rijn, cabaret performer Sanne Wallis de Vries and Tan's own son Niels Dijkstal. In her most recent work, *Projection*, 2010, Tan continues her exploration of portraiture, turning the camera on herself to create an intimate self-portrait. To create the work, Tan filmed herself in her studio and subsequently projected the footage onto a bed sheet, which she then filmed again. As the bed sheet moved and swayed throughout the filming, the result is an image of Tan that is fragmented, broken and constantly changing.

Born in Indonesia in 1966, Fiona Tan grew up in Australia. She received her formal art training in Amsterdam and has been living in the Netherlands since the late 1980s. Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in international venues, including the Dutch Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale, 2009; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 2008; Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2008; Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, 2005; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2004; Tate Modern, London, 2004; Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 2002; Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul, 2003; Documenta 11, Kassel, 2002; and the 49th Venice Biennale, 2002.

Following its presentation at the Vancouver Art Gallery, *Fiona Tan: Rise and Fall* will be presented at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C. from September 18, 2010 to January 9, 2011 and at the Galerie de l'UQAM in Montréal in the spring of 2011. The exhibition is accompanied by a 128-page full-colour publication featuring the artist's work and major essays by exhibition curator, Bruce Grenville, Okwui Enwezor, dean of Academic affairs and senior vice president at the San Francisco Art Institute, Michael Newman, associate professor of art history, theory and criticism at the Art Institute of Chicago, Irit Rogoff, professor of visual culture at Goldsmiths College at London University, and Madeleine Schuppli, director of the Aargauer Kunstauss.