

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Acquisitions Elevate Vancouver Art Gallery's Collection of Artworks by Jeff Wall to Largest Public Holding of Artist's Work in North America

VANCOUVER, BC — The Vancouver Art Gallery has acquired two major works by Vancouver-based artist Jeff Wall for the Gallery's permanent collection. With the addition of *Concrete ball*, 2002 and *War game*, 2007, the Gallery makes an important addition to its collection of works by Jeff Wall, who is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential contemporary artists working today.

"Jeff Wall is, quite simply, among the most important artists of our time," said Kathleen Bartels, director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "His work as an artist, writer and teacher has had a major impact on the contemporary art world and his art is held in high esteem and sought after by major contemporary art institutions, collectors and private galleries worldwide. With this acquisition, the Vancouver Art Gallery now has one of the largest public collections of Jeff Wall's work in the world. This tremendous addition provides further depth to the Gallery's already significant photo-based collection of works by leading contemporary artists."

Concrete ball, 2002 is a backlit colour transparency mounted in a lightbox, a format widely associated with Wall's work. Shot on a typical rainy day, the photograph depicts a concrete ball on a pedestal that marks an entrance to a public park near Vancouver's downtown east side, with the Harbour Centre Tower rising in the distance. The subject is very simple; the image focuses on the commonplace to evoke the atmospheric character of a particular place, time of day and season. The large scale, rich colour and long tonal range of the backlit transparency invites the viewer to examine a subject that might be otherwise overlooked and to consider the scene as a stage on which everyday dramas are played out.

War game, 2007, is part of a new series of black and white photographs. In this work, the artist alludes to the unique characteristics of still photography, in which the ability to stop time is both a limitation and an advantage. In cinematic fashion, *War game* features an expansive view of boys playing with toy guns in a vacant lot of grass and gravel. Wall's choice of black and white and his subject matter are indicative of his continued interest in neo-realist cinema in which staged scenes appear to be snapshots from everyday life. Purchase of the work was made possible in part by a gift from the **Audain Foundation**.

"We are extremely pleased to add these two outstanding works by Jeff Wall to the Gallery's internationally significant permanent collection," said Claudia Beck, chair of the Board of Trustee's Acquisition Committee. "The new additions were selected by the artist to complement works in the collection, which include *Backpack*, 1981-1982, *Bad Goods*, 1985, *Outburst*, 1989 and *Pine on the Corner*, 1990. The Gallery plans to exhibit this collection later this year, which will present a rare opportunity to view a historic range of this acclaimed Vancouver artist's work."



Jeff Wall
Concrete ball, 2002
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Acquisition Fund
transparency in lightbox
204.0 x 260.0 cm



Jeff Wall
War game, 2007
silver gelatin print
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery,
Purchased with funds from the Audain
Foundation, the Vancouver Art Gallery
Acquisition Fund and the Major
Purchase Fund
247.0 x 302.6 cm

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Over the last twenty years, Jeff Wall has developed an outstanding and innovative body of photographic work that has played an important role in establishing photography as the most significant art form of the late 20th century. His work has been exhibited in galleries and art museums around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Art Institute of Chicago; The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Tate Modern, London; the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Schaulager, Basel; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Art Tower Mito, Japan; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte, Reina Sofia, Madrid; and the Jeu de Paume, Paris, among many others.

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