

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Vancouver Art Gallery Exhibition Meditates on the Meaning of the Tree

**VANCOUVER, BC** — *The Tree: From the Sublime to the Social*, on view at the **Vancouver Art Gallery** from **February 2 to April 20, 2008**, provides a provocative exploration of the tree's significance in art spanning time, culture and media. Comprised of 95 works by almost 40 local, national and international artists, the exhibition is prompted by two significant bodies of work in the Gallery's collection – Emily Carr's iconic paintings of the majestic coastal forest and a recent gift of a photo-based series by German born artist Jochen Gerz that documents the results of a lost battle against logging on Cortes Island, British Columbia.

"The tree offers an intriguing focus for an exhibition in this part of the world," said Vancouver Art Gallery director Kathleen Bartels. "It acts as powerful visual representation of Canada's national identity, while also serving as a reminder of our precarious ecological condition. The diverse representations of the tree in this exhibition are indicative of its enduring power as an evocative symbol of our complex and changing relationships with our natural environment."

*The Tree: From the Sublime to the Social* includes a wide selection of artistic perspectives focused on the tree as inspiration and a subject of investigation. The exhibition incorporates historical images of the forest that evoke the grandeur and power of the natural world and includes works by contemporary artists who use the tree as a device to consider abstraction and figuration, as well as to question humankind's relationship with the natural environment, especially the growing sense of alienation from the natural world. Some artists depict trees as a resource for economic development and the devastating consequences of severe logging practices, while others present life-affirming projects that engaged in both metaphorical and actual tree-planting projects.

As part of the exhibition, Berlin-based Portugese artist Gabriela Albergaria has created a new site-specific installation for the Gallery rotunda consisting of a "rebuilt" oak tree. To supply the material needed for this sculptural work, Albergaria collaborated with the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to identify a dead oak marked for felling. The tree was cut in pieces under her direction and reassembled according to her rules of composition, creating a sculptural installation out of natural matter. Titled *Blenheim Street and 29<sup>th</sup>* after the location at which the tree was felled, the work invites the viewer to consider the transposition of nature into the Gallery's interior space. In grafting and unifying the fragmented tree, Albergaria's intervention evokes a poetic action of reparation – reviving that which was considered dead.

*The Tree: From the Sublime to the Social* includes works from the Gallery's permanent collection by Vikky Alexander, Sybil Andrews, Franklin Carmichael, Emily Carr, Patricia Deadman, Jochen Gerz, Lorraine Gilbert, Rodney Graham, Lawren Harris, E.J. Hughes, Arthur Lismer, Alexander François Loemans, William Nottman, Gordon Smith, Tom Thomson, Cy Twombly, Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace, and William Percival Weston. Key loans were also secured for the exhibition, including works by Gabriela Albergaria, Karin Bubaš, Andrew Dadson, Kirsten Everberg, Máximo Gonzáles, Arni Haraldsson, Geoffrey James, Nestor Krüger, Liz Magor, Aernout Mik, Ed Pien, Raphael Ortega, Pedro Reyes, Thomas Ruff, Kevin Schmidt, Althea Thauberger, Mungo Thomson, Stephen Waddell, Carlton Watkins, and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun.

***The Tree: From the Sublime to the Social*** is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Daina Augaitis, chief curator and associate director, with assistant curator, Emmy Lee.

### **Related Events**

#### **Curator's Tour**

**Sunday, February 3, 2pm**

Daina Augaitis, chief curator/associate director, leads an exhibition tour.  
Free with Gallery admission.

#### **Artist's Talk**

**Jochen Gerz – Creating a Cultural City**

**Thursday, February 7, 5:30pm**

In conjunction with exhibition, artist Jochen Gerz presents his current research on the role and function of public art in a cultural society.  
Free with Gallery admission

#### **Artists in Conversation**

**Tuesday, February 26, 7pm**

Exhibiting artists, including Andrew Dadson, Kevin Schmidt and Ian Wallace, join curator Daina Augaitis for a discussion of their work in the exhibition space.  
Free with Gallery admission.

### **Media contacts**

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