

For immediate release

Long-time supporter, philanthropist Michael Audain becomes Vancouver Art Gallery's first Honorary Chairman

November 13, 2014, Vancouver, B.C. – The Vancouver Art Gallery is proud to announce Michael Audain, the former Chair of the Vancouver Art Gallery Board of Trustees and Foundation as well as one of the Gallery's strongest supporters and advocates, to be the first Honorary Chairman in the Gallery's 83-year history. The Honorary Chairman is a lifetime position that recognizes the distinguished involvement of those eminently qualified in one or more aspects of the Gallery's activities.

"It is our great honour to recognize Michael Audain on behalf of a much larger community of Vancouver and British Columbian artists, arts professionals, visual arts supporters and enthusiasts who have all benefited from his extraordinary generosity, hard work and commitment," said Bruce Munro Wright, Chair of the Gallery's Board of Trustees. "Since 1931 when the Vancouver Art Gallery's Board of Trustees was established, there have been countless motions that have been presented before the Board for approval. However, rarely has one resolution received such overwhelmingly unanimous support as to invite Michael to be the Honorary Chairman."

"I am sincerely grateful to Michael for his unwavering support of the Vancouver Art Gallery, both as a leader on the Board of Trustees and Foundation, and as a strong advocate behind the Gallery's relocation effort," said Kathleen S. Bartels, Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "Michael's contribution as a major donor to the Gallery is unprecedented and has made an extraordinary impact on the Gallery's endowment, exhibition program and permanent collection. His passion and commitment to the visual arts in this city, province and country will be a legacy for generations to come."

"I am proud and delighted to accept this honorary position. The Vancouver Art Gallery has played such an important role in my life during the past fifty years, firstly as a venue where I learnt to appreciate art, and then as a centre of community involvement," said Michael Audain. "I am extremely proud of my long association with this renowned institution and confident that the Gallery will continue to make a significant contribution to Vancouver's reputation as one of the world's most important centres for visual art. And, this is bound to be enhanced by a move into much needed new quarters."

Michael Audain is Chairman of Polygon Homes Ltd., one of BC's leading home builders. He currently serves as Chair of the Audain Foundation, a leading supporter of the visual arts in British Columbia and a Visionary Partner of the Vancouver Art Gallery. Mr. Audain joined the Vancouver Art Gallery's Board of Trustees in 1990, and was elected to the Chair of the Vancouver Art Gallery Board of Trustees (1997-1999), and Chair of the Vancouver Art Gallery Foundation (2001-2014). The Gallery has been stewarding the position of The Audain Curator of British Columbia Art (2005 – present), the Audain Emerging Artists Acquisition Fund (2008 – present) and the Audain Prize Endowment Fund (2003 – present) since their inception. Audain is a Visionary Partner of the Gallery through the Audain Foundation, which provides a multi-year initiative that provides subsidized Gallery memberships for post-secondary students pursuing visual art studies in British Columbia, since September 2013.

Over the years, Mr. Audain has helped realize nineteen exhibitions, catalogues and special projects at the Gallery, which has enabled our exhibition program to flourish with such presentations as *Charles Edenshaw; Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture; Shore, Forest and Beyond: Art From the Audain Collection; Brian Jungen;* and *Carr, O'Keeffe, Kahlo: Places of Their Own*. He has donated 39 artworks to the Vancouver Art Gallery's permanent collection and contributed towards the purchase of 44 artworks, significantly raising the Gallery's institutional profile.

About the Vancouver Art Gallery

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of the most respected and innovative visual arts institutions in Canada and is committed to strengthening ties between artists and diverse communities throughout the city, province, and beyond. As the largest public art museum in Western Canada, the Gallery features the work of ground-breaking contemporary artists from around the world and presents historical art of international significance, is committed to exploring the art of Asia, and provides a global platform for British Columbia's dynamic artistic community, including the work of First Nations artists. Its growing collection represents the most comprehensive resource for art in British Columbia and is the principal repository for visual art produced in the region, as well as related works by other notable Canadian and international artists. The Gallery also places an emphasis on advancing scholarship through major publications and presents a multitude of public programs that offer new ways to consider art for visitors who come from throughout the region and internationally.

In response to the significant growth in collections, exhibitions and attendance over the past decade, the Gallery announced in 2014 the selection of Herzog & de Meuron for the design of a new and expanded home in downtown Vancouver. The new facility will double the Gallery's current size and will be a vital catalyst to Vancouver, enhancing the city's cultural community and serving as a centre for cross-cultural dialogue and exchange in the visual arts.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Debra Zhou | Communications Specialist
Direct Line 604-662-4722 | Cell 604-671-2358
dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca