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## **Landmark Collection of Over 550 Photographs by Harry Callahan Donated to Vancouver Art Gallery**

**Collection Ranks Among Largest Public Holdings in World of Influential 20<sup>th</sup>-C Artist,  
and Marks Largest Photography Donation in Gallery's History**

**June 10, 2014**, Vancouver, BC – A monumental donation of 556 photographs by the acclaimed American photographer Harry Callahan (1912-1999) has been donated to the Vancouver Art Gallery by the Montreal-based Larry and Cookie Rossy Family Foundation. Unique in its comprehensive character, the collection is an exemplary representation of Callahan's practice, featuring work from throughout the artist's sixty-year career. The gift marks the largest photography donation in the Gallery's history and is by far the most important collection of Callahan's work in Canada, and the second largest public collection in the world. To mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Callahan's 1976 retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Vancouver Art Gallery plans to present these works as part of a major exhibition on Callahan in 2016, which will explore the role of this seminal artist's work in the development of modern photography and its links to contemporary practices.

"This collection is an unparalleled representation of the work of a pioneering photographer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, noted and acclaimed for his engagement with a range of photographic techniques. It is an outstanding addition to the Vancouver Art Gallery's photography collection, which has grown substantially over the past decade and is now of international importance," said Kathleen S. Bartels, the Vancouver Art Gallery's Director. "We are extremely grateful to The Larry and Cookie Rossy Family Foundation for its generosity, which will enable our audiences to experience the oeuvre of one of the ground-breaking photographers of the last century."

Harry Callahan (1912-1999) is recognized for his experimentation with a range of approaches to image-making and composition, from straightforward social documentary style images of city streets, to lyrical, starkly minimal compositions from nature, to multiple exposures made in camera using both black and white and colour materials. At times his prints are marked by subtle gradations in tonality, and at others by high contrast with almost no intermediate grey tones. Some pictures appear to have been made spontaneously, while others are the result of an extended and carefully measured interaction between photographer and his subject.

The Rossy collection sheds light on Callahan's wide-ranging working methods and his emphasis on repeated examinations of a subject over time. "This gift significantly enhances the importance of the Gallery's collection as a resource for the study of photography," said the Chair of the Gallery's Acquisitions Committee, Jane Irwin. "It will allow our curators, external scholars and students of art to consider Callahan's work in light of the profound impact of photography on local, national and international levels."

### **About Harry Callahan**

Harry Callahan is a canonical figure in the development of modern photography and is considered one of the most influential photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born in Detroit in 1912, Callahan was self-taught. As a young man, he worked at Chrysler and subsequently studied engineering at Michigan State University. However he dropped out of university and returned to Chrysler where he joined the company's camera club and began to teach himself photography.

In 1946 he was invited by László Moholy-Nagy to teach at the Institute of Design in Chicago, where he remained until 1961. At that time he left Chicago to become the founding chair of the photography department at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. Under Callahan's guidance, the program became one of the most respected and influential photography programs in North America. Photographers who studied with Callahan can be found in the faculty of universities and art schools throughout North America (including Vancouver) and his approach to image making remains influential to this day.

Callahan's work has been featured in over 60 solo exhibitions at institutions and galleries such as: the Art Institute of Chicago; George Eastman House, Rochester; Museum of Modern Art, New York; United States Pavilion, 38<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale; Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo; National Gallery of Art, Washington; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Fundación la Caixa, Madrid; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris; Haus der Photographie Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich; Tate Modern, London, among many others.

Callahan's work can be found in the collections of important art museums around the world, including: Art Institute of Chicago; Center for Creative Photography, Tucson; Cleveland Museum of Art; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington; J. Paul Getty Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Harvard Museum of Art, Cambridge; The High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Seibu Museum, Tokyo; Yale University Art Museum, New Haven; and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

### **About The Larry & Cookie Rossy Family Foundation**

The Montreal-based Larry & Cookie Rossy Family Foundation was established by Mr. Larry Rossy, founder and CEO of Dollarama Inc. Mr. and Mrs. Rossy are major Canadian philanthropists and have donated works to other Canadian art museums. As well, they provide financial support for the Colart Collection, a private collection that purchases work by emerging Canadian artists.

### About the Vancouver Art Gallery's permanent collection

The Vancouver Art Gallery's permanent collection includes 11,347 works. Well-known for its photo-based artwork, the Gallery now has one of the most significant international photography collections in North America, which includes Canadian artists such as Vikky Alexander, Roy Arden, Edward Burtynsky, Stan Douglas, Rodney Graham, Ken Lum, Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace, Jin-me Yoon as well as international artists Andreas Gursky, Thomas Ruff, Cindy Sherman and Thomas Struth among others. The Gallery's growing collection of historical and modern photography includes highlights by esteemed artists such as Ansel Adams, Samuel Bourne, Harry Callahan, Harold Edgerton, William Henry Jackson, Eadweard Muybridge and William Notman.

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Image credits:

Harry Callahan, *Atlanta*, 1984, dye transfer print, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of The Larry and Cookie Rossy Family Foundation, VAG 2013.36.167

Harry Callahan, *Eleanor*, *Chicago*, 1949, silver gelatin print, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of The Larry and Cookie Rossy Family Foundation, VAG 2013.36.352

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About the Vancouver Art Gallery

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. We thank everyone for their continuing generosity.