

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEXT: Christos Dikeakos



Vancouver, British Columbia (October 9, 2015) – The Vancouver Art Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition by Vancouver-based artist Christos Dikeakos. On display now until January 31, 2015, *NEXT: Christos Dikeakos* is a focused exhibition that features a series of photographs produced by the artist over the last six years through which the artist considers the economic and cultural values involved in transactions of Northwest Coast art.

For the last two decades, Christos Dikeakos has been deeply interested in the changing landscape of our city, as well as the art and culture of Indigenous cultures of the Northwest Coast. Among these explorations is a series of panoramic photographs produced in the 1980s and 90s of False Creek, an area of Vancouver that has undergone dramatic changes since it was inhabited centuries ago by Coast Salish peoples. As a precursor to this exhibition, these works registered urban development in this area of the city with an overlay of the history of Indigenous land use and cultural activity that took place long before the arrival of European settlers.

This exhibition begins with an image of False Creek, taken through the artist's studio window that frames an ever-changing view of the world. The work revisits the shifting land use of this urban area, which has undergone yet another phase of dramatic growth with the development of the Olympic Village. The subsequent photographs, as well as the artist's collection of Northwest Coast baskets also on display, point to the importance of Indigenous history and culture in this region.

In the successive images, Dikeakos portrays collectors, artists and entrepreneurs that he has captured in acts of assessing, exchanging or contemplating evocative Northwest Coast objects. The photographs show how one culture interacts with another through collecting as both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures have historically and mutually engaged in economic and cultural exchanges since early contact. Such exchanges have the ability to transform values, beliefs and ideologies.

The final image in the exhibition, taken in the forest of Haida Gwaii, depicts a man holding a microphone and wind-sock as if attempting to record the sound of the trees or to capture the essence of the medicine plants and other cultural materials found in this bog—as if in search of an intangible heritage. Dikeakos speaks of the soundman as a stand-in for shaman figures, “who are believed to be in touch with a language of meanings, cosmologies that could go outward and backward to produce a knowledge of the world.” Together, these works point to an existential pursuit that accompanies an intrinsic drive to collect, create or be with such inspiring objects—activities that offer the possibility of cross-cultural dialogue.

About the artist

Christos Dikeakos is an artist working primarily in photography who has actively participated in the development of

photoconceptual art in Vancouver and has exhibited nationally and internationally. He was born in Thessaloniki, Greece and moved to Vancouver in 1956, graduating from the University of British Columbia in Fine Arts in 1970.

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.

Following an in-depth master planning process that was in response to the significant growth in collection, exhibitions and attendance, the Gallery unveiled in September 2015 the conceptual design by Herzog & de Meuron for a new and expanded home in downtown Vancouver. Double the Gallery's current size, the future facility will be a vital catalyst in enhancing Vancouver's cultural community, and will serve 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.

NEXT: Christos Dikeakos is the seventeenth instalment in *NEXT: A Series of Artist Projects from the Pacific Rim*. Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director.

Generously supported by: Christopher and Tara Poseley
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Image credits:

(Left) Christos Dikeakos, *The Collector*, 2013, ink jet print, Private Collection, West Vancouver

(Right) Christos Dikeakos, *Naikoon Park*, 2014, ink jet print, Courtesy of the Artist

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Images are available upon request.

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