

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vancouver Art Gallery Presents the First Comprehensive Retrospective
of Visionary Artist Jerry Pethick



The media is invited to attend a preview tour of the exhibition on Thursday, October 22, 9:00-10:00am, at the Vancouver Art Gallery (750 Hornby Street). To RSVP or request an interview, please contact Debra Zhou.

Vancouver, British Columbia (October 14, 2015) – The Vancouver Art Gallery is proud to present *Jerry Pethick: Shooting the Sun/Splitting the Pie*, a retrospective that provides a comprehensive overview of Canadian artist Jerry Pethick's prolific career that emerged from his lifelong investigation into the relationship between technology, consciousness and shifting paradigms of perception. Opening on October 24, 2015, the exhibition comprises approximately 100 artworks, including a number of the "photo arrays" for which Pethick became widely known. Though Pethick's work has been exhibited across Canada, Europe, the United States and Japan, this is the first in-depth museum survey of this important artist's career.

Over the course of a career that spanned five decades, Jerry Pethick (1935–2003) produced a complex and multifaceted body of work that is difficult to classify. Pethick's practice focused on questions of perception, an important area of activity in the visual arts over the past four decades. However, his amalgamations of photography, optical devices, sculpture and drawing, and the structures he assembled to create new conceptions of material space, are a unique achievement. Although it has been twelve years since his passing in 2003, his experimental approach to form and materials—along with his rigorous investigations into art history, the history of science and the nature of visual perception—remain both remarkably current and relevant to contemporary art practices today. His visionary work has been an inspiration for new generations of artists.

Through an extended emphasis on an object's entanglement with its surroundings and the viewer's consciousness, Pethick challenged culturally determined ways of perceiving space and the related separation of observer and object that has occupied a central position in Western thought since the 18th century. Pethick saw disciplinary boundaries and linear conceptions of history as regimented structures of communication that limit perception and produce a pervasive false consciousness. His practice could be described as an ongoing attempt to push aside these limitations by exploring parallels in the methods of representation developed concurrently in the arts and sciences over the past two centuries, as well as the perceptual systems that have been left in their wake.

The unusual path Pethick took is embodied in his choice to live and work on Hornby Island in British Columbia, a remote and pastoral site frequented by artists and curators from Vancouver and abroad that is both connected to and distanced from the art world's circuits of communication.

This exhibition is accompanied by a 160-page catalogue that marks the first major publication dedicated to the career of this artist with essays by Grant Arnold, Monika Szewczyk, John Drury, Geoffrey Farmer, Jerry Pethick and Siobhan McCracken Nixon, co-published by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Black Dog Publishing.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Pethick was born in 1935 in London, Ontario and passed away in 2003 on Hornby Island, British Columbia. He was a multimedia artist who investigated space, optical phenomena, and perception to create innovative, often witty artworks and installations. He studied art at the Chelsea College of Art in London, England, and later became an associate of the Royal College of Art. After spending time in the 1960s at a holography school in San Francisco in the United States, he moved to Hornby Island, British Columbia, where he lived and worked for the remainder of his life.

Solo exhibitions of Pethick's work include Simon Fraser University Gallery (2011); *Typology of Space*, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2004); Art Gallery of Nova Scotia; Musée Regional de Rimouski, Quebec (2001); *Out of the Corner of an Eye*, Center of Contemporary Art, Seattle (2000); *The Further World*, Canadian Embassy, Tokyo (1997); *The Composite Image: New Works by Jerry Pethick*, Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver (1994); *Notion of Nothing*, Stadtgalerie, Saarbrücken, Germany (1994); *Still Veils*, The Power Plant, Toronto (1992); and *La Dot/Transition in Progress*, 49th Parallel Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, New York (1986). His work has also been included in numerous international group exhibitions.

Jerry Pethick was the recipient of the Claudia de Hueck Fellowship for Arts and Science at the National Gallery of Canada in 1997/1998 as well as a VIVA Award from the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation in 2000. He was included in the Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery in 1989 and in 2003 he achieved a patent for his apparatus for stereoscopically viewing scenes and objects. *Time Top*, commissioned by Concord Pacific, was his first public art commission and remains on view at the edge of False Creek near the Cambie Street Bridge in Vancouver.

Related Events

Saturday, October 24, 3pm – Curator's Tour with Grant Arnold

Friday, October 30, 3:00-5:30pm – Traces of Discovery Conversations on Jerry Pethick with artists John Drury, Melissa Crenshaw and Buster Simpson

Tuesday, November 24, 7:00pm – Exhibition tour with artist Tom Burrow

Jerry Pethick: Shooting the Sun/Splitting the Pie is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Grant Arnold, Audain Curator of British Columbia Art.

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(left) Jerry Pethick, *Volklingen Scarab*, 1995, aluminum, stainless steel, plywood, 79 photographs, 56 Fresnel lenses, glass, fluorescent light fixture, silver diffraction foil, silicone, acrylic paint, dimensions variable, Courtesy of Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, Photo: Scott Massey

(right) Jerry Pethick, *Lenticular Registrar*, 1973, rubber, tile, tape, Rolux, 56 x 50 cm, Courtesy of Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver, Photo: Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

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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.