

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2010

**U.K. ARTISTS BUILD MONOLITHIC PUBLIC SCULPTURE
WITH HELP FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY**

Vancouver Art Gallery Offsite: Heather and Ivan Morison. Oct. 2, 2010 – May 6, 2011

Vancouver, BC – *Vancouver Art Gallery Offsite* unveils a new installation by internationally acclaimed British artists Heather and Ivan Morison on October 2, 2010. Titled *Plaza*, the work is the result of a community-based effort which included Vancouver artists, businesses and not-for-profits.

Artists Heather and Ivan Morison explore architecture as it relates to ideas of escape, shelter and refuge. For *Offsite*, they have created a pavilion which hovers between sculpture and architecture. More than 12,000 board metres of raw lumber were used to make the monumental structure. The enormous work (11.2 metres tall X 9.7 metres wide X 16.7 metres long) is built of heavy timber beams burnt to a dark charcoal using a Japanese technique for preserving and protecting wood from the elements. Featuring huge blackened timber beams, *Plaza* mimics the basic form of the urban environment---the gridded box---and twists it to appear suspended between falling and flight.

“We like to start a project looking at what materials are available,” artist Heather Morison said. “This physically embeds the work in its environment. We also look at what skills are available, as we always work in large teams. We have had a fantastic team here in Vancouver, who have worked incredibly hard making *Plaza* and brought an extraordinary level of skill and creative thinking to this challenging project,” Morison added.

Plaza was made using salvaged wood collected from beaches, development sites and construction yards throughout Vancouver. Individuals and local businesses in Vancouver generously donated materials and labour, including lumber, hardware, propane, architectural and on site engineering expertise.

“This newly commissioned site-specific project is the result of a these remarkable artists’ vision, brought to life with help from members of our own community”, said Kathleen Bartels, director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. “This unique collaboration has resulted in a truly stunning and provocative work of art.”

The work was constructed at Great Northern Way Scene Shop, a not-for-profit shop affiliated with the University of British Columbia. Members of the construction team included carpenters, artists, students and volunteers, as well as BladeRunners, a Vancouver program which helps at-risk youth from the Downtown Eastside to gain skills and employment in the construction industry.

“This is the first time we’ve worked on a project like this,” said Garry Jobin of BladeRunners. “We thought it would be great to do something totally new to us, and our six participants have really enjoyed it.”

More information will be provided at a media breakfast on Thursday, September 30, 2010, at 9am at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Artist Ivan Morison gives a talk and tour at Offsite that evening at 7pm.

Offsite is the Vancouver Art Gallery’s public art space in downtown Vancouver that presents a rotating program of innovative public art projects. *Offsite: Heather and Ivan Morison* is the third project in the *Offsite* series.

Offsite is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and funded by the City of Vancouver through the Public Art Program. The Gallery recognizes Ian Gillespie, President Westbank; Ben Yeung, President, Peterson Investment Group; and the residents of Shangri-La for their support. This project is made possible by in-kind donations from ParkLane Homes, Taiga Building Products, Superior Propane and Elia Kirby Productions.

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Attachment: Backgrounder on the Morisons and the *Plaza* installation
Photographs for publication are available on request.

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 Gaming Revenues; the Government of Canada through the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage. We thank everyone for their continuing generosity.