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Willem van der Velde I, *Warships in a Calm Sea*, 1678, oil on canvas, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John S. Davidson, Photo: Rachel Topham, Vancouver Art Gallery

Vancouver Art Gallery Provides an Innovative Look at 17th Century Art
Persuasive Visions: 17th Century Dutch and Flemish Masterworks and Contemporary Reflections
(June 15th – September 15th, 2013)

June 4, 2013, Vancouver, BC—The Vancouver Art Gallery presents *Persuasive Visions: 17th Century Dutch and Flemish Masterworks and Contemporary Reflections* opening June 15th, 2013. This highly anticipated exhibition will contextualize the Gallery's remarkable collection of 17th century Dutch and Flemish art with exquisite, rarely-seen works from the Rijksmuseum and several important contemporary works by leading contemporary artists - all of which examine the resonance and importance of four modes of artistic production practiced in the 17th century - still life, portraiture, landscape, and marine painting.

Persuasive Visions marks the third instalment of an ongoing partnership with the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, which has previously included successful collaborations *Vermeer, Rembrandt and the Golden Age of Dutch Art* (2009) and *Fiona Tan: Rise and Fall* (2010). "We are extremely privileged to have collaborated on these exceptional exhibitions with the Rijksmuseum over the past four years" said Kathleen Bartels, director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. "Through this important international partnership, we are able to showcase rarely seen 17th century Dutch and Flemish artwork from the Rijksmuseum in concert with our own extraordinary collection from one of the most important eras in the history of art."

Painting in the Netherlands and Flanders flourished with tremendous variety and richness during the seventeenth century. In the Dutch Republic—which had recently freed itself from the control of monarchic and Catholic Spain—an art market developed unlike any other in Europe, supported by a newly powerful mercantile class of Protestant burghers who were made prosperous by a robust economy and the spoils of international trade. Intent on fashioning their own distinct identities, members of this new art-buying public desired to see

their own interests and worldview mirrored back at them. This drove the production of highly differentiated genres of painting—including portraiture, landscape, still life and maritime images—enabling some artists to rise to great prominence and specialization. With astounding illusionism and minute attention to detail, these paintings are fascinating windows into an exceptionally rich cultural moment, communicating—whether openly or obliquely—the dominant values, desires and anxieties of a dynamic and turbulent age.

The historic Dutch works from the Vancouver Art Gallery's collection include **Willem van der Velde's** *Warships in a Calm Sea*, 1678; **Jan Anthonisz van Ravesteyn's** *Portrait of a Woman*, date unknown; and **Jan van Goyen's** *A Frozen River Landscape With Skaters by a Village*, 1627, among many others. Rarely loaned paintings from the Rijksmuseum include **Abraham Mignon's** *The Overturned Bouquet*, **Aert de Gelder's** *Portrait of Ernst van Beveren, Lord of IJsselmond an De Lindt, burgomaster of Dordrecht*, **Salomon van Ruysdael's** *Riverview at Deventer*; and **Jan van de Capelle's** *Ships at a Calm Sea*.

Each of the four sections of the exhibition also includes the work of a contemporary artist whose practice shows a unique concern for and treatment of a particular genre: **Liz Magor's** sculptural installation is positioned alongside still life, the monumental photographs of **Thomas Ruff** are paired with portraiture, **Jeff Wall's** lightbox tableaux are considered within the landscape tradition and a newly commissioned work by the collaborative artists **Trevor Mahovsky and Rhonda Wepler** addresses a maritime theme. In the hands of these present-day artists, traditional modes of picture making take on new meaning and resonance. They encourage us to consider and question our relationship to the history of art, the nature of representation and the painting genres that were defined so persuasively by the vision of Dutch and Flemish artists four centuries ago.

Persuasive Visions: 17th Century Dutch and Flemish Masterworks and Contemporary Reflections is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Ian Thom, Senior Curator-Historical, with the assistance of The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

A media preview with senior curator Ian Thom will take place on Thursday, June 13th at 9am in the Gallery. Media attending are requested to RSVP to Brittany Chiu (bchiu@vanartgallery.bc.ca)

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For media kits, images and passes to access exhibition please contact Brittany Chiu,
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