

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Portrait of the Artist* offers rare look at images of artists from  
the British Royal Collection**



Media are invited to an exhibition preview of *Portrait of the Artist: An Exhibition from the Royal Collection* on **Thursday, October 26, 2017, 9:00 am** at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Please RSVP to Justin Mah ([jmah@vanartgallery.bc.ca](mailto:jmah@vanartgallery.bc.ca)). Other fall exhibitions will be previewed on this day.\*

**October 2, 2017, Vancouver, BC** – The Vancouver Art Gallery is pleased to present *Portrait of the Artist: An Exhibition from the Royal Collection*, opening on October 28, 2017 and remaining on view until February 4, 2018.

Following the acclaimed exhibition that debuted at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace in 2016, *Portrait of the Artist: An Exhibition from the Royal Collection* presents a remarkable group of works from the Royal Collection—one of the most important art collections in the world. The first of its kind to focus on images of artists within the Royal Collection outside of the UK, the exhibition will showcase self-portraits by world-renowned artists including Rembrandt, Peter Paul Rubens, Artemisia Gentileschi, Lucien Freud and David Hockney, as well as images of artists by their friends, relatives and pupils, including the most reliable surviving likeness of Leonardo da Vinci by his student, Francesco Melzi.

“*Portrait of the Artist* presents a remarkable group of paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and works of art spanning six centuries from the Royal Collection. These works highlight both the enormous richness of the Royal Collection and the complex and deep relationship that the British monarchy has had with artists,” says Kathleen S. Bartels, Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. “We are delighted to offer audiences this rare opportunity to trace the evolving role of artists across time.”

Central to the history of the British monarchy has been the role of art, both to define the image of the monarch and to confirm their power, wealth and taste. However, during the Renaissance, artists began claiming an increasingly central role in visual culture, as emphasis shifted toward individual achievement and the notion of the artist as a uniquely visionary genius. This growing respect for artists as creators led to the collecting of artist's self-portraits and images of artists playing roles and at work. Such voracious collecting began with King Charles I, one of Europe's greatest art collectors. As soon as succeeding British monarchs began employing and collecting the work of artists (both British and European), they also began collecting artist's self-portraits.

*Portrait of the Artist: An Exhibition from the Royal Collection* is divided into four sections:

The first section is titled *Portraits of Artists* and includes images of Peter Paul Rubens, Isaac Oliver, Annibale Carracci, Joshua Reynolds and Lucian Freud, among others. The second, which looks at the *Artist at Work*, has a remarkable self-portrait of Sir Edwin Landseer and Thomas Rowlandson's satirical *The Chamber of Genius*, c. 1805-10. The third section, *Playing a Role*, which looks at how the self-portrait provides artists the opportunity to choose what persona to present to the world, includes one of the most important Italian paintings of the seventeenth century, Artemisia Gentileschi's iconic *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting (La Pittura)*, c.1638-9. The final section, which examines the role of the self-portrait in the *Life and Legacy* of artists, includes works by Johann Wittmer, *Raphael's First Sketch of the 'Madonna della Sedia,'* 1853, and Giovanni Castiglione's, *The Genius of Castiglione*, 1648.

Helping to mark the sesquicentennial of Canada, *Portrait of the Artist* is exclusive to Vancouver, having been generously lent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II from the British Royal Collection. The exhibition is curated by Anna Reynolds, Lucy Peter and Martin Clayton from Royal Collection Trust. The coordinating curator is Ian Thom, Senior Curator—Historical.

## Exhibition Support

**Visionary Partner for Historical Exhibitions: Huaijun Chen and Family**

## **Exhibition-Related Public Programs**

### **Curator's Lecture: Anna Reynolds**

**When:** Saturday, November 18, 3:00 pm

**Where:** UBC Robson Square, 800 Robson Street, Theatre C300

**Admission:** \$16.00 General / \$14.00 Members / \$12.00 Students

This lecture will look at the varied ways in which artists have been depicted in artworks over time. Anna Reynolds proposes that the rise in images of artists is linked to broader changes in attitudes about the role of art and artists in society, and this lecture will examine what motivates an artist to represent themselves or each other. Reynolds will also consider the role of collectors and biographers in shaping an artist's reputation and legacy.

Anna Reynolds is Senior Curator of Paintings at Royal Collection Trust, where she has worked since 2008. She is part of the curatorial team with responsibility for temporary exhibitions at The Queen's Gallery in London and The Queen's Gallery in Edinburgh, as well as the permanent display of approximately 8,000 paintings across royal residences including Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Her exhibitions and accompanying publications include *In Fine*

*Style—The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion* (2013), *Royal Childhood* (2014), *A Royal Welcome* (2015) and *Portrait of the Artist* (2016). She is currently undertaking a sabbatical year at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York where she has been awarded the Polaire Weissman fellowship. Her research examines the connections between the paintings of John Singer Sargent and fashion. Reynolds holds an undergraduate degree from Cambridge University, a Diploma from Christie's Education and a Masters in the History of Art from the Courtauld Institute.

**\*Also opening this month at the Vancouver Art Gallery:**

*Gordon Smith: The Black Paintings* (October 21, 2017 – February 4, 2018)

*True Nordic: How Scandinavia Influenced Design in Canada* (October 28, 2017 – January 28, 2018)

*Carol Sawyer: The Natalie Brettschneider Archive* (October 28, 2017 – February 4, 2018)

Image:

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting (La Pittura)*, c. 1638–39, oil on canvas, Royal Collection Trust, Photo: © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017

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IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

**MEDIA CONTACT**

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**About the Vancouver Art Gallery**

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most respected and innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs, and emphasis on advancing scholarship focus on historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the world. Special attention is paid to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists, as well as to the arts of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art that the Gallery founded in 2014. The Gallery's programs also explore the impacts of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture. [www.vanartgallery.bc.ca](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca)

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.

**About Royal Collection Trust**

Royal Collection Trust, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The Queen. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes. Royal Collection Trust's work is undertaken without public funding of any kind. [www.royalcollection.org.uk](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk)

The Royal Collection is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some fifteen royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by

the Sovereign for her successors and the nation, and is not owned by The Queen as a private individual. At The Queen's Galleries in London and Edinburgh aspects of the Collection are displayed in a programme of temporary exhibitions. Many works from the Collection are on long-term loan to institutions throughout the UK, and short-term loans are frequently made to exhibitions around the world as part of a commitment to public access and to show the Collection in new contexts. Explore the Royal Collection at [www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection)