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Vancouver Art Gallery Launches New Triennial: *Vancouver Special*

First edition *Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures* features artworks by 40 artists examining contemporary art practices in the city



September 1, 2016, Vancouver, BC – The Vancouver Art Gallery is pleased to announce the inauguration of a new triennial exhibition *Vancouver Special*. The first edition of this triennial, *Ambivalent Pleasures*, will open on December 3, 2016 at the Gallery, featuring a diverse range of media including painting, drawing, animations, ceramics, textiles, audio and installation works by 40 artists. This exhibition offers a comprehensive look at the most current contemporary art practices in this city, and the triennial model creates a formal and sustained engagement for the Gallery to connect with local artists and bring exposure to emerging practices. The full list of participating artists will be unveiled in early October.

The Vancouver Art Gallery has regularly produced exhibitions surveying the activity of contemporary artists in and around Vancouver. *Paint* (2006), *How Soon Is Now: Contemporary Art From Here* (2009) and *Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture* (2012) have been timely assessments of the local arts scene. Following comparable models such as *Made in L.A.*, *Greater New York* and Tokyo's *Roppongi Crossing*—all highly-anticipated platforms presenting the arts activity within these respective cities—*Vancouver Special* will showcase contemporary practices that emerge from this place, and further establish Vancouver as a dynamic city for visual art.

Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures is co-curated by Daina Augaitis, Vancouver Art Gallery's Chief Curator/Associate Director, and guest curator Jesse McKee, the Head of Strategy at 221A Artist-Run Centre. After conducting an extensive number of studio and gallery visits, the curators have selected works by 40 artists and developed an exhibition that encompasses a range of reimagined explanations of surrealism, abstraction and conceptual practices.

Enthused by the activities and dialogues within the city over the last five years, this triennial looks at recent shifts in the cultural ecology such as the increasingly hazy conceptualizations of place and identity that are triggered by such contemporary conditions as deeper global interconnectedness, growing austerity and the presence of the digital cloud. While focusing on emerging practices, *Ambivalent Pleasures* also includes a number of established artists who engage in similar conversations, resulting in a multigenerational exhibition.

Vancouver Special: Ambivalent Pleasures will be accompanied by a 144-page book co-published by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Black Dog Publishing. It will feature reproductions artworks presented in the exhibition, as well as texts by the curators and invited critics and scholars.

About the curators

Daina Augaitis has been Chief Curator/Associate Director at the Vancouver Art Gallery since 1996 where she works with a team of curators to conceive and develop the Gallery's exhibitions, publications, collections and public programs. Among the solo exhibitions she has curated or co-curated are those focusing on Rebecca Belmore, Douglas Coupland, Christos Dikeakos, Stan Douglas, Charles Edenshaw, Geoffrey Farmer, Bharti Kher, Kimsooja, Muntadas (organized for the Museo Reina Sofia), Brian Jungen, Ian Wallace, Gillian Wearing and Zhu Jinshi. Thematic exhibitions have included *For the Record: Drawing Contemporary Life*; *Visceral Bodies*; *Between Object and Action: Transforming Media in the 1960s and 70s*; and *MashUp: The Birth of Modern Culture* (with Bruce Grenville and Stephanie Rebick). Augaitis was formerly Director of the Visual Arts Program at the Banff Centre for the Arts, where she organized thematic residencies for artists and curators as well as spoken word, pirate radio and performance art projects, and has held curatorial positions at the Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff; the Western Front, Vancouver; Convertible Showroom, Vancouver; and Franklin Furnace, New York.

Jesse McKee is the Head of Strategy at 221A, Vancouver. He is responsible for leading the organization's research-based programming and aligning all aspects of the organization's work with a strategic plan that develops and sustains self-organized cultural infrastructures. Prior to joining 221A he was the Curator of the Walter Phillips Gallery at the Banff Centre, and the Exhibitions Curator of Western Front in Vancouver. He completed a curatorial residency with Tranzit.org in Romania, and curated a group exhibition on the grotesque entitled *Stopping the Sun in its Course* at the François Ghebaly Gallery in Los Angeles in 2015. In 2013 McKee was a jury member for the Sobey Art Award, and was a member of the Canada Council for the Art's Asia Pacific Delegation. In 2015 he was a nominator for The Aimia Photography Prize and the The Brink Award. His writing has appeared in *Canadian Art*, *C Magazine*, *Fillip* and *Border Crossings*. Recent catalogue essays have focused on the work of Ricardo Brey for the Museum of Fine Arts, Havana and the Museum of Modern Art, Antwerp, and Bill Vazan for the VOX Center for the Contemporary Image, Montreal.'

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 contemporary and historical exhibitions all year round, and provides a global platform for British Columbia's dynamic artistic community, including the work of First Nations as well as art of the Asian Pacific artists. Its growing collection of over 12,000 artworks 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. www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

Images:

(left) Tamara Henderson, *The Scarecrow's Holiday*, 2015, textile, wood, glass, sand, pigment, Courtesy of the Artist and Rodeo, London, Photo: Robert Wedemeyer, Courtesy of China Art Objects
(middle) Derya Akay, *cyclodrum, potbound & soup from stone*, 2015, ash, acrylic, beeswax, buttermilk, ceramics, clay gathered from turkish, beaches (cone 6 orange cone 10 silver), cochineal dye, coffee, copper, cotton, egg yolk, flowers, ginger ale, glass, glue, house paint, hydrogen peroxide, indigo dye, kimchi juice, linen, madder root dye, metal, mirror, oil paint, paper, pickling fruits & vegetables, pigment, plaster, plexiglass, sand, sardine oil, sea salt, silk, sodium hydroxide, spit, stones from Chris, Joe & Wesley and Cemrenaz (melted), teavinegar, walnut oil, watercolour, wood, Courtesy of the Artist, Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid, Courtesy of Gardiner Museum
(right) Barry Doupé, *Shell Vase*, 2016, digital drawing created using Deluxe Paint V on an AMIGA computer, Courtesy of the Artist

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.