

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY EXHIBITION GIVES OLYMPIC VISITORS THE CHANCE TO SEE BRITISH COLUMBIA THROUGH THE EYES OF THE PROVINCE'S ARTISTS

## **VISIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA A LANDSCAPE MANUAL**

VANCOUVER, BC – Visitors from around the world during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will see British Columbia through the eyes of the province's renowned artists at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Presented from January 23 to April 18, 2010, *Visions of British Columbia: A Landscape Manual* is among the largest exhibitions of British Columbia's visual art ever mounted. This landmark survey occupying two full floors of the Gallery will showcase artworks from a wide variety of media throughout the province's rich artistic history.

"From the earliest days to the present, artists have played a critical role in recording, communicating and shaping public perception of British Columbia," said Vancouver Art Gallery director Kathleen Bartels. "Through their art we have come to understand the extraordinary diversity of this region, its people and places. We are grateful that our partnership with the Province of British Columbia will allow us to provide free access to these magnificent artworks during the 17 days of the Olympic Winter Games, and for the generous support of investment dealer Raymond James whose major contribution as Presenting Sponsor helped make this exhibition possible."

*Visions of British Columbia* opens with a large-scale installation presenting an array of images and objects drawn from the broadest possible range of the province's visual culture. Envisioned as a cabinet of wonders, the installation presents more than 60 artworks on one wall, including paintings, drawings, projection, sculptures, prints, books, films and photographs, sometimes displayed as many as seven or eight high. Revealing the astounding diversity of British Columbia's visual culture, the installation is a visual testament to the breadth and complexity of the province's art.

"The visions represented in this exhibition are as varied as the artists who produced them and as diverse as the landscapes that inspired them," said Vancouver Art Gallery senior curator Bruce Grenville, who curated the exhibition. "From the ocean to the mountains, rivers, forests, beaches, deltas, streets, lawns and sidewalks, this province provides a seemingly endless impetus to artmaking."

Drawn primarily from the Gallery's rich permanent collection and supplemented with key loans, *Visions of British Columbia* includes landscapes, cityscapes and portraits that speak to the province's rich artistic traditions. Tracing a captivating path across the history and rugged terrain of British Columbia, the exhibition charts a course beginning with ceremonial masks by renowned First Nations artist Willie Seaweed and continuing through to the many internationally acclaimed artists working in the province today. As the exhibition progresses, the



works of 37 artists are highlighted, each represented by a group of outstanding works or a major installation. Included are canonical works by Roy Arden, B.C. Binning, Karen Bubas, Emily Carr, Robert Davidson, Stan Douglas, Charles Edenshaw, Gathie Falk, Rodney Graham, Fred Herzog, Brian Jungen, Ken Lum, Liz Magor, Scott McFarland, Susan Point, Bill Reid, Jack Shadbolt, Gordon Smith, Althea Thauberger, John Vanderpant, Frederick Varley, Jeff Wall and Ian Wallace, among others.

“*Visions of British Columbia* will give B.C. residents and visitors alike the opportunity to experience the tremendous depth of talent and creativity that exists in our province,” said Premier Gordon Campbell. “With the British Columbia Pavilion located within the Gallery during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, thousands of people from across Canada and around the world will have the opportunity to visit the pavilion and see this exhibit of world-class B.C. artwork free of charge.”


A major thread of the exhibition is the connection between the province’s artists and the natural environment. Emily Carr’s paintings from the 1930s depict a dark, mysterious and impenetrable natural world vulnerable to the economic forces of logging. Fifty years later, photo-based artist Jeff Wall photographed a monumental lone pine tree on a corner lot in suburban Vancouver, signifying the transformation of the landscape. Ian Wallace, in his series of mixed-media paintings of the Clayoquot protest of 1993, documents the largest act of civil disobedience in the province’s history when citizens blockaded logging roads to stop the destruction of old-growth trees.

Jin-me Yoon presents a completely different take on the ideals embodied in the province’s wilderness in her 1996 photo installation *A Group of Sixty-seven*. Placing sixty-seven Korean-Canadian immigrants against the backdrop of a Lawren Harris mountain painting and an Emily Carr forest painting, she highlights a perceived incongruence of her subjects in relation to the modernist landscapes that often stand for a major aspect of British Columbian identity.

“It is an honour to have helped make this landmark celebration of British Columbia’s visual art possible during the 2010 Games,” said Paul Allison, president and chief executive officer of Raymond James. “We are proud to join with the Vancouver Art Gallery in showcasing the province’s best artists and sharing their treasures with all Canadians and visitors from around the globe.”

The largest survey of British Columbia art since the exhibition that opened Vancouver Art Gallery in its current location in 1983, *Visions of British Columbia* will offer the best opportunity to experience the province’s visual culture during the 2010 Winter Games. The exhibition is curated by Vancouver Art Gallery senior curator, Bruce Grenville and assistant curator Emmy Lee, and is accompanied by a major publication co-published with Douglas & McIntyre that pairs the work of each artist in the exhibition with texts by renowned British Columbia writers.

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Emily Carr, *Scorned as Timber Beloved of the Sky* [detail], 1935, oil on canvas. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Emily Carr Trust. Photo: Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery.

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