

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Drawing the World: Masters to Hipsters** **June 28 to September 21, 2003**



(Images L to R: Carlo Vimercati, *Figure and Drapery Studies*, c1700, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Don de Sidney and Gladye Bregman, Toronto, 2002; Alex Morrison, *Every House I've Ever Lived in Drawn from Memory* (detail), 2000, Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund; Rajasthan School, Bundi, *Lakshmi-narayan flying through the night sky*, c1760, San Diego Museum of Art, Edwin Binney 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection; Marcel Dzama, *Untitled*, 2000, Vancouver Art Gallery; Michael Landy, *The Subject of Consumption*, 1999, ink on paper, Collection of Karsten Schubert, London, Photo by Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd., Courtesy of Karsten Schubert)

**Vancouver, BC** – *Drawing the World: Masters to Hipsters* opens at the Vancouver Art Gallery on June 28, with works that stretch the parameters of drawing from masters of the Italian Renaissance to new work by LA hipsters. This monumental project spans 500 years and explores the rich and diverse worlds of drawing, bringing to Vancouver over 400 works from diverse cultural traditions east to west, north to south.

*Drawing the World: Masters to Hipsters* incorporates four distinct historical collections and a contemporary exhibition:

- Italian Drawings from the National Gallery of Canada;
- Power and Desire: South Asian Paintings from the San Diego Museum of Art, Edwin Binney 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection
- Where the River Widens, Drawings by Baker Lake Artists;
- Nk'Mip Chronicles: Drawings from the Osoyoos Museum; and,
- For the Record: Drawing Contemporary Life.

“We are pleased to present for the first time in Vancouver works by major international artists including Raymond Pettibon’s installation from Documenta 2002,” said Kathleen Bartels, Director, Vancouver Art Gallery. “We will also present new works created specifically for this exhibition by Xu Bing, Dave Muller, Natasha McHardy and Elizabeth MacKenzie.”

While painting has dominated the visual arts for centuries, and photo-based art has become the rising star of recent decades, drawing has continued to be an essential art form in its own right. Not only is drawing the foundation of all visual arts, it continues to develop as a unique medium with a seemingly unlimited capacity to communicate and inspire. It is timely to consider the history and current practice of drawing, how it depicts diverse worlds, tells a story and communicates ideas.

**For the Record: Drawing Contemporary Life**

*For the Record: Drawing Contemporary Life* brings together forty artists who have a serious commitment to drawing. International in scope, the exhibition has a strong core of Vancouver-based artists and includes some of the hottest artists from North America, Europe and Asia. *For the Record: Drawing Contemporary Life* comprises 160 works including four site-specific works that were created specifically for this exhibition.

“Drawing is intrinsic to human communication—we doodle, scribble and make diagrams to record and convey meaning,” said Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/ Associate Director, Vancouver Art Gallery. “Today’s art world shows signs of unprecedented rigour and energy in drawing, and as a result traditional parameters are being pushed and new forms of expression have emerged.”

The exhibition seeks to investigate the ways in which today’s artists have pushed the limits of drawing and how they have used the medium to address the world we live in. The traditional parameter of “works on paper” has been expanded to incorporate drawings on canvas, vases, walls and a car. It also includes garbage and computers as the means for generating the work. While the standard conventions of line, contour and perspective are evident, there is a focus on content over form. As a result, the art works are largely figurative, and this exhibition looks at the subjects of study, considering drawing as a way to record and comment on contemporary life.

*For the Record: Drawing Contemporary Life* offers a contemporary counterpoint to the social values and cultural perspectives that exist in the historical segments of this project. A new catalogue *For the Record: Drawing Contemporary Life* has been created that examines the representational impulse of drawing in contemporary art. The catalogue, hot off the press on June 23, is authored by Daina Augaitis and published by the Vancouver Art Gallery. This exhibition is curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator and organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery.

**Italian Drawings from the National Gallery of Canada/ Dessins italiens de la collection du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada**

In the Western art world, drawing rose to unparalleled heights of acclaim and sophistication during the Italian Renaissance. It was not until sixteenth century Italy that a concerted effort to collect and appreciate drawings, such as Giorgio Vasari's collection of drawings by Italian contemporaries in his famous *Book of Drawing*, commenced.

The collections of the National Gallery of Canada include a rich survey of drawings of this period, 1520 to 1800, with a particular emphasis on the drawings of the seventeenth century, which depict the people, landscape, and activities of the time. Works presented are by Guercino, Giordano, Jacopo da Empoli and the Carracci, showing the innovative use of chalk, ink and varieties of coloured paper. These drawings give immediate insight into the work of major figures from the Italian Renaissance and the culture that inspired them.

Curated by David Franklin, Deputy Director, Chief Curator, National Gallery of Canada. Coordinating Curator - Ian Thom, Senior Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery.

**Power and Desire: South Asian Paintings from the San Diego Museum of Art, Edwin Binney 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection**

*Power and Desire* is comprised of 67 works created under the patronage of rulers of South Asian courts between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. India's ancient tradition of miniatures has influenced a unique practice of drawing where exceptional depictions of battle, romance and everyday life are manifest in miniature but exquisite form. These works are the great achievement of Indian two-dimensional art and include both religious and secular subject matter.

Motives of power and desire underlie the narrative of much South Asian painting, giving the exhibition its title. The dynamics of relationships between ruler and subject, lover and beloved, and gods and humans are used to organize the exhibition into three sections: Rule And Domain (Kings in Royal Audience, Hunts, Entertainments, Kings & Gods), Love And Longing (Sanctioned Relationships, Objects of Desire, Pleasures & Torments) and Divine Realms (Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Cosmic Realms).

These works were made at court-sponsored ateliers to serve the pleasure and interests of rulers of South Asian courts – Mughal, Rajput, and Deccani. The Mughals translated Persian manuscript illumination into a record of the magnificence of their rulership in South Asia. This contrasts sharply with the aims of indigenous Rajput painting that is rooted in a long tradition of Buddhist and Hindu religious narratives. The paintings were gathered in unbound sets or incorporated into sumptuous manuscripts.

The Edwin Binney 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection of South Asian Painting totals 1,450 works of art and was bequeathed to the San Diego Museum of Art in 1990. Edwin Binney the 3<sup>rd</sup> was a grandson of the founder of Binney & Smith, makers of Crayola Crayons. He served on the board of the San Diego Museum of Art from 1977-1979 and from 1983-1986. The Binney collection includes work from nearly every court and period on the subcontinent.

The Edwin Binney 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection is regarded as one of the most important collections of South Asian painting in the United States. The Vancouver Art Gallery is the final venue in a major international tour of this rare collection that commenced in San Diego in spring 2000 and has travelled to New York, Hong Kong, Nice and Geneva.

Curated by Dr. Caron Smith, Senior Curator of Asian Art, San Diego Museum of Art; Dr. Vishakha Desai, Senior Vice President, Director of Museum and Cultural Programs, Asia Society, New York; Dr. Kavita Singh, Associate Professor, School of Arts and Aesthetics, University Jawaharlal Nehru, New Delhi. Coordinating Curator – Ian Thom, Senior Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery.

### **Where the River Widens, Drawings by Baker Lake Artists**

Drawings by the Inuit have attracted the notice of scholars, artists, collectors and wide audiences since the early years of the twentieth century. This selection of 78 works produced by aboriginal artists of Canada's north from the 1960s to the present provides an overview of various factors that have affected the development of Inuit art as well as revealing the evolution of subject matter, styles and community approaches.

Qamanittuaq means "Where the river widens," the Inuit name for Baker Lake, a place where four rivers meet. This exhibition presents an evolving tradition of over thirty-five years of drawing in Baker Lake, a small community in the western Canadian Arctic. These drawings reveal a rich history of shamanic and spiritual imagery focused on the interconnection of three elements—family, animals and the spirit world. They also reflect changes to life in the North during the last thirty years, and an increasing awareness of artistic traditions in the world outside Arctic Canada.

Art production began in Baker Lake in the 1960s. The Canadian government funded programs for carving, fabric work and printmaking in order to provide skills to create new sources of income. Although it had never been a part of Inuit culture, drawing now became a new way to make money. Of the nineteen artists whose works are featured in this exhibition, ten are from the more economically disadvantaged groups around Baker Lake who moved off the land to avoid illness and

starvation. Today many Baker Lake artists continue to make artwork and distribute drawings directly through art dealers across Canada, the United States and Europe.

This exhibition is curated by Judith Nasby, with assistance from Marion Jackson and William Noah and is organized by the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre in Guelph, Ontario. It was originally developed in conjunction with an arts symposium held in Baker Lake in 1994. The Macdonald Stewart Art Centre has been collecting contemporary Inuit drawings for more than twenty years, and has built a body of interviews with artists to support their collections. Translations from some of those interviews accompany the exhibition.

### **Nk'Mip Chronicles: Drawings from the Collection of the Osoyoos Museum**

This rare group of 36 drawings was created by young Nk'Mip students between 1932 and 1942 attending the Inkameep Day School in British Columbia. The students, under the guidance of teacher Anthony Walsh, created drawings that depict everyday realities and a sense of identity growing up in mid-twentieth-century British Columbia. Their world was complex, layering Okanagan traditions and stories, old and new ways of life, an evolving agricultural economy and North American popular culture.

Anthony Walsh's approach to teaching and learning through the arts was very unusual for his time. During his tenure at Inkameep Day School, the school became a focus for building bridges between Native and non-Native communities. The activities in the school gave profound personal testimony to the benefits of building a respectful, multicultural environment. An editorial appearing in 1944 in *Saturday Night*, a national news magazine, reads: "It seems odd that the most intelligent and understanding suggestions for modernization of Canada's policy towards the Indians of the Dominion should have come from a little community in British Columbia. But such is the case."

The artwork was regularly submitted to the Children's Wartime Drawing competition held by the Royal Drawing Society in London, England, and students won awards there every year. The British Royal Family purchased a drawing on buckskin by one student, Francis Baptiste (Sis hu lk). Artwork from Inkameep was also exhibited in Glasgow, Dublin, Paris and Vienna. In Canada, the artists Emily Carr and Lawren Harris corresponded with Walsh about his work at Inkameep and the children's artwork, as did the American filmmaker Walt Disney.

It is unusual for the Vancouver Art Gallery to exhibit children's work, however, these drawings provide a rare insight into the lives and views of this group of children, and into the ongoing national dialogue on evolving ideas about Canadian identity and citizenship.

Inkameep and Nk'Mip - The Osoyoos Indian Band, or Nk'Mip in the Okanagan language, was formed in 1877 and is part of the Okanagan Nation. Today, approximately 370 band members live on the Osoyoos Indian Reservation near Oliver, British Columbia. Inkameep is the phonetic spelling of the contemporary word Nk'Mip, which the band uses.

This exhibition has been curated by Ian Thom, Senior Curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery, with invaluable assistance from Dr Andrea Walsh, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Victoria, and organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Tickets for this exhibition may be purchased in advance by phone (604-662-4700 ext.525) or by email [tickets@vanartgallery.bc.ca](mailto:tickets@vanartgallery.bc.ca). For information regarding the *Drawing Your World Summer Contest* to win a 19-day all-inclusive drawing and painting vacation at the Centre Estival des Arts, France, visit [www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/home.cfm](http://www.vanartgallery.bc.ca/home.cfm)

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**Italian Drawings from the National Gallery of Canada/ Dessins italiens de la collection du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada.** Organized and circulated by the National Gallery of Canada. Supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Travelling Exhibitions indemnification program.

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