

For Immediate Release

Vancouver Art Gallery Announces Ian M. Thom's Retirement from the Position of Senior Curator— Historical

April 20, 2018, Vancouver, BC – Following a thirty year career with Vancouver Art Gallery as Senior Curator – Historical, Ian M. Thom will retire from his position at the end of June 2018.

Over his many years with Vancouver Art Gallery, Thom has been integral to the presentation of more than one hundred exhibitions at the Gallery and across Canada. Considered a leading expert of BC art and a pre-eminent scholar of Emily Carr's works, Thom has served as a sought-after authority on the Gallery's permanent collection. He has also contributed immensely to the growth of the permanent collection, playing a key role in the acquisition of important works from Canada and abroad.

Thom helped facilitate the entry of 119 works by original members of the Group of Seven, which includes major artworks by Arthur Lismer and A.Y. Jackson. He also brought into the collection or added significantly to the representation of works by such artists as John Vanderpant, Beatrice Lennie, Jock Macdonald, and Liliias Farley. Within the Gallery's Indigenous art collection, Thom was key to the entry of thirty-two historical Indigenous objects and several important contemporary Indigenous works. He notably worked closely with the late esteemed collector Ron Longstaffe, who donated close to 800 works to the Gallery before he passed away in 2003. Thom was directly responsible for arranging the entry of 195 works from the collection Longstaffe gifted to the Gallery, including eleven works by Betty Goodwin and two major Bertram Charles Binning paintings.

Among the exhibitions Thom has organized, highlights of his curatorial credits include the Vancouver Art Gallery retrospective of *EJ Hughes* (2002), the retrospective of works by *Takao Tanabe* (2005), a collaboration between Vancouver Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria that later toured the country, *Gordon Smith: The Black Paintings* (2018) and exhibitions featuring works by Frederick Varley, LeMoine FitzGerald and Lawren Harris. In conjunction with the 2010 Winter Olympics, Thom curated *Leonardo Da Vinci: The Mechanics of Man*. Also notable, the 2006 travelling exhibition *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon*, presented by the National Gallery of Canada and Vancouver Art Gallery, changed the conversation around Carr's place in Canadian art history.

Thom has contributed to seventy eight publications, and is the author of thirteen books, including *Challenging Traditions: Contemporary First Nations Art of the Northwest Coast* (2009), a major survey of forty contemporary Indigenous artists of the Northwest, *Art BC: Masterworks from British Columbia* (2000), the first comprehensive history of visual art in the province, and *Andy Warhol: Images* (1995), an overview of the American artist's most influential works.

For his achievements as a curator, Thom has been recognized nationally; he was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2008, and received the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

“With a breadth of knowledge of Canadian historical art that is unmatched in the country, Ian has played a pivotal role in developing the Gallery’s permanent collection and bringing these works to new light before the public. His dedication as a historian, lecturer, writer and curator has been invaluable to the Gallery and has had a lasting impact on the Canadian visual art landscape,” says Kathleen Bartels, Director. “We congratulate Ian on his retirement and look forward to continuing to work with him on special projects and research.”

“I am tremendously proud to have been a part of this renowned institution as a member of the talented curatorial team. Looking back on the exhibitions of the last thirty years, it has been an honour to highlight significant artists by putting their works in front of new audiences and adding to wider interest in visual art,” says Ian M. Thom.

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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 innovative ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on the historical and contemporary art of British Columbia and international centres, with special attention to the accomplishments of First Nations artists and the art of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art 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

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.

MEDIA CONTACT

Johanie Marcoux

Director, Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs

jmarcoux@vanartgallery.bc.ca, Direct: 604-662-4721