



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, November 1, 2002

Liz Magor
November 16 to February 23, 2003



Liz Magor, *Cabin in the Snow* (detail), 1989, mixed media, courtesy of Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

Vancouver, BC – A solo exhibition of the work of Canadian artist, Liz Magor, opens at the Vancouver Art Gallery on November 16 featuring a remarkable collection of sculpture, photography and installation pieces. The survey brings together a total of 18 works created over the past 13 years and explores the artist’s interest in a widely shared desire to escape the uncertainties of the present into the realms of nature, history and the domestic.

“The Gallery first exhibited the work of Liz Magor in 1980 and this survey is long overdue. Along with a significant new publication, this exhibition provides recognition to one of Vancouver’s principal visual artists,” said Kathleen Bartels, Director, Vancouver Art Gallery. “I am delighted to present the work of such an important Canadian artist in collaboration with The Power Plant in Toronto.”

Magor’s rigorous investigation of material and form has resulted in fresh perspectives using familiar icons—a cabin in the snow, a case of Kokanee beer, a woman’s raincoat, a ubiquitous dog, a hollow log. Ordinary objects are remade, cast from the original item in non-traditional materials, creating sculptures and installations with a delusional quality, a feeling that things are not quite as they seem. Despite the sculptural simplicity and clarity of the work, the artist’s subtle manipulation of texture and material challenges visual assumptions of what is real and what is not.

Magor's work has for some time explored the desire for seclusion and issues around identity. The unattainable ideal of escape into nature and the search for authentic experience reverberates through much of the work in this survey. Recent work also expands on these ideas by dealing with notions of refuge, shelter and the idea of domestic defence—how we stash, hoard and protect ourselves with commodities. Magor has a rare aesthetic ability to choose visually powerful motifs to convey these themes.

“Magor's work suggests narrative interpretations: stories can be attached to each of the photographs, sculptures and installations that make up this exhibition,” said Grant Arnold, Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery. “However through their persistent emphasis on reproduction and imitation—the sense that what appears to be real isn't—the very basis on which any certain meaning can be found is called into question. The viewer is constantly returned to a position of doubt, caught in a never-ending process of trying to find a secure place through which to anchor the self in the world.”

Since her first solo exhibition in 1977, Magor has established an international reputation and represented Canada at the Biennale of Sydney in 1982, the prestigious Venice Biennale in 1984 and Documenta VIII, in Kassel, Germany in 1987. However, she resists attempts to label her art as significantly evocative of Canada and more specifically of British Columbia as a place of last resort. “Wherever there is a city, there are citizens who want out, who dream of a solitary, independent life. I'm sure there are just as many restless people in Toronto as in Vancouver.” (Canadian Art, Spring, 2000)

In Canada, her work has been exhibited in major public galleries and museums, including the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver. In 2001, she received the Governor General's Award for visual and media arts. This was a rare mark of respect for her work and an acknowledgment of her position as one of Canada's pre-eminent visual artists.

Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Magor studied at the University of British Columbia and the Parsons School of Design, New York. After living in Toronto from 1981 to 1993, the artist returned to the west coast and now divides her time between Vancouver and Cortes Island. She has taught at a number of institutions across Canada, including the University of British Columbia, the Ontario College of Art and Design and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. She currently teaches sculpture at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.

Liz Magor is represented by Equinox Gallery in Vancouver and Susan Hobbs Gallery in Toronto. Her last solo exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery was in 1980. The exhibition is curated by Grant Arnold of the Vancouver Art Gallery in collaboration with Philip Monk of The

Power Plant, Toronto. An illustrated catalogue has been published to accompany the exhibition. As part of the Philosophers' Café, Liz Magor will speak about her work at the Vancouver Art Gallery on Thursday, November 28 at 7pm.

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When: November 16 to February 23, 2003

Where: Vancouver Art Gallery
750 Hornby Street
Vancouver BC V6Z 2H7

Hours: Tuesday to Sunday & Holidays, 10am to 5.30pm
Thursdays, 10am to 9pm
Closed Mondays

Admission: Adults \$12.50
Seniors \$9.00
Students \$8.00
Children (12 & under) Free
Family \$30
Thursday evening suggested donation \$5.00

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Images: Digital images for professional media use are available at the Vancouver Art Gallery's FTP site.
MAC [ftp.vanartgallery.bc.ca](ftp://ftp1-vag@vanartgallery.bc.ca)
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