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## ***Myfanwy MacLeod, or There and Back Again*** uncovers new meanings in iconic popular culture

March 3, 2014, Vancouver, BC – Since the mid-1990s, Vancouver-based artist Myfanwy MacLeod has become widely known for making art that traverses the boundaries that define high culture and mass entertainment in a satirical investigation of social power. Opening on **March 8, 2014** at the Vancouver Art Gallery, ***Myfanwy MacLeod or There and Back Again*** features sculpture, painting and photography created by the artist over the past decade, uncovering new meanings and intersections within iconic episodes in popular culture and the history of modern art.

“The Vancouver Art Gallery is honoured to present the work of Myfanwy MacLeod, an outstanding Canadian artist,” said the Vancouver Art Gallery’s Director Kathleen S. Bartels. “Her work brings together an eclectic set of references, from conceptual art and Minimalism to motifs salvaged from popular literature, music and cinema.”

*Myfanwy MacLeod, or There and Back Again* highlights a selection of new works produced specifically for this exhibition. These include *Stack*, a large-scale wall-mounted series of screen printed paintings that resembles both a stack of Marshall amplifiers used by the iconic rock band Led Zeppelin to produce heavily amplified sound for stadium concerts and the minimalist sculpture of the influential American artist Donald Judd, and *Ramble On*, a 1977 Chevrolet Camaro that has been stripped of its engine and much of its bodywork then mounted on a steel “rotisserie” stand as if it’s a beast in the process of being roasted. Additional works include *The Emptiness* and *Lost Inside*, monumental versions of heavy metal logos that evoke the industrial and masculine character of minimalist sculpture, and *Albert Walker*, an oversized home entertainment unit that contains replicas of buds from a strain of marijuana named after a notorious Canadian con artist and murderer.

The exhibition’s title refers to J.R.R. Tolkien’s popular fantasy novel *The Hobbit, or There and Back Again* and has traces of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* trilogy found in Led Zeppelin’s song lyrics. This reference is intended to evoke the experience of a journey or quest in which encounters with strange and surprising scenarios initiate a process of discovery that challenges and transforms traditional perceptions of the commonplace.

Noting that “pop culture is the language I know,” MacLeod takes familiar objects and images from cartoons, movie posters, record albums and soft-core porn magazines, shifting their form or context in order to make visible the way they shape our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. “Myfanwy’s work is layered with humour, fantasy and allusions to forbidden desire. It’s simultaneously amusing and disconcerting. It situates the art world as a mirror of larger social structures by drawing attention to the way concepts such as privilege, value and gender are embedded in commonly held perceptions of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture,” said the exhibition’s curator Grant Arnold.

*Myfanwy MacLeod, or There and Back Again* is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Museum London and curated by Grant Arnold, Audain Curator of British Columbia Art, Vancouver Art Gallery and Cassandra Getty, Curator of Art, Museum London.

Presented in conjunction with *Myfanwy MacLeod, or There and Back Again*, an exhibition titled *Artist's Choice: Cock and Bull* features work from the Gallery's permanent collection selected by Myfanwy MacLeod and Grant Arnold following the model of a "cock and bull story," an improbable tale passed off as the truth. Taken together, the works that make up the exhibition engage with imbalances of power in the art world while addressing the conflict between art and commerce, and the tension between high art and popular entertainment.

**A media tour of *MacLeod, or There and Back Again* and *Artist's Choice: Cock and Bull* with Myfanwy MacLeod and Grant Arnold will take place at 9:00am, Thursday March 6, at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Media attending are request to RSVP to Debra Zhou ([dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca](mailto:dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca)).**

Image credits:

(Left) Myfanwy MacLeod, *Stack*, 2013, acrylic and ink on canvas, Courtesy of the Artist and Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver. Photo: Rachel Topham, Vancouver Art Gallery

(Right) Myfanwy MacLeod, *Ramble On*, 2013, 1977 Camaro Rally Sport, steel stand, Courtesy of Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Vancouver.

Visionary Partner: **David Aisenstat**

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**Images are available upon request.**

**MEDIA INFORMATION:**

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About the Vancouver Art Gallery: 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. We thank everyone for their continuing generosity