

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A New Chapter for the Collection: Vancouver Art Gallery Opens First Dedicated Collection Floor in More Than Two Decades

Featuring 200 plus works, *Highlights from the Collection* traces the evolving history of the Gallery's permanent collection



March 18, 2026, VANCOUVER, BC // Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations

The Vancouver Art Gallery presents *Highlights from the Collection*, a major exhibition drawn entirely from its permanent holdings of more than 13,000 artworks. This presentation marks the opening of a newly dedicated floor for the collection.

Featuring more than 200 works by over 100 artists, the exhibition traces the evolving history of the collection through the environments in which art has lived, circulated and gathered meaning. With the selection rotating regularly to preserve light-sensitive works, the exhibition will continually refresh, offering visitors differing perspectives on the collection throughout its run.

“*Highlights from the Collection* reflects our ongoing commitment to making the Gallery’s collection more accessible while foregrounding the stories and connections that continue to resonate today,” says **Eva Respini**, Interim Co-CEO & Curator at Large at the Vancouver Art Gallery. “As the cultural memory keeper of the province, the collection carries the legacies, voices and creative expressions that continue to shape our collective imagination. We are excited to invite visitors from near and far to rediscover beloved works, encounter new perspectives and experience the living histories held within our walls.”

Highlights from the Collection takes visitors on a tour through the Vancouver Art Gallery’s collection, from historic Indigenous art to contemporary practices today. Significant works—including *The Atom* (c. 1938) by **Beatrice Lennie**, **Andy Warhol’s** *Marilyn Monroe* (1967) and **Geoffrey Farmer’s** *The Surgeon and the Photographer* (2009)—are joined by recent acquisitions such as **Elizabeth McIntosh’s** striking painting *Work Out* (2023), **Ellen Pau’s** first super-8 film *Glove* (1984) and photographs by **Shikanosuke Yagaki** from the 1930s. The selection includes over 40 of the Gallery’s recent acquisitions, spanning sculpture, prints, video installations and site-specific wall paintings. Largely chronological, artworks appear in environments that evoke the exhibition conventions at the time the works were made, from salon-style arrangements and the intimate setting of a modernist home to the experimental spaces of artist-run centres and contemporary white cube galleries.

“A permanent collection is the sum of choices made throughout an institution’s history,” says **Diana Freundl**, Senior Curator & Interim Director of Collections. “*Highlights from the Collection* reflects the Gallery’s values at different moments in history. Through the artworks selected and the exhibition design, we hope to make visible those shifts in priorities and aesthetics over time. This project draws on the combined perspectives and expertise of the Gallery’s curatorial team; it has been deeply collaborative.”

Visitors begin their journey with an acknowledgment of the central, ongoing place of contemporary and **Historic Indigenous Art** in this region, including 19th century Haida totem poles, masks and silver jewellery. The section **Early Collecting** introduces the artistic histories and ideas that shaped the Gallery’s beginnings, bringing together works by Canadian photographer **William Notman** and Group of Seven painter **Lawren Harris** alongside **Emily Carr**, whose modernist depictions of Pacific Northwest forests continue to influence how the region is seen and represented in art today.

Modernisms on the West Coast explores Vancouver’s postwar embrace of abstraction and modern design, with works by **BC Binning**, **Rita Letendre** and **Jack Shadbolt**, while **Street Photography** highlights artists such as **Fred Herzog**—now Vancouver’s most widely recognized street photographer—whose vibrant images capture the rich textures of everyday life in the city. In **Pop & Prints**, works by **Roy Lichtenstein** and **Robert Rauschenberg** reflect the impact of consumer culture, alongside works that play with scale and materials by artists including **Gathie Falk** and **Dan Flavin**. **Claes Oldenburg’s** *Saw (Hard Version)*, commissioned for a 1969 exhibition at the Gallery, stands as a testament to the bold experimentation of the era.

The exhibition continues with **Video & Performance**, examining the Gallery as a key venue for interdisciplinary and time-based work in the 1960s and 70s. The Rotunda is transformed by performance documentation and video works from local and international artists, including **Paul**

Wong, Robert Smithson and Nam June Paik. It concludes with **Photoconceptualism**, which redefined photography's role in contemporary art, alongside **Contemporary Collecting**, highlighting the 1980s as a transformative period of expansion for the Gallery's collection. New acquisitions underscore this evolution, with photography by **Thomas Ruff** and **Cindy Sherman** presented alongside significant works by Vancouver's leading photo-based artists, including **Marian Penner Bancroft, Dana Claxton, Stan Douglas, Jeff Wall, Ian Wallace** and **Yin-me Yoon**.

Highlights from the Collection is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery Curatorial Department and will be on view at the Vancouver Art Gallery from March 27, 2026. An exclusive media preview, tour and Q&A will take place on Wednesday, April 8 at 4 PM.

To coincide with the launch of the permanent collection floor, the Gallery is producing a richly illustrated hardcover publication, the most significant record of our collection to date. Featuring a visual history and catalogue entries by members of the Gallery's current and former curatorial team—including **Daina Augaitis, Grant Arnold, Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, Bruce Grenville, Ian M. Thom** and **Scott Watson**—this publication offers a visual overview of the Gallery's holdings through a closer look at the stories and scandals behind 110 beloved works and lesser-known treasures.

Visionary Partner:

Bruno Wall

The Christopher Foundation

Generous Support:

The Phillips Family

Digitization of archival video material was generously supported by RBC Foundation.



Foundation

We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia.



PROGRAM SCHEDULE

THE MAKING PLACE

Every Sunday | 11AM – 4PM | 4East

The Making Place is an invitation for families to get creative together and make art inspired by the exhibitions on display. Every Sunday, families can expect hands-on making activities and a family-focused tour at 2PM, designed for visitors aged 5 to 12 years old and their families, although everyone is welcome. Drop in for a same-day tour on the day of your visit.

LUNCHTIME LOOK

Wednesdays at 1PM | Gallery Lobby

Take a closer look at the exhibition during your lunch hour with an intimate tour series led by members of the Gallery team. Each week a different expert—from curators and educators to conservators and art handlers—offers a unique perspective, sharing behind-the-scenes insights and stories about the artworks on view. Tours will be offered weekly, beginning April 15, and are free with Gallery admission. No booking required.

PUBLIC TOURS

Thursdays at 10:30 AM, 11:30 AM, 1 PM and 2 PM and Sundays at 11AM | Gallery Lobby

Guided Tours are a great way to enhance your Gallery experience and learn more about the cultural and social contexts of artworks on display. Led by a trained Art Educator, each tour is unique and reflects your guide's passions and interests. Free with Gallery admission.

-30-

Media package: <https://spaces.hightail.com/space/gsd3iBiMi3>

For media requests, email media@vanartgallery.bc.ca

Image: Geoffrey Farmer, *The Surgeon and the Photographer* (detail), 2009, paper, textile, wood, metal, Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Purchased with funds from the Jean MacMillan Southam Major Art Purchase Fund, Phil Lind, Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund, Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Program and the Michael O'Brian Family Foundation, VAG 2010.19.1, Photo: Vancouver Art Gallery

ABOUT THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

Founded in 1931 on the ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̅əm (Musqueam), Sḵwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's celebrated exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the world. Special attention is given to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists, as well as to those of the Asia Pacific region—through the Centre for Global Asias (formerly the Institute of Asian Art) founded in 2014. The Gallery's exhibitions also explore the impact of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture.

The Gallery's new Art of Wellbeing lab furthers its commitment to community by promoting the role of art in fostering health and wellbeing. Developed in collaboration with healthcare professionals, researchers and Indigenous Elders, the lab creates opportunities for individuals to engage with art in ways that support mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Committed to inclusivity and accessibility, the Gallery welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year to share perspectives, build community and shape our collective future through art.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a charitable not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the B.C. Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.