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Art Gallery of Hamilton Summer 2011 exhibition season highlights French and Francophone historical and contemporary art

The French Connection, the exhibition that inspired the Art Gallery of Hamilton's themed year, kicks off the Gallery's exhibition season this summer. This examination of Canadian artists who flocked to Paris and their French counterparts is joined by other exhibitions that highlight historical and contemporary art by French and Francophone artists. The Gallery's themed year is presented with the generous support of TD.

For Canadian artists working in the last quarter of the 19th century, the lure of Paris was irresistible. With its teaching and exhibition opportunities, international artists flocked to the City of Lights in search of education and artistic validation. On view from May 21 to September 5, 2011, ***The French Connection*** explores the essence of the French experience for Canadian artists and how it manifested itself in their work and thinking, alongside work by French masters such as Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904) and Jean-Paul Laurens (1838–1921). A central theme of the exhibition is a consideration of the annual Paris Salons, acceptance to which was considered the very apogée of one's training in Paris. As such, ***The French Connection*** brings together works exhibited at these pivotal exhibitions by such artists as Paul Peel (1860 – 1892), Maurice Cullen (1866 – 1934), William Blair Bruce (1859 – 1906), George Reid (1860 –1947), Laura Muntz (1860 – 1930) and Sophie Pemberton (1869 – 1959), among others. Curated by Tobi Bruce and Dr. Patrick Shaw Cable. This exhibition is funded in part by the Canadian Government through the Department of Canadian Heritage Museums Assistance Program.

On view June 9 to September 25, 2011, ***Out of Place / Non lieu: Lise Beaudry, Isabelle Hayeur, Marie-Josée Laframboise*** highlights three Canadian Francophone artists whose works portray ephemeral sites or places that don't exist in reality. The AGH is the first Ontario venue for Isabelle Hayeur's new body of work *Dé-peindre Québec ou l'envers du décor*, which addresses gentrification and the preservation of historic sites in old Quebec City. These large scale photographs are digitally altered to include elements that are both factual and fictional, presenting the viewer with seamless views of places that don't actually exist. Focusing on the temporal character of a site, Lise Beaudry photographs the snowy surfaces of frozen lakes in a highly minimalist manner. The images are mostly white with little detail. In aiming her lens downward instead of out to create these "landscapes," she leverages a new conceptual approach in her work, involving non-representational photography. An accompanying video, *Underscape*, is shot beneath a lake's icy surface. In the Gallery, it is projected at a large scale, engrossing the viewer in an experience of an ambiguous liquid environment. An installation piece by Marie-Josée Laframboise makes use of ambiguity as well, in an imaginary landscape made of undulating bright green net, suspended within and stretched across a room. Its surface is transparent, but the forms read as solid. The piece is created in a performative and intuitive manner, as the artist culls her memory for impressions of places she's been. The viewer's experience with the piece is subjective—it inspires multiple perspectives on this idea of a place. Curated by Melissa Bennett.

On view May 21 to September 5, ***Elegant Verve: Modern French Graphics from the Collection*** captures the vibrant spirit of graphic art by the French avant-garde in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with a selection of prints, drawings, and sketches. The latter half of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of an unprecedented degree of exploration in graphic media, giving rise to the rich diversity and originality that has distinguished French prints of the past two centuries. On view

will be works by mid-nineteenth century artists Honoré Daumier and Édouard Manet, later period works of the human form by the Impressionist artist Renoir and the woodcuts of boldly defined forms of Nabi artist Vallotton. Other featured artists from this period include Tissot, Seurat, Vuillard, and Bonnard. Owing to masters such as Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, Léger, Arp, and Bourgeois, whose works will also be on view, graphic media continued to demonstrate great vitality in the modern art movements of the twentieth century, from Cubism to Surrealism and beyond. Curated by Tara Ng, Curatorial Intern, with Dr. Patrick Shaw Cable.

On view June 9 to September 25, 2011, **Peter Karuna: All in Good Time** showcases the photographic work of the last forty-five years of this Hamilton-based visual artist. Many of his images are candid—they arrest rare moments when things ironic or beautiful align. His longstanding commitment to ecological and social issues is evident. Time itself is a reigning theme in Karuna's works—the mechanics of the medium of photography, and the poetics of time's passage. As broad as his subject matter is, time's fleeting character is a shared principle. Mostly black and white images, with a few in colour, the photographs were captured on film and digitally and are carefully printed by the artist. Curated by Melissa Bennett.

The following exhibitions are on view on Gallery Level Two, with free admission courtesy of Orlick Industries...

On view April 30 to August 14, 2011, **Mise-en-scène: Views of France** explores how artists past and present have responded to and interpreted the French landscape. From explorations of the pastoral views that have in part shaped our perception of France as an idyllic and evocative locale to depictions of Paris as a vibrant metropolitan center, the images, drawn from the Gallery's extensive holdings, provide artistic glimpses into the particular charm that has long characterized the country. In *Mise-en-scène* several generations of European, Canadian and American artists – including James W. Morrice, Christiane Pflug, Albert Marquet and Stephen Shore – take us to the places and spaces that inspired them, in turn transporting us there. Curated by Melissa Bennett and Tobi Bruce.

On view April 30 to August 14, 2011, **Brendan Fernandes: New Video Acquisitions** showcases two video works – *Foe* (2008) and *Performing Foe* (2009) – acquired by the AGH following Fernandes' exhibition *until we fearless* at the Gallery in 2010. This purchase was made possible with the generous support of Pierre Karch and Mariel O'Neill-Karch, with matching funds from the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance for Art Museums and Public Galleries program. In his works, Fernandes often explores the topics of post-colonialism and identity in globalized cultures. In *Foe* and *Performing Foe*, the artist examines the ways in which one learns to speak in a culturally specific way. These pieces play on the notion of pedagogy through mimicry and disguise; Fernandes' interests are not in the authenticity of these accents but in the idea of being taught to speak in these voices. He asks the viewer to consider the ways in which language and culture are acquired and communicated. Curated by Melissa Bennett.

From Rude to Rodin and Dance of Life: The Tanenbaum African Collection will also be on view throughout 2011.

The following exhibition is on view on the Central Staircase, with free admission courtesy of Orlick Industries...

On view throughout 2011, **passe-partout: A Century of Canadians in France** presents three generations of Canadian artists who journeyed to France over the course of a century in search of training, inspiration and exhibition. Works by Robert Pilot, Hortense Gordon, Edwin Holgate, Paul Peel, J.M. Barnsley, Maurice Cullen, William Blair Bruce and William Brymner are showcased. Curated by Tobi Bruce.

In the Jean and Ross Fischer Gallery, with free admission courtesy of Orlick Industries...

On view May 19 to June 19, 2011, **Follow Your Art VI: SAGE Student Exhibition** features an exciting array of works from Strathcona School's SAGE (Scholastics Arts Global Education) students from Senior Kindergarten through Grade 5. SAGE students visited the AGH five times throughout the school year, studying select exhibitions in depth and creating work based on their experiences. This exhibition is the culmination of a year's work for 91 talented students.

On view June 26 to August 25, 2011, **Express Your Vision: The Dundas Valley School of Art's Full-Time Programme** presents an exhibition of work by a selection of its current and former full-time students. DVSA's full-time programme has provided visual art education since 1978 and is a place for artists to learn about themselves as creative visual thinkers as it fosters independent and self-directed learning. The exhibition will present a range of work including painting, drawing and photography.

In the AGH Entrance Foyer....

On view May 14 to August 21, 2011, **Rick Pottruff: Search Engine City** continues the artist's exploration of large-scale, intricate and gestural drawings of cities, bridges, cars, ships, planets and technological devices providing ample opportunity for viewers to be psychologically transported into the worlds he creates. His hybrid style combines the devices of illustration, fine art, and film. Pottruff will undertake a new large drawing that will expand over the AGH foyer wall. Incorporating images of industry, traffic and more, he will portray an explosive dystopian scene that will catapult the viewer's eye across its many detailed sections. Beginning May 11th, the artist will be in the AGH foyer, creating this drawing on site over a period of several weeks. Viewers are encouraged to visit the AGH to see the drawing develop, and enjoy the rare opportunity to talk to the artist about his project while it's in progress. To confirm the artist's schedule, please visit www.artgalleryofhamilton.com - What's On Calendar, or call in advance at 905-527-6610, ext. 0. Curated by Melissa Bennett.

The Art Gallery of Hamilton's programming activities are assisted by the City of Hamilton, Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Art Gallery of Hamilton is located at 123 King Street West in downtown Hamilton, 905-527-6610. Gallery hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 12 noon to 7 pm, Thursday and Friday 12 noon to 9 pm, Saturday and Sunday 12 noon to 5 pm. Closed Mondays. The AGH is open from 12 noon to 5 pm on Victoria Day (Monday, May 23), Canada Day (Friday, July 1), Civic Day (Monday, August 1) and Labour Day (Monday, September 5). Admission to Gallery Level One is free on the first Friday of each month from 5 pm to 9 pm. As Canada Day falls on First Friday, the Gallery will be open and will offer free admission from 12 noon to 5 pm on July 1, 2011.

Please visit www.artgalleryofhamilton.com for complete exhibition and programming information.

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To access high-resolution images of AGH exhibitions and programming, please e-mail: steve@artgalleryofhamilton.com

For further information on the Art Gallery of Hamilton, its exhibitions and programming, please contact: Steve Denyes, Manager, Communications
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