

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 09, 2012



**ONLY STOP IN EASTERN CANADA:  
MUCH-ANTICIPATED WILLIAM KURELEK EXHIBITION  
KICKS OFF AGH WINTER 2012 SEASON**

The Art Gallery of Hamilton's Winter 2012 exhibition season hosts the eagerly anticipated exhibition of works by William Kurelek and two contemporary Canadian artists Mark Lewis and Kristin Bjornerud – the perfect launch to the AGH's year-long celebration of visionary Canadian Artists.

2012 marks the Art Gallery of Hamilton's **A League of Their Own** themed year – twelve months of visionary Canadian artists, presented by **TD**.

The time has come to revisit the work of one of the most recognized Canadian painters of the twentieth century. On view from January 28 to April 29, **WILLIAM KURELEK: THE MESSENGER** is the first exhibition of William Kurelek's (1927 – 1977) work in a quarter century. This project is an ambitious collaboration between the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and Winnipeg Art Gallery. With loans from institutions and individuals from across Canada, as well as the United States and Great Britain, and comprising over eighty important paintings, *William Kurelek: The Messenger* is the largest exhibition of the artist's work ever to be mounted.

William Kurelek—who was born in Alberta, raised in Manitoba and settled in Toronto—was an intriguing combination of everyman and visionary, and his work is equally complex. Widely recognized as a painter of reminiscences of his Prairie childhood and a chronicler of the experiences of various cultural groups in Canada, Kurelek conjured a sense of a timeless and innocent past. But there is another, equally important, Kurelek: the anguished prophet of a modern apocalypse, his art an indictment of the secular age and a testament to his unwavering Roman Catholic faith. Kurelek was at his best and most challenging when he successfully bridged the pastoral and the prophetic, combined memory and message. This exhibition explores the various ways in which he strove to reconcile the two poles of his thinking and practice—in essence, his being.

This exhibition is a collaboration between the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria and the Winnipeg Art Gallery and is co-curated by Tobi Bruce (AGH), Andrew Kear (WAG) and Mary Jo Hughes (AGGV). This project is generously funded by the Canadian Government through the Department of Canadian Heritage Museums Assistance Program.

On view January 14 to May 21, **KRISTIN BJORNERUD: SAFE HARBOUR** highlights the artist's lyrical watercolours conveying myths and legends, dreams and superstitions. This exhibition includes several works made during a residency on the island of Gotland, Sweden in 2010 as winner of the Brucebo Fine Art Foundation scholarship, which is juried in part by the Art Gallery of Hamilton. The Foundation was established by William Blair Bruce, a celebrated Hamilton painter of the turn of the 20th century, and his Swedish-born wife, artist Caroline Benedicks Bruce, to support emerging Canadian artists.

During her summer residency, Bjornerud's immersion in Gotland's fabled history and mythological atmosphere greatly influenced her works, and she incorporated her usual set of female characters drawn from life experiences. The paintings show scenes of women in tableaux, often in a mode of creation. They are playful, laden with references to women as producers, and to fables intertwined with historic events. Curated by Melissa Bennett.

From January 14 to May 21, the AGH is pleased to present two films by **MARK LEWIS**. Organized and circulated by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal as part of the MOMENTUM series, **RUSH HOUR, MORNING AND EVENING, CHEAPSIDE** (2005), captures the moving shadows of pedestrians in the slanting light of morning and end of day when the sun, low in the sky, stretches silhouettes magnificently along the ground. By simply inverting the image, Lewis composes a never-ending rush hour, with early morning perambulations sweeping past in continuous movement, right to the "golden hour" that precedes sunset. This film from the Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal has been made possible with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage through its Museums Assistance Program. **FORTE!** (2010) was filmed as the artist flew over the Italian Alps and a Napoleonic fort. Born in Hamilton, Mark Lewis is now based in London, England. His work has been shown widely around the world to enthusiastic notices, particularly for his contribution to the 2009 Venice Biennale of Visual Art where he represented Canada. In 2007 he was the winner of the inaugural Gershon Iskowitz Prize. **FORTE!** is curated by Melissa Bennett.

*The following exhibition is on view on Gallery Level Two, with free admission courtesy of Orlick Industries...*

Scale—both physical and perceived—plays an important part in how we experience the exhibition **SIZE MATTERS**, on view until June 17. Whether we look at an ambitious twelve-foot canvas or a miniature artwork the size of a locket, the dimensions of any given object can both define and condition how we perceive and engage with it. This exhibition explores the AGH collection from this perspective, as we ask ourselves how scale defines an artwork and, in turn, how size shapes our interaction with objects. **Size Matters** is largely an exploration, posing questions about what the scale of an object can communicate. Curated by Melissa Bennett and Tobi Bruce.

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

On view February 4 to May 13, the **WOMEN'S ART ASSOCIATION OF HAMILTON 116<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL JURIED EXHIBITION** presents works by seasoned exhibitors and newcomers selected by jury. Founded in 1894, the Women's Art Association is one of Hamilton's oldest and most important art associations. Ties between the WAAH and the Art Gallery of Hamilton are formative and longstanding, stemming back to the formation of the AGH in 1914, in part through the tireless efforts of early WAAH members.

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.

**The AGH is pleased to announce new hours for 2012.** The Gallery will be open Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 11 am to 6 pm; Thursday 11 am to 8 pm; Saturday and Sunday 12 noon to 5 pm; closed Mondays. For the AGH's First Fridays, admission is free from 4 pm to 8 pm on the first Friday of each month. The Gallery will be open 12 noon to 5 pm on Family Day (Monday, February 20), the first day of the March Break (Monday, March 12), Good Friday (Friday, April 6) and Easter Monday (Monday, April 9).

Please visit [www.artgalleryofhamilton.com](http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com) for complete exhibition and programming information.

**-END-**

**To access high-resolution images of AGH exhibitions and programming,** please e-mail: [steve@artgalleryofhamilton.com](mailto:steve@artgalleryofhamilton.com)

**For further information on the Art Gallery of Hamilton, its exhibitions and programming,** please contact: Steve Denyes, Manager, Communications  
[T] 905-527-6610, ext. 255 [E] [steve@artgalleryofhamilton.com](mailto:steve@artgalleryofhamilton.com) [W] [www.artgalleryofhamilton.com](http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com)