

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Art Gallery of Hamilton and TD Bank Financial Group present  
six exhibitions celebrating

**i**NSPIRATION  **east**

on view throughout the summer of 2008

Lavish silk kimonos. Cutting-edge of contemporary Japanese art. Private collections of historical Japanese ceramics and modern Chinese painting. The influence of Japanese art upon the work of Edgar Degas and James Tissot. An engaging roster of films, live performances, readings and workshops.

Visitors to the AGH have much to experience, as the Gallery's year-long celebration of Asian arts and culture, Inspiration East, presented by TD Bank Financial Group, culminates in a summer of outstanding exhibitions and related programming.

**Art Gallery of Hamilton Inspiration East** exhibitions:

**On view from May 10 to September 1, 2008**

***From Geisha to Diva: The Kimonos of Ichimaru***

One of the most famous geishas of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Japan, Ichimaru successfully escaped the geisha world and became a major singing talent in Japan. She continued to perform in full regalia throughout her long and illustrious career, and in true geisha fashion would continue to purchase beautiful kimonos, of which more than 20 are included in this exhibition organized and circulated by the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.

**On view from May 17 to August 24, 2008**

***The Collectors Series: Joe Ng***

***The Collectors Series: Luke Chan***

Hamilton collectors Joe Ng, founder of the Joe Ng Group of Companies, and Luke Chan, Associate Vice-President of International Affairs at McMaster University, have each assembled a sizable and quality collection of Asian art. Joe Ng's collection focuses primarily upon historical Japanese ceramics, dating from the 17th to the 20th century. Luke Chan concentrates on modern Chinese painting nourished by and continuing the age-old tradition of Chinese landscape painting and calligraphy.

**On view from April 27 to September 28, 2008**

***TD Waterhouse Great Masters Series: Masters of the Ukiyo-e***

A quintessential Japanese historical art form, *ukiyo-e* (“pictures of the floating world”) are colour woodblock prints featuring such subjects as landscapes and urban life; works by such masters as Hiroshige and Kunisada show such subjects as geishas, sumo wrestlers, episodes along the Tokaido Road, river crossings, and snow scenes.

**On view from May 22 to September 7, 2008**

***Great New Wave: Contemporary Art from Japan***

This groundbreaking Canadian presentation of Japanese art examines emerging and mid-career artist working in drawing, installation, photography, sculpture, textile and video. In addition to new and recent work by Manabu Ikeda, Kohei Nawa, Tabaimo and Miwa Yanagi, the exhibition will also showcase two site-specific works created in Hamilton: internationally-known artist Yoshiaki Kaihatsu will transform consumer waste donated by Hamilton residents into a contemporary take on the traditional Japanese teahouse, and textile artist Sayaka Akiyama, having spent four weeks in the community, translates her experiences of Hamilton’s environment, geography, history and sensibility into a large-scale signature mapping project. A co-presentation of the Art Gallery of Hamilton and Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Supported by the Japan Foundation.

**On view from May 10 to September 1, 2008**

***The Japonisme of Edgar Degas and James Tissot***

This intimate exhibition explores the influence of Japanese art on two of the great French realists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the impressionist Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and the “Victorian realist” James Tissot (1836-1902). Both artists were inspired by the special forms, colours, and motifs of the art of Japan, particularly the Japanese woodblock print. Presented by Orlick Industries.

An integral part of **Inspiration East**, a varied series of lectures and lifestyle activities focus on the aesthetic aspects of eastern culture. Complete programming information is available at [www.artgalleryofhamilton.com](http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com).

**Inspiration East** has been financially assisted by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund, a program of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture, administered by the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund Corporation and supported by the Japan Foundation and the Canadian Foundation for Chinese Heritage Preservation. The AGH also acknowledges the support of Sheraton Hamilton Hotel. The exhibitions *Great New Wave: Contemporary Art from Japan*, *The Japonisme of Edgar Degas*, *From Geisha to Diva: The Kimonos of Ichimaru* and *TD Waterhouse Great Masters Series: Masters of the Ukiyo-e* have been recognized as celebratory events marking the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan-Canada diplomatic relations. The AGH gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Hamilton, the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts of its programming activities.

**Also on view May 22 to September 7, 2008**

**Atelier: Tor Lukasik-Foss**

Tor Lukasik-Foss will build *The Monotheatrum*, Hamilton's newest performance venue inside an AGH gallery. Described by the artist as a "nomadic amphitheatre," the structure's meticulous design references the architecture of opera houses, scaled down here to house only a single performer. The innovative twist is the stage itself: although physically present, the performance space remains concealed from view – the stage is not visible to the audience. This separation between performer and spectators riffs on the notion of obscurity as a viable creative path – perhaps even as the necessary ingredient in the mysterious recipe for success.

Art Gallery of Hamilton is located at 123 King Street West, downtown Hamilton.

For complete **Art Gallery of Hamilton** exhibition and programming information, please visit [www.artgalleryofhamilton.com](http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com).

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