

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2007



Canadian Folk Art • Henri Rousseau • Kent Monkman • The Group of Seven

Art Gallery of Hamilton announces Summer 2007 Exhibition Schedule

The Art Gallery of Hamilton's Summer 2007 exhibition schedule offers an eclectic mix of the historical and contemporary, the natural and the naïve, the controversial and the classically Canadian.

On view June 2 to September 3, 2007

Wit and Whimsy: Folk Art in Canada

From the Collection of the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
Curated by Tobi Bruce and Sara Knelman

Organized by the Art Gallery of Hamilton, *Wit and Whimsy* explores the fascinating world of twentieth-century folk art in Canada. Bringing together over fifty works by renowned folk artists from coast to coast, the exhibition provides an overview of the various working methods and thematic approaches explored by folk artists over several decades. A truly national representation is presented; Nova Scotia's Maud Lewis and Joe Sleep find company with Québec's Alcide St-Germain, Ontario's John Elliot, Manitoba's William Stefanchuk and British Columbia's Frank Koccevar.

Drawing their inspiration from the land and the world around them, folk artists have traditionally looked to, and reflected, their environments and lived experiences. *Wit and Whimsy* takes its lead from the artists and explores the three basic elements of the natural world: land, sea and air. Organized around these recurring thematic streams, *Wit and Whimsy* constructs a view of the world as seen through the eyes of the artist and their lived experience, providing intimate and insightful views into the human condition.

This exhibition has been generously sponsored by Frank and Elizabeth Butty and Effort Trust.

On view June 2 to September 3, 2007

CANADIAN FOLK ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF SUSAN A. MURRAY

Organized and circulated by the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, New Brunswick

As part of our ongoing commitment to present private collections of significance, the AGH is pleased to exhibit the collection of one of the most impressive private holdings of folk art in this country. A collector for over twenty years, Susan A. Murray has amassed over five hundred objects of contemporary and historical folk art, reflecting both the eye and the passion of a discerning collector. The exhibition includes works by such recognized artists as Collins Eisenhauer, Joe Norris, Sidney Howard, Ewald Rentz and Charlie Tanner.

On view June 2 to September 3, 2007

HENRI ROUSSEAU, "PETIT DOUANIER" OF MODERNISM

Curated by Patrick Shaw Cable

Henri ("le Douanier" or "the customs officer") Rousseau (1844–1910) occupied a unique position within early 20th-century modernism, standing as the archetype of the self-taught "naïve" painter, yet inspiring artists from Picasso to the Surrealists. Continuing the Gallery's series of intimately scaled focus exhibitions that highlight the work of major historical artists, this select group of Rousseau paintings, on loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Musée du Vieux-Château in Laval, France, span Rousseau's entire career. Since no Canadian institution holds a significant work by this singularly gifted modernist master, this exhibition offers visitors a unique opportunity to appreciate Rousseau's special place within modernism. *Henri Rousseau* is presented by Orlick Industries.

On view June 7 to August 26, 2007

KENT MONKMAN: THE TRIUMPH OF MISCHIEF

Curated by Sara Knelman

Kent Monkman is a contemporary Toronto-based artist of Cree ancestry. Working in video, photography, painting, installation and performance, Monkman takes inspiration from the histories depicted in 19th-century art and creates new visual stories that reinstate the missing narratives of Aboriginal peoples into these contexts. His work also explores stereotypes of masculinity and queer culture through the construction of piercingly witty situations that use sexuality as one tool for challenging the authority of these established histories. This retrospective of his work involves a site-specific installation, new video and painting, in addition to Monkman's work on loan from public and private collections. The AGH is pleased to dedicate this exhibition in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the Canada Council for the Arts. The public should take note that this exhibition contains scenes of sexuality and nudity and is intended for mature audiences.

On view May 26 to September 3, 2007

TD WATERHOUSE GREAT MASTER SERIES: AROUND SEVEN

The Group of Seven & Their Contemporaries

Curated by Tobi Bruce

The year 1920 marked the inception of two important artistic groups. In Toronto, the Group of Seven held its first exhibition and in Montréal, a less formal (and much shorter lived) Beaver Hall Group was established. While both groups were interested in furthering a modern approach to painting, the bushwhacking ideology of the Group of Seven found representation in the rural and frontier landscapes of Canada, and while some of their Québec contemporaries shared this interest, there was a greater interest among the Montréal painters in depicting their immediate surroundings and the individuals who peopled them. *Around Seven* takes the work of the Group of Seven and Tom Thomson as its starting point and then considers the various approaches taken by their Ontario and Québec contemporaries – many of whom were women – to carve their own artistic paths in light of the Group's national presence.

Tickets to these **Gallery Level One** exhibitions are \$12 for adults, \$10 for students and seniors, \$5 for children ages 6 to 17 and free for children under 5 years. AGH Members receive free admission. Tickets may be purchased on-line at www.artgalleryofhamilton.com

Admission to the AGH's **Gallery Level Two** is free, courtesy of Orlick Industries, and includes the following exhibitions:

On view until December 2, 2007

WILD NATURE: GEORGE McLEAN AND CHRIS BACON FROM THE COLLECTION OF MR. DAVID BRALEY

Wild Nature continues the Gallery's commitment to share with the public significant private regional collections. Mr. David Braley's focused interest on the work of contemporary wildlife painters George McLean and Chris Bacon has resulted in an important collection of the two artists whose distinctive personal views complement and contrast with each other, while illustrating the range that wildlife painting can offer. Each artist's work is based on consummate technical skill and close observation of nature, yet McLean and Bacon possess distinct viewpoints. While Bacon specializes in avian painting, frequently silhouetting his birds against minimalist natural backgrounds and rendering them in delicate watercolour, McLean represents his animals immersed and sometimes camouflaged within a verdant natural world filled with meticulously rendered details of foliage.

On view until December 2, 2007

A VISUAL BESTIARY

Curated by Patrick Shaw Cable

Organized from the AGH collection, this exhibition explores the theme of animals in European, Canadian, and American historical art, featuring the rich and diverse symbolism of the animal in painting and sculpture. From the Romantic period come works by the great French painter Eugène Delacroix and his friend, the sculptor Antoine-Louis Barye, for whom exotic animals in mortal combat symbolized the primal power of nature. Later in time and standing at an opposite thematic scale are domestic farming views by the early 20th-century American social realist George Bellows (*Pigs and Donkey*) and the 19th-century amateur Canadian painter Ebenezer Birrell (*Good Friends*).

On view from June 30, 2007 to June 15, 2008

CARNIVAL

Curated by Tobi Bruce, Patrick Shaw Cable and Sara Knelman

Drawn entirely from AGH's Permanent Collection, *Carnival* assembles major works by Canadian and International artists that have an element of the fantastical, the satirical, the playful or the macabre. Each of the works reflects upon one of the basic elements of masquerade, performance or the extraordinary, thus linking the works in the exhibition together through a carnivalesque spirit. On view will be works by Joseph Calleja, Fernando Botero, Dorothy Cameron, Tony Urquhart, Don Bonham, David Pelletier, Stephen Livick and Karel Appel.

Also on view...

DOMESTIC POETRY until September 30, 2007

This exhibition features the Gallery's special collection of historic European still lifes, many of which date from the late 19th century and the period between the two World Wars. The works range from a handsome group in The Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Collection produced by important French realist painters such as Antoine Vollon, to pictures from the late careers of the masters of early 20th-century modernism, including the Fauve André Derain, and the Cubists Georges Braque and Fernand Léger.

EDWARD STEICHEN: NATURE CRYSTALLIZED until September 30, 2007

One of the great heroes of 20th-century photography, this exhibition highlights some of Edward Steichen's (American 1879–1973) close-ups of nature and still lifes.

KAREL APPEL: THE CRY OF COLOUR until October 8, 2007

The AGH, chosen by Karel Appel in the 1970s as “the institution of record” for his prints and other multiples, possesses an extensive collection of his work. This intimate exhibition features two Appel oil paintings and six large multi-media prints from the AGH collection.

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

The Art Gallery of Hamilton has organized an engaging lineup of film, performance, children’s, family and adult programming to complement its varied roster of exhibitions. For complete exhibition and programming information, please visit www.artgalleryofhamilton.com.

Art Gallery of Hamilton is located at 123 King Street West in downtown Hamilton, 905-527-6610. Gallery hours: Tuesday and Wednesday Noon to 7 pm, Thursday and Friday Noon to 9 pm, Saturday and Sunday Noon to 5 pm. Closed Mondays.

-END-

To access high-resolution images of AGH exhibitions, 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

[T] 905-527-6610, ext. 255

[E] steve@artgalleryofhamilton.com