

***For immediate release***  
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**Art Gallery of Hamilton prepares to bid farewell to its Canadian treasures  
with reading from Tom Thomson book and film screening**

As summer comes to a close, the Art Gallery of Hamilton marks the last days of the exhibition *Lasting Impressions: Celebrated Works from the Art Gallery of Hamilton* in Hamilton before these paintings and sculptures travel across Canada on a six-city tour. In celebration of the exhibition and Tom Thomson's evocative oil painting, *Birch Grove, Autumn*, a favourite among Gallery visitors and a highlight of the exhibition, the **AGH presents a special reading of *The Thomsons of Durham: Tom Thomson's Family Heritage* by author Angie Littlefield on Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 pm at the AGH**, located in downtown Hamilton at 123 King Street West. Admission to this event is free, with donations gratefully accepted. The 1944 National Film Board of Canada film, *West Wind*, will also be screened.

The last day to view the exhibition itself is Labour Day - Monday, September 5<sup>th</sup> - and the Gallery is open from 12 noon - 5 pm on this statutory holiday. Admission to *Lasting Impressions* is free, courtesy of Orlick Industries Limited.

Tom Thomson was born on August 5, 1877 in a stone house on the 9<sup>th</sup> concession of Claremont in Durham Region, just east of Toronto. Two months later his family left the area. Ms. Littlefield will read passages from her book and discuss how the continued influence of Tom's family heritage weaved its way through the actions he takes and the decisions he makes throughout his short life. Thomson was just 40 years old when a canoe accident in Algonquin Park ended his life in 1917. Copies of the book will be available for purchase.

The film *West Wind* chronicles Tom Thomson's brief life and career. Fellow artists (and Group of Seven members) Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson and Arthur Lismer pay tribute to the genius of Tom Thomson, who, in Jackson's words, "contributed more to Canadian painting than any other artist." In the film, photographs of his favourite landscapes are interspersed with images of the paintings they inspired.

*Lasting Impressions: Celebrated Works from the Art Gallery of Hamilton* traces the evolution of modernism in Canada as it presents the very best of the Gallery's Canadian historical art collection Bracketed by two icons of Canadian art - William Blair Bruce's *Phantom Hunter* and Alex Colville's *Horse and Train* - the over eighty works will visit the following venues across the country: the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (May 5 - September 4, 2006); the Beaverbrook Art Gallery (September 21 - November 20, 2006); the MacKenzie Art Gallery (January 13 - March 18, 2007); the Mendel Art Gallery (April 5 -

June 3, 2007); Museum London (June 23 - September 16, 2007); and the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (October 11, 2007 - January 6, 2008).

“We’re slowly preparing ourselves to say good bye to these works,” says AGH Senior Curator Tobi Bruce, who spent 4 years researching and organizing the exhibition and its accompanying 300-page publication. “You spend a great deal of time looking at and thinking about these works and develop quite an attachment. The thought of putting them on the road for their cross-country tour and not having the opportunity to see them everyday must be a bit like sending your kids off to university. It’s very bittersweet.”

In addition to *Lasting Impressions*, Labour Day is also the final day to view the Gallery’s contribution to a province-wide Group of Seven Project commemorating the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Group of Seven’s first group exhibition. *A.Y. Jackson, Patron* highlights a series of Jackson’s sketches, donated to the gallery during the AGH’s crucial collection-building decades of the 1950s and 1960s.

Founded in 1914, the Art Gallery of Hamilton is Ontario’s third largest public art gallery. Recently re-opened following an \$18-million, 19-month renovation, the AGH has three fundamental collecting and programming strengths - nineteenth-century European, Historical Canadian, and Contemporary Canadian - and owns one of the finest collections in the country.

For further event information, please call 905-527-6610, ext. 257

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