

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2010



***Vital Africa* artist Brendan Fernandes shortlisted for prestigious Sobey Art Award**

Exhibition on view at Art Gallery of Hamilton until October 3, 2010

Brendan Fernandes, whose exhibition *until we fearless* is featured as part of the Art Gallery of Hamilton Vital Africa celebration, was shortlisted for the Sobey Art Award. Selected by the 2010 Sobey Art Award Curatorial Panel, the five shortlisted artists are competing for the Award's \$50,000 top prize. Fernandes was selected to represent Ontario.

The exhibition at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, which is Fernandes' first solo exhibition at the museum level, is the culmination of several years of his most poignant artistic investigations. The exhibition pushes viewers to reconsider perceptions and inhibitions about the cultural identities associated with Africa and the African Diaspora.

"We're absolutely delighted at the news, and so pleased for Brendan," said AGH President and CEO Louise Dompierre. "His exhibition is an important component of our year-long celebration of African arts and culture and its influence on the world. One facet of his exhibition is inspired by works from the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum collection of African art; the resulting works forge a new link between historical and contemporary art."

"Fernandes takes a critical approach to the stereotypes that persist about Africa as a homogenous culture and to the historical and contemporary descriptions that mythologize the region as the 'Dark Continent,'" added Melissa Bennett, AGH Curator of Contemporary Art. "We've already had a great response to Brendan's clever critical approach. He uses humour to encourage people to consider new ways of thinking."

Born in Kenya of South Asian heritage, Fernandes immigrated to Canada in the 1990s. He completed the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum of American Art (2007) and earned his MFA (2005) from the University of Western Ontario and his BFA (2002) from York University. He has exhibited internationally, has participated in numerous residency programs and is the current recipient of the New Commissions Project through Art in General, New York. He is based between Toronto and New York. His work is represented by Diaz Contemporary, Toronto.

In addition to Fernandes, the other shortlisted artists are: Brendan Lee Satish Tang (representing West Coast and Yukon); Daniel Barrow (Prairies and The North); Patrick Bernatchez (Quebec); and Emily Vey Duke and Cooper Battersby (Atlantic). All five shortlisted artists will have selected works exhibited at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal this fall. The winner of the 2010 Sobey Art Award will be announced on November 18, 2010.

Founded in 1914, the Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH) is Ontario's third largest public art gallery and owns one of the finest art collections in Canada.

-END-

For further information, contact: Steve Denyes, Manager, Communications/Art Gallery of Hamilton [T] 905-527-6610, ext. 255 [E] steve@artgalleryofhamilton.com