

## You asked about ... Art's Golden Home

### **Why is the Gallery renovating?**

For some time, the Art Gallery of Hamilton's aging building has been a major concern. The building leaks, endangering the Gallery's 8,000-plus Permanent Collection and limiting the types of exhibitions the AGH can host.

Thanks to funding from the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program (through the Governments of Canada and Ontario), the City of Hamilton, Dofasco, and the generous support of corporations, foundations and individuals, renovations to stop the leaks by enclosing the building in attractive gold-coloured steel panels are now underway. This will not only solve the challenge of our leaking – yet still structurally sound – building, but also provide the Gallery with an eye-catching, distinctive façade in the heart of downtown Hamilton.

### **When will the Gallery re-open with new exhibitions?**

A three-day re-opening celebration is scheduled for Spring 2005. Events will include a Gala, a Member Preview and a Public Grand Opening.

### **What exhibitions are planned for the Gallery's Grand Re-Opening in Spring 2005?**

The reclad and renovated Gallery will serve as a wonderful setting in which to enjoy many of the Gallery's most important -- and most recognized -- works that will be featured in two spectacular exhibitions.

The rich variety of nineteenth-century art is celebrated in the 200 paintings and sculptures that comprise *Heaven and Earth Unveiled: European Treasures from the Tanenbaum Collection*. Donated to the AGH in 2002 by Joey and Toby Tanenbaum, this collection is one of the most significant privately assembled collection of the period anywhere. In fact, Jacques Foucart, Chief Curator, Department of Paintings at The Louvre, Paris, noted that "as a whole, this Tanenbaum collection would, by itself, because of its diversity and originality, act as a foundation for a museum; a museum which, far from replicating what can be seen elsewhere, would provoke great and well-founded curiosity."

The collection includes works by masters such as Gustave Doré, John Singer Sargent, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Jean-Léon Gérôme, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, Théodule Ribot, and Eugène Carrière; several works in the collection are considered among the artists' finest works of great historical significance. In addition to representing major aesthetic movements of the nineteenth-century, *Heaven and Earth Unveiled* examines the poignancy of the human condition: our ideals, aspirations, struggles and emotions are captured variously in grand religious and historical compositions, portrayals of everyday life, high-society portraits and scenes of labour and social unrest.

*Heaven and Earth Unveiled* will be on view at the Gallery for one year, after which time about 80 highlights from the 200-strong collection will tour nationally and internationally.

Where *Heaven and Earth Unveiled* focuses on European – mainly French – works of the nineteenth century, *Lasting Impressions: Celebrated Works from the Art Gallery of Hamilton* straddles the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with a close look at the very core of the Canadian collection (and sideways glances at American, British and French art). Deftly tracing the evolution of modernism in Canada, the exhibition highlights the various artistic movements that defined Canadian art over a period of several decades as suitably bracketed by two powerhouses, William Blair Bruce's *Phantom of the Snow* (1888) and Alex Colville's *Horse and Train* (1957). Other Canadian art icons on display will include Maurice Cullen's *Logging in Winter Beaupré* and *Cape Diamond*, Tom Thomson's *The Birch Grove, Autumn*, Lawren Harris' *Ice House, Coldwell, Lake Superior*, Emily Coonan's *Girl in Dotted Dress*, Charles Comfort's *The Dreamer*, Prudence Heward's *Girl Under a Tree*.

Key works in *Lasting Impressions* are currently undergoing conservation to prepare them for viewing and for the six-city Canadian tour that follows the exhibition's nine-month premiere at the AGH. Gallery Members and visitors will be able to see favourite works as they would have appeared fresh off the easel when first painted.

### **Will the inside of the Gallery change at all?**

Absolutely. From the new glass-enclosed front entrance on King Street and updated lighting and flooring to larger exhibition space and a new Sculpture Atrium on Gallery Two, the renovated AGH will be a more welcoming and attractive space for Hamilton residents and visitors to the city to enjoy art, performances, classes, workshops and events.

The renovations will also improve accessibility within the Gallery for visitors in wheelchairs and those with limited mobility. Enhancements include a new lift to the Community Gallery in the Upper Lounge and a wheelchair-accessible washroom on the Office Level for Gallery staffers and visitors using the Boardroom and Studios located on that floor.

But the Gallery's most important interior enhancement won't be visible at all. The AGH's climate control system – the system that regulates temperature control, air quality, and humidity – will be completely overhauled, bringing the Gallery up to stringent international museum standards, better protecting our works on view and enabling us to host major blockbuster exhibitions.

### **What's in store for the Irving Zucker Sculpture Court on Commonwealth Square?**

Less concrete. More green space. Thanks to the generosity of the late Mr. Zucker's children – Martin, David and Susan – the Irving Zucker Sculpture Garden will contain grass, trees, water features, a staging area, and sculptures from the Gallery's Collection within a fenced enclosure with gates that open onto Commonwealth Square. As the Sculpture Garden will be located beside and accessible from the Gallery's new multi-use Pavilion, the Garden will become a natural extension of the Gallery experience for visitors.

### **Will there be a café at the new AGH?**

We heard you! A café at the Gallery is one of our visitors' most frequent requests and we're delighted that a new café facing the Gallery Shop will serve light meals and snacks. For special functions, the Gallery's exclusive caterer will be able to accommodate more elaborate meals, cocktail functions, and coffee service for meetings and presentations.

### **Will I be able to rent space in the renovated Gallery?**

Yes. The new AGH will make a stunning venue for a range of special events. Areas available for rent include the new glass-enclosed Pavilion next to the Irving Zucker Sculpture Garden, the updated Upper and Lower Lounges, the Board Room and, for very special occasions, the Sculpture Atrium on Gallery Two. Whether you're hosting a cocktail reception for 200 or a board meeting for 20, the AGH can provide a unique setting, plus excellent food and beverage services.

**While the Gallery is under renovations, is there anywhere I can go to purchase tickets for film screenings, register for classes and the like?**

For all the latest information on off-site exhibitions and activities, to renew or purchase memberships, to buy tickets for film programme screenings and sevenseason performances, and to register in person for upcoming workshops and conferences, please visit our satellite location. In partnership with Jackson Square, we've opened AGH in the Square at this downtown mall. AGH in the Square shares space with our *Future Cities* main space at King and James Streets.

AGH in the Square/*Future Cities* main exhibition space hours are:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday	10:30 am – 5:30 pm
Thursday, Friday	10:30 am – 8 pm
Sunday, Monday	Closed

If you prefer, you can also visit our website – [www.artgalleryofhamilton.com](http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com) -- or call AGH in the Square directly at (905) 522-8222 for information.

**How can I reach staff during construction?**

As the Gallery's administrative offices – housed on the top floor of the building – are not being renovated, AGH staff will stay on site during construction. Staff telephone numbers and e-mail addresses remain unchanged. There may be times during renovations, however, that computers and telephone lines may not be working; we appreciate your patience and understanding should this happen.

**When will I be able to see the renovated Gallery?**

We're planning a special reception for all our Building a Legacy Campaign donors and Benefactor Members in December 2004.

As at July 7, 2004