

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Art Gallery of Hamilton to offer innovative Touch Tours in August and September with the support of the Government of Ontario

Thanks to funding provided by the Government of Ontario, the Art Gallery of Hamilton is pleased to offer Touch Tours on four Tuesdays in August and September: August 11, 25, September 8 and 22 at 2:00 p.m.

Participants will experience an innovative tactile tour that allows those with vision-loss to experience works of art from the collection. A specially trained docent will help attendees develop their ability to create mental images of works of art through touch and description. Two works of art have been selected for this tour, and visitors should plan to spend about an hour in the Gallery. Interested individuals are asked to visit the Gallery's Front Desk upon arrival. The Art Gallery of Hamilton is located at 123 King Street West in downtown Hamilton

The Touch Tour programme is but one visitor enhancement supported by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism Celebrate Ontario programme. The Gallery's themed year – *Vista Italia* – is a celebration of Italian arts and culture in recognition of this province's diversity. Throughout July and August, thanks to funding provided by the Government of Ontario, the Art Gallery of Hamilton offers special experiences and resources to make visits memorable for all ages.

For visitors with special needs, our Vista Italia enhancements also include Large Print Materials to make exhibition material more accessible for people unable to read the wall texts or labels. These binders are available for sign out.

For children and families, the Gallery offers:

Drop-In Studio Activities from 1:30 to 3:00 pm on Saturdays and statutory holidays are on offer this summer. Professional artist-instructors will share their skills and teach creative, safe and inspired studio projects. These workshops take place on the following dates: Saturday, August 1st; Monday, August 3rd (Civic Holiday Monday); Saturday, August 8th; Saturday, August 15th; Saturday, August 29th; Monday, September 7th (Labour Day). This drop-in studio activity is included with exhibition admission.

Discovery Kits (designed especially for families with children under the age of 8) for use in the Gallery provide samples of painted canvases and artist's papers, paint brushes and fabric that are all touchable, allowing visitors to experience what a painted canvas or a marble sculpture really feels like without endangering the art on view or themselves. Art-related games and laminated thinking cards will ask questions that can be discussed as a family, inviting everyone to understand and appreciate artworks in a new way. Kits are available for sign out on a first come, first served basis, and are included with exhibition admission.

Family Activity Books (designed especially for families with children between the ages of 8 and 12) features take-away activity guides that invite children to answer interesting questions, sketch favourite artworks, and learn suggestions for at-home art-making activities. Included with exhibition admission.

For adult visitors, our Vista Italia enhancements include:

Summer Exhibitions Brochure, a full-colour guide that provides highlights of the exhibitions on view for use in the Gallery and as a memento of their visit. Included with exhibition admission.

Audio Guides offer an opportunity for visitors to learn more about key works in the exhibitions, including important information about the artists and pieces featured. Audio guides are available for sign out on a first come, first served basis, and are included with exhibition admission.

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For more information on the Touch Tours, please contact:

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For more information on the Art Gallery of Hamilton, its exhibitions and programmes, please contact:

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