



NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA FOUNDATION  
FONDATION DU MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DU CANADA

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For immediate release**

### ***\$2 MILLION GIFT FROM THE DONALD R. SOBEY FAMILY FOUNDATION IN SUPPORT OF THE CANADIAN ARTISTS IN VENICE ENDOWMENT***

---

**OTTAWA, Canada, February 24, 2015** – The National Gallery of Canada Foundation is very pleased to announce the receipt of an exceptional gift of \$2 million from the Donald R. Sobey Family Foundation.

This lead gift of the Donald R. Sobey Foundation will establish the *Canadian Artists in Venice Endowment* at the National Gallery of Canada Foundation. The endowment will provide vital financial support to Canadian artists representing Canada at *La Biennale di Venezia*, the iconic international biennial art exhibition in Venice, Italy, better known as the *Venice Biennale*. This fund is being endowed with the aim of attracting other philanthropic partners.

The *Venice Biennale* is the most important recurring international gathering of the contemporary art community. Every two years, over 80 countries send official entries to the *Biennale* and its coveted art prizes have attracted top talent and defined artists' careers for over a century. Canadian artists have been presented for over 60 years and Canada's participation has been instrumental in promoting the reputation of Canadian artists and their work within the global artistic community.

“We are delighted to lead the way in making this first contribution to this innovative endowment,” said Donald Sobey, former Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada. “We loved the idea of partnering with other philanthropists from across the country to establish sustainable support for Canada in Venice. Our sincere hope is that this endowment will enhance the National Gallery's operational capacity of the Canadian Pavillion and, in so doing, will have a transformative impact on the place of Canadian artists in the international art community,” he concluded.

“The Gallery is most grateful to the Donald R. Sobey family for their ongoing generosity and their visionary contribution to Canadian contemporary art,” said National Gallery Director and CEO, Marc Mayer. “Canada has some of the brightest and most talented artists in the world. Canadians need to see their work, the world needs to see their work,” observed Mr. Mayer.

### ***Inaugural Naming Initiative at the National Gallery of Canada***

In consideration of the gift, the National Gallery of Canada Foundation will take the unprecedented step of naming a major space in the Gallery after the Donald R. Sobey family.

The Chair of the Foundation, Thomas d'Aquino, said, "It is with great pride that for the first time in the Gallery's history, we attach the name of a major donor and his family to one of the public spaces of this great institution. The recognition is richly deserved and acknowledges the visionary philanthropy of the Donald R. Sobey family in support of the National Gallery of Canada as a centre of national and global excellence."

### ***The Donald R. Sobey Family and Canadian Art***

The Donald R. Sobey Family has made several donations to the National Gallery of Canada and the national collection. This has included the establishment of the *Sobey Chief Curator's Research Endowment*; the purchase of Michel De Brouin's exterior sculpture, *Majestic*, and numerous contributions to exhibition and acquisition projects since 1997. Above and beyond this, the [Sobey Art Foundation](#) funds the Sobey Art Award, supporting the Canadian contemporary art community with over \$100,000 in prizes since the inception of the awards in 2002.

### ***About the National Gallery of Canada Foundation***

The National Gallery of Canada Foundation is dedicated to supporting the National Gallery of Canada in fulfilling its mandate. By fostering strong philanthropic partnerships, the Foundation provides the Gallery with the additional financial support required to lead Canada's visual arts community locally, nationally and internationally. The blend of public support and private philanthropy empowers the Gallery to preserve and interpret Canada's visual arts heritage. The Foundation welcomes present and deferred gifts for special projects and endowments. To learn more about the National Gallery of Canada Foundation, visit <http://www.gallery.ca/en/give/foundation.php>.

### ***About the National Gallery of Canada***

The National Gallery of Canada is home to the most important collection of historical and contemporary Canadian art. The Gallery also maintains Canada's premier collection of European Art from the 14th to the 21st century, as well as important works of American, Asian and Indigenous Art and renowned international collections of prints, drawings and photographs. Created in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada has played a key role in Canadian culture for well over a century. Among its principal missions is to increase access to excellent works of art for all Canadians. For more information, visit [gallery.ca](http://www.gallery.ca)

– 30 –

### **For media only: For more information, please contact:**

#### **National Gallery of Canada:**

Josée-Britanie Mallet  
Senior Media and Public Relations Officer  
(613) 990-6835  
[bmallet@gallery.ca](mailto:bmallet@gallery.ca)

#### **Sobey Art Foundation:**

Bernard Doucet  
Secretary  
(902) 921-1755  
[Bernard.Doucet@sobeys.com](mailto:Bernard.Doucet@sobeys.com)

