



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

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA HONOURS MICHAEL AUDAIN AND YOSHIKO KARASAWA FOR A DECADE OF PHILANTHROPY

OTTAWA, Canada, May 27, 2015- The National Gallery of Canada Foundation announced today the naming of an important contemporary exhibition space at the National Gallery of Canada in honour of Michael Audain and his wife Yoshiko Karasawa of Vancouver, British Columbia.

The *Audain Gallery* is instituted in recognition of the extraordinary financial support in excess of \$5 million donated by the Audain family to the Gallery over the past decade.

Mr. Audain, Chairman of Polygon Homes Ltd, Vancouver, and Ms. Karasawa have built a significant personal art collection with strong interest in Northwest Coast Indigenous art, contemporary Canadian art, and the works of Emily Carr. Their deep commitment to Canadian art is well-known across the country through their generous involvement with the National Gallery as well as various art museums and artistic initiatives – including the establishment of the *Audain Prize* for British Columbia artists.

“The Gallery is delighted to salute this precious partnership and acknowledge the profound impact Michael Audain’s leadership has had on the direction and activities of this great institution,” said the Gallery Director and Chief Executive Officer, Marc Mayer,.

The Chair of the National Gallery of Canada Foundation, Thomas d’Aquino, said, “It is a privilege to count Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa among the first of the Gallery’s generous donors to have a public space named after them at this leading institution. As lovers of Canadian art, their unflinching support of the National Gallery speaks to their commitment to building and celebrating Canada’s visual arts patrimony. Their philanthropy has been transformative for the Gallery and for Canada.”

Ten years of support to the National Gallery

Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa donated a \$2 million bequest to establish *The Audain Endowment for Contemporary Canadian Art* (2006) in support of Canadian acquisitions from, in particular, British Columbia. The fund has supported purchases of art every year since its establishment including the most recent international installation “tour de force”, *Leaves of Grass* (2013) by Canadian artist, Geoffrey Farmer. It is currently on view at the Gallery.

A second \$2 million bequest to establish *The Audain Curator of Indigenous Art Endowment* (2007) propelled the National Gallery to the forefront of contemporary indigenous art studies. Expanding collections and exhibition programming, including the recent, global survey of

Indigenous Art, *Sakahàn* in 2013 are a direct result of this funding. Local residents will remember the giant iceberg, by Greenlandic artist Inuk Silis Høegh, covering the exterior of the National Gallery's Great Hall as part of that exhibition. Almost \$1.25 million in further donations were directed in support of various special projects, collections and operations. The most significant art donation is the commission to complete and install *The Three Watchmen*, a bronze sculpture by British Columbia's Haida Chief James Hart. This three sided figure, more than four metres high, now stands guard on the traffic island between the Gallery plaza and Major's Hill Park.

Michael Audain also provided personal leadership as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada (2009-13) and as a Director at the Gallery's Foundation (2009-2014). Mr. Audain and Ms. Karasawa are currently *Distinguished Patrons* of the National Gallery of Canada Foundation and remain active in that capacity.

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, please 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 collections of historical and contemporary Canadian art, including the extensive collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography. 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: please visit www.gallery.ca

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