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1,000 WORKS OF CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS AND INUIT ART GIFTED TO MACKENZIE ART GALLERY

Kampelmacher Collection Reflects Diversity of Artists and Media From Across Canada and the United States

Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada - Monday, January 14, 2019: The MacKenzie Art Gallery today announced that it has received a pledged gift of more than 1,000 works of art by contemporary Indigenous and Inuit artists from Edmonton-based collectors, Thomas Druyan and Alice Ladner. The Kampelmacher Memorial Collection of Indigenous Art, named in honour of Druyan's grandparents Wolf and Sala Kampelmacher, began in 1992 and is the product of the couple's commitment to engaging with artists and galleries that reflect the myriad of artistic expressions of Indigenous art from across North America. For the MacKenzie, Indigenous art has long been a core area of activity. With this gift, the Gallery can strengthen this capacity, developing an expanded array of exhibitions and programs for current and future audiences and, especially, students, scholars, and members of the community. A selection of works from the collection is touring as part of the MacKenzie's *Provincial Touring Artists and Exhibition Program* and additional pieces will be on view at the Gallery beginning January 25, 2019.

"Thomas and Alice are visionary collectors, who bring a rare sensitivity and desire to understanding how different artists develop their skills, as well as how these works relate to the artist's own community and its traditions," said Anthony Kiendl, the museum's Executive Director and CEO. "Just as importantly, they understand that this collection will engage the next generation of audiences and scholars—a commitment we share."

"Alice and I are thrilled that our collection is going to reside at the MacKenzie Art Gallery, which has been a leader since the 1970s in showcasing works by Indigenous artists and in promoting Indigenous curatorship," said Thomas Druyan. "This collection is named for my grandparents of blessed memory, who immigrated to Canada in 1969, because I want to give back to the country that welcomed us at our time of need. We can think of no better way to do so than with a gift that reflects the cultural diversity of these lands—and by giving them to an institution where we feel confident they will be shared with the public in a wide range of exhibitions and educational programs. We were heartened by the warm reception that the people of Regina gave to the 2016 exhibition of a portion of our collection and are pleased to deepen our relationship."

The MacKenzie's relationship with Druyan and Ladner formally began with the 2016 exhibition *Across the Turtle's Back: The Kampelmacher Memorial Collection of Indigenous Art*. The first part of their gift—which will be made in three installments over a three-year period—includes 221 of the 234 works from that exhibition. As *Across the Turtle's Back* demonstrated, Druyan and Ladner share a vision that is driven by the expressive qualities of individual works. This has resulted in an eclectic collection, often incorporating Indigenous artists they felt were deserving of greater recognition.

Within the collection, there are a number of recurring themes: supernatural beings and legends; bears, birds and other animals; depictions of customary practices and worldviews; flora, vegetation and images of the land; and works exploring political issues and history. The collection has also been subdivided into areas that reflect the geographical diversity of the art as well as the collectors' interests. These include:

- The Contemporary North American Indigenous Art category, which embraces contemporary art and artists from across Canada, including:
 - Works from Mi'kmaw artists, based in Canada's Atlantic provinces, the Gaspé Peninsula area of Quebec, as well as parts of Maine;
 - Numerous pieces by Woodland School artists, as well as those from Manitoulin Island, Ontario;

- Five of the seven members of Professional Native Indian Artists Inc. (PNIAI)
- And works from artists on Canada's West Coast, as well as the Pacific Northwest and Southwestern regions of the United States.

- The Inuit category, with artwork across a diverse array of media and stylistic rendering/representation, in three key areas of media: sculpture, textiles, and graphic arts. The collection includes art produced in all four regions of Inuit Nunangat (Nunatsiavut in Labrador, Nunavik in Northern Quebec, Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories), as well as in Greenland.

As a whole, the Kampelmacher Memorial Collection is reflective of artistic experimentation, with many artists whose work combines Indigenous customs as well as art-making traditions with present-day innovations in materials or form. While some of the artists within the collection have already received national recognition—for example, Daphne Odjig, Alex Janvier, Shuvina Ashoona and Oviloo Tunnillie—many others have not.

A key objective for Thomas Druyan and Alice Ladner in making this gift to the MacKenzie is to create an educational resource for current and future generations of students and scholars—many of whom are also members of Canada's Indigenous communities. In addition to future exhibitions and programs at its location in Regina, the Gallery also expects to become an important resource for loans of art to institutions across Canada and internationally.

The Kampelmacher Memorial Collection also fills gaps in the Gallery's existing holdings of Indigenous art, with the addition of previously unrepresented artists, including: Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Blake Debassige, Eddy Cobiness, Allen Angecone, Pitalousie Salla, and Germaine Arnaktauyok, among others. Furthermore, the MacKenzie will supplement the collection with important early works already in its possession, by a number of leading contemporary artists, including: Robert Houle, Carl Beam, and Helen Kalvak.

In reimagining the role of a public art gallery, the MacKenzie Art Gallery seeks to become an immersive, community-engaged centre for art, focusing on visitors and artists, Indigenous culture and diversity, engaging people in transformative experiences of the world through art.

The MacKenzie is grateful for the support of the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation; Canada Council for the Arts; Saskatchewan Arts Board; SaskCulture; the City of Regina; University of Regina.

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Background on the Collection:

The foundations of the Kampelmacher Memorial Collection began with Druyan and Ladner's purchase of Carl Beam's *Autumnal Idiocy Koan* in 1992. The work came at an extraordinary time in the struggle by Indigenous peoples of Canada for recognition, inherent rights to self-government, and title to First Nations lands. It was also the year when Beam was featured in two major exhibitions of Indigenous art: *Land, Spirit, Power* (National Gallery of Canada) and *Indigena* (Canadian Museum of Civilization). Both were organized to coincide with the "celebrations" of the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus' arrival in North America, and compelled viewers to question prevailing historical assumptions.

"I have long appreciated art, art museums, and buying exhibition catalogues and posters, but it was not until we bought the Carl Beam work that I discovered an 'ordinary' person like me could become an art collector," said Druyan. "One piece led to another, and it soon became a passion, with treks to galleries all over Canada and the northeastern U.S. We have also been fortunate to have lived up north for more than a decade, which has allowed us to meet many leading Inuit artists. This personal contact with the artists and their families has greatly enriched our appreciation of the art in our collection and enhanced our passion about the material. All the more reason, therefore, to give it to a museum that we are confident will care for it much as we do, and that is the MacKenzie Art Gallery. And although my grandparents were neither rich nor famous, I am glad that there will be something in their adopted country to commemorate them."

About the MacKenzie Art Gallery:

The MacKenzie Art Gallery (MAG) is Saskatchewan's oldest and most comprehensive art museum. This is a watershed moment in the history of the Gallery, as it is undergoing a multi-phase organizational transformation. Programming primarily contemporary art from the prairies, Canada and abroad, the MAG addresses an encyclopedic range of visual art and culture, and is an international leader in Indigenous art. The MAG permanent collection spans 5000 years of art with nearly 5000 works. MAG was founded on the collection of its namesake, Norman MacKenzie (1869–1936), who bequeathed his collection to the University of Saskatchewan (Regina College), now the University of Regina.

MAG is located within Treaty Four territory, the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine and Metis, and a home to the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people. Sited in Wascana Centre, the largest urban park in Canada, Wascana Centre (1962) was designed by renowned modernist architect Minoru Yamasaki, designer of the original World Trade Center in New York, and is a living artifact of modernist design heritage. Today this park is a national treasure—home to museums, the university, and the provincial capital—where nature, culture, science, and education meet. The MacKenzie Art Gallery collection holds works by internationally renowned and Canadian artists including General Idea, Rodin, Anthony McCall, Greg Curnoe, Joyce Wieland, Jeff Wall, Rebecca Belmore, the Regina Five, Joe Fafard, Ruth Cuthand, Bob Boyer, and many others. The MacKenzie features world-class exhibitions and public programs, research, publications, and more.

www.mackenzieartgallery.com



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