

**Vancouver Art Gallery Announces
Appointment of Dr. Richard W. Hill as First Smith Jarislowsky
Senior Curator of Canadian Art**



November 16, 2021, VANCOUVER, BC // *Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), Squamish (Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw) and Tsleil-Waututh (səlilwətaʔ) Nations.*

The Vancouver Art Gallery announced today the appointment of Dr. **Richard William Hill** to be the first curator to fill the new position of the **Smith Jarislowsky Senior Curator of Canadian Art**. This new role was announced in April 2021, after Vancouver Art Gallery received a bequest of \$1 million from artist Gordon Smith, and together with a generous matching donation of an additional \$1 million from The Jarislowsky Foundation, was able to create this endowed curatorial position. In his role as the Smith Jarislowsky Senior Curator of Canadian Art, Hill will build upon the research, presentation and collection of historical and contemporary art in the Gallery’s collection, as well as temporary exhibitions, publications and other research activities. Hill will commence his position January 4, 2022.

“We are delighted to welcome Dr. Hill,” says **Anthony Kiendl, Vancouver Art Gallery CEO & Director**. “Richard will be an incredible addition to the Gallery’s curatorial team. With extensive academic and curatorial experience, he will offer innovative perspectives on the collection and programs. He brings a special passion for—and thoughtful consideration of—audiences and the understanding of art in society. We are grateful to the Gordon and Marion Smith Estate and the Stephen and Gail Jarislowsky foundation for their generous gifts to enable this new position.”

“I’m extremely excited to be coming to the Vancouver Art Gallery at this moment of change and possibility and I’m looking forward to working with the team at the Gallery and with CEO Anthony Kiendl whose integrity, vision and commitment to diversity I respect. Having spent much time teaching, researching and writing about Canadian and Indigenous art, I am eager to return to them as a curator,” says Hill, “My approach to curating is to leave no methodological assumption unexamined in the attempt to match the form of the exhibition to its curatorial intent. We need innovative ways of looking at the art we are used to seeing in the museum, but also new methods for drawing attention to what has been overlooked or excluded. Anyone familiar with my career knows that Indigenous art will be a central part of this, but I am keenly aware that this position includes a broader scope as well, which I look forward to exploring in its full breadth and complexity.”

Hill has worked as a curator, critic and historian of Indigenous and Canadian art for nearly three decades. His Cree heritage and lifelong interest in Indigenous art and questions of transcultural experience, are often themes in his research and exhibitions. Currently, he holds a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Studies at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. Prior to this, he was Associate Professor at York University teaching courses in art history, curatorial practice and graduate research methods. Hill also worked at the Art Gallery of Ontario, where, with Dr. Anna Hudson, he oversaw the museum’s first substantial efforts to collect Indigenous North American art and display it in the permanent collection galleries.

During his career Hill has authored several publications, and has been published in many journals, periodicals and art publications throughout Canada, the US and Europe. He is currently co-curating a major retrospective of acclaimed Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin. The exhibition *Alanis Obomsawin: Lifework* is co-curated with Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, Associate Curator Hila Peleg, and co-organized by the HKW, Art Museum at the University of Toronto and Vancouver Art Gallery. This exhibition will open at Vancouver Art Gallery in 2023.

The Gallery believes this to be an unprecedented bequest from an individual artist to a Canadian art museum. The late Gordon Appelbe Smith (1919-2020) and Marion Smith, his wife of over 50 years, were generous, long-time supporters of the Vancouver Art Gallery. Smith gave his time and his art prodigiously, donating works to the Gallery's permanent collection and for many fundraising events. He believed passionately in the Vancouver Art Gallery's educational role to expand people's creative horizons. Although an immigrant himself, he was proud to have been known as a Canadian artist, representing the region and country in national and international exhibitions.

The Jarislowskys and Gordon Smith were friends. Stephen Jarislowsky collected and admired Smith’s work and is delighted to match the generosity of his late friend in supporting the Vancouver Art Gallery and Canadian art. The Smith Jarislowsky Senior Curator

of Canadian Art at the Vancouver Art Gallery will foster the research, presentation, and collection of Canadian art and promote the invaluable work of historical and contemporary Canadian artists, artists with a significant relationship to Canada, and Canadian Art in a Global context.

-30-

MEDIA CONTACT

Larah Luna, Director of Marketing and Communications

lluna@vanartgallery.bc.ca

778.939.4319

Sascha Freudenheim

sascha@paveconsult.com

917-544-6057

ABOUT VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

Founded in 1931, the Vancouver Art Gallery is recognized as one of North America's most innovative visual arts institutions. The Gallery's ground-breaking exhibitions, extensive public programs and emphasis on advancing scholarship all focus on historical and contemporary art from British Columbia and around the world. Special attention is given to the accomplishments of Indigenous artists, as well as to those of the Asia Pacific region—through the Institute of Asian Art founded in 2014. The Gallery's exhibitions also explore the impact of images in the larger sphere of visual culture, design and architecture.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is a charitable not-for-profit organization supported by its members, individual donors, corporate funders, foundations, the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is situated on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy'əm), Squamish (Sḵwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw) and Tsleil-Waututh (səɬilwətaʔt) Nations, and is respectful of the Indigenous stewards of the land it occupies, whose rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Vancouver and the work of the Gallery.

Photo: Scott Little, Vancouver Art Gallery.