

For Immediate Release

Vancouver Art Gallery's new exhibition celebrates visionary photographer Harry Callahan and the 40th anniversary of his MoMA New York retrospective



June 3, 2016, Vancouver, BC – The Vancouver Art Gallery presents *Harry Callahan: The Street* (June 11 to September 5, 2016), an exhibition that celebrates one of the most canonical figures in the development of modern photography in the 20th century. The collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery includes almost 600 photographs by Harry Callahan (1912–1999) that were acquired through the generosity of the Montreal-based Rossy Family Foundation, which donated 556 images to the Gallery in 2013 as well as the funds to purchase an additional 33 photographs in 2014. With this gift, the Vancouver Art Gallery now houses by far the most important collection of Callahan's work in Canada, and the second largest public collection in the world.

To celebrate this extraordinary gift and to mark the 40th anniversary of Callahan's 1976 retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, *Harry Callahan: The Street* features more than 120 photographs that focus on Callahan's interest in the street as a social space, an aspect of his artistic production that is not as widely known as others. It covers the entire span of Callahan's career, beginning with the in-camera montages produced in Detroit in the early 1940s and concluding with the multi-part works he made along Peachtree Street in Atlanta during the late 1980s and early 1990s. It showcases the full range of techniques Callahan employed, from complex multiple exposures in black and white to richly coloured, single-exposure dye transfer prints.

During a career that spanned five decades, Harry Callahan produced an extraordinary body of work that focuses on the everyday and encompasses a broad array of photographic techniques. His images range from "straight" pictures of isolated figures on city streets to starkly minimal compositions drawn from nature and multiple-exposure, in-camera montages using both black and white and colour materials. At times his prints are marked by subtle gradations in tonality, at others by high contrast with no intermediate tones. In some instances his pictures appear to have been made spontaneously, while others are the result of extended interaction between photographer and subject. While Callahan's work incorporates different approaches, it is bound together by a profound awareness of the devices and materials he employed to make his images.

About Harry Callahan

Born in Detroit in 1912, Callahan was self-taught. As a young man, he worked at Chrysler and subsequently studied engineering at Michigan State University. However, he dropped out of university and returned to Chrysler where he joined the company's camera club and began to teach himself photography.

In 1946, he was invited by László Moholy-Nagy to teach at the Institute of Design in Chicago, where he remained until 1961. At that time he left Chicago to become the founding chair of the photography department at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. Under Callahan's guidance, the program became one of

the most respected and influential photography programs in North America. Photographers who studied with Callahan can be found in the faculty of universities and art schools throughout North America (including Vancouver) and his approach to image making remains influential to this day.

Callahan's work has been featured in over 60 solo exhibitions at institutions and galleries such as: the Art Institute of Chicago; George Eastman House, Rochester; Museum of Modern Art, New York; United States Pavilion, 38th Venice Biennale; Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo; National Gallery of Art, Washington; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Fundación la Caixa, Madrid; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris; Haus der Photographie Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; Münchner Stadtmuseum, Munich; Tate Modern, London; among many others.

Callahan's work can be found in the collections of important art museums around the world, including: Art Institute of Chicago; Center for Creative Photography, Tucson; Cleveland Museum of Art; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington; J. Paul Getty Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Harvard Museum of Art, Cambridge; The High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; National Museum of Photography, Copenhagen; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Seibu Museum, Tokyo; Yale University Art Museum, New Haven; and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Harry Callahan: The Street is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Grant Arnold, Audain Curator of British Columbia Art. It is accompanied by a 159-page full-colour illustrated catalogue, co-published by the Vancouver Art Gallery and Black Dog Publishing.

Related Events:

Friday, June 10, 6pm: Members Opening
Tuesday, July 12, 7pm: Curator's Tour with Grant Arnold

Also opening this month at the Vancouver Art Gallery:

Picasso: The Artist and His Muses (June 11 – October 2)
NEXT: Stephen Waddell – Dark Matter Atlas (June 11 – September 5)
An Agreeable State of Uncertainty (June 11 – September 5)

For more information please visit www.vanartgallery.bc.ca

A media preview of all four exhibitions will take place on June 9 at 9am. Please RSVP to Debra Zhou at dzhou@vanartgallery.bc.ca.

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IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

MEDIA INFORMATION:

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About the **Vancouver Art Gallery**: The Vancouver Art Gallery is a 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. We thank everyone for their continuing generosity.