

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, January 29, 2004

Determined Pursuit: Highlights from the Longstaffe Collection February 28 to May 16, 2004

Vancouver, BC – *Determined Pursuit: Highlights from the Longstaffe Collection* portrays some of the primary developments of mid-to-late twentieth century modern art—from Pop Art to abstraction—as seen through the eyes of an extraordinary collector. Opening on February 28, 2004, *Determined Pursuit* brings together major works from the private collection of J. Ron Longstaffe generously donated to the Vancouver Art Gallery over a period of three decades. A total of over 800 works of art exceeding \$5million in value were gifted to the Gallery during this time in accordance with Longstaffe’s firm belief that art should be seen, not stored away.

J. Ron Longstaffe was an ardent nationalist and his collection covers a range of important Canadian art from the 1950’s onward. His collection includes valuable examples of east coast realism, Toronto abstraction and depictions of the landscape from the prairies to the west coast. Prominent Canadians include Maxwell Bates, Jack Bush, Greg Curnoe, Paterson Ewen, Gathie Falk, Betty Goodwin, Toni Onley and Christopher Pratt.

In particular, his gifts of Québécois painting have made the Gallery’s holding one of the finest in western Canada. His passion for Québécois painting made between 1950 and 1980 is revealed in this exhibition with key examples by Paul-Emile Borduas, Charles Gagnon, Yves Gaucher, Jean McEwen, Guido Molinari, Alfred Pellan and Claude Tousignant.

“Ron Longstaffe purchased many works with the Gallery in mind. As a result, the Gallery’s permanent collection has been enormously enriched by his generosity, especially in the areas of Québécois painting, British Columbia art and international graphics,” said Chief Curator/Associate Director Daina Augaitis, curator of the exhibition. “This show reveals his passionate interest in the subjective nature of art.”

In 1969, his move to England prompted a keen interest in international graphics. He was particularly engaged by the icons of Pop Art such as Richard Hamilton, Andy Warhol, David Hockney, Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein whose work remained a life-long passion. Exceptional works on paper by international figures such as Rene Magritte, Joan Miro and Pablo Picasso eventually became welcome additions to the Gallery’s international graphics collection.

In the 1970's, after his return to Canada, he visited the North and began collecting Inuit art. He developed a stellar collection of prints and drawings from the North. Consequently the Gallery's collection has been enriched with works by Simon Tookoome and Parr, among others.

In 2001, J. Ron Longstaffe received the Order of Canada in recognition of his public service in many aspects of Vancouver life. He was one of Canada's most avid collectors and a long-standing supporter of the Vancouver Art Gallery. J. Ron Longstaffe died in Vancouver in 2003, at age 69. He was recently named the posthumous recipient of the Distinguished Service Award by the British Columbian Museums Association for his contribution to the arts.

Highlights from the Longstaffe Collection will be on display at the Vancouver Art Gallery until May 16, 2004. The exhibition is curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director, Vancouver Art Gallery. Organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery.

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- When:** February 28 to May 16, 2004
- Where:** Vancouver Art Gallery
750 Hornby Street
Vancouver BC V6Z 2H7
www.vanartgallery.bc.ca
- Hours:** **Winter hours** cease April 5, 2004 **Summer hours** commence April 6, 2004
Closed Mondays Open every day
Tuesday to Sunday & Holidays 10am to 5.30pm Monday to Sunday & Holidays 10am to 5.30pm
Open Thursdays 10am to 9pm Open Thursdays 10am to 9pm
- Admission:** Adults \$12.50, Seniors \$9.00, Students \$8.00, Children (12 & under) Free
Family \$30 (2 adults, 2 children, 13 years +), Thursday evening suggested donation \$5.00
- Media contact:** Julie-Ann Backhouse
Communications Specialist
604 662 4722
- Images:** Digital images for professional media use only are available at the Vancouver Art Gallery's FTP site <ftp://ftp.vanartgallery.bc.ca>
Contact 604 662 4722 for password access.