



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday July 2, 2002

Exhibition of Paul Wong's work presents compelling views on sex, life and death



Paul Wong
in ten sity (detail), 1978
5 channel video installation, 23 minutes, black and white photographs, text, architectural construction
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Acquisition Fund

Vancouver, BC – *Paul Wong: from the collection* opens at the Vancouver Art Gallery on July 13, 2002. Spanning three decades of work, the exhibition speaks to changing values pertaining to sexuality, life and death. This is the first time Vancouver audiences have had an opportunity to view a comprehensive survey of Wong's work which often challenges prevailing standards and questions what is 'normal.'

A multimedia artist, Paul Wong is an internationally recognized figure based in Vancouver. Over the past three decades Wong has played a crucial role in the development of media art. In 1973, Wong co-founded the Satellite Video Exchange Society (Video In), an important Vancouver centre for the production and distribution of independent video. He is also co-founder and Artistic Director of On Edge, producing cross-cultural and cross-border collaborations of new art. In 1995-96, a mid-career retrospective of his work was held at the National Gallery of Canada. As a curator and mentor to younger artists, Wong has been an influential figure in the Vancouver art community.

“Over the decades, Paul Wong has been investigating the complex issues around identity, including its personal, social and cultural manifestations,” said Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator of the Vancouver Art Gallery. “Through his art an expansive commentary on social values emerges, especially in relation to sex, life and death. As a viewer, one repeatedly comes into contact with individual expressions that persist in the face of mainstream stereotypes.”

Wong’s work moves between documentation and fiction, and is often infused with the dramatic qualities of television and advertising. While the spectacle of mass media is a seductive lure, Wong’s ambivalent stance in the use of it seems to offer an inherent critique on the world of surface and appearance.

The Vancouver Art Gallery recently acquired a number of seminal artworks by the artist: *60 Unit: Bruise* (1976), *Murder Research* (1977), *in ten sity* (1978), *Untitled (Ken Fletcher 1954–1978)* (1978), *Confused: Sexual Views* (1984) and *Blending Milk and Water: Sex in the New World* (1995). This exhibition showcases the acquisitions and re-affirms the Gallery’s commitment to local artists.

In 1992, Wong received the Canada Council’s Bell Canada Award in Video Art in recognition of his pioneering contribution to the development of video practices in Canada and in spring 2002 he was recognized in Vancouver with the Asian Canadian Heritage Award for Transforming Art.

– end –

Paul Wong will attend the opening at the Vancouver Art Gallery on the evening of July 12, 2002.

Media Contact:

Julie-Ann Backhouse, Communications Specialist, Vancouver Art Gallery

604 662 4722

media@vanartgallery.bc.ca

The Vancouver Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, the Government of Canada through the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage Museum Assistance Program, Young Canada Works and Western Economic Diversification, the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the Vancouver Arts Stabilization Program (VAST) and the Gerald and Sheahan McGavin Capital Grants to the Arts.