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July 18 - August 8

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Canada's first drawing festival will showcase a range of contemporary and historical works

Vancouver, BC — The Vancouver Drawing Festival Society is pleased to present **Drawn / Artists and Drawings / Vancouver 2009**, Metro Vancouver's inaugural celebration of contemporary drawing. For three weeks in July and August, residents and visitors will be invited to explore 17 exhibitions featuring a range of contemporary and historical drawings from BC and beyond. The first multi-venue celebration of its kind in Canada, Drawn's programme will also include an exciting lineup of free artist talks, public performances, panel discussions, family activities, opening receptions, gallery tours and more. The festival will kick off with a unique launch in Gastown that will have Vancouverites talking for years to come.

According to Dr. Lynn Ruscheinsky, an art historian and one of Drawn's founding directors, the summer festival aims to celebrate drawing's place in the ever-changing world of art and culture. "For a long time, drawing was regarded primarily as a preparatory activity for works created in other media such as sculpture, painting and architecture," she said. "But the contemporary art world has been reevaluating the medium's place in recent years." Ruscheinsky notes that drawing is now increasingly recognized as an important art form in its own right. "Many artists are choosing it as their principal medium of expression, while others regard the mark-making associated with drawing as an integral facet of their multi-disciplinary work. Drawing clearly deserves its own showcase and this festival will be the vehicle."

With works by over 80 artists on display at 13 private galleries and three museums across Metro Vancouver, the 3-week festival promises to be a highlight of the city's visual arts season. The list of participating artists includes many leading names in BC's contemporary art scene. **Graham Gillmore, Reece Terris, Ann Kipling, Bruce Pashak, Kristin Bjornerud, Neil Wedman, Vicky Marshall, David Alexander** and **Charles Rea** are

continued on page 2

just some of the artists whose work will be shown. In addition, works by some of Canada's most recognized artistic legends will be on view at three public institutions. The **Burnaby Art Gallery** will feature images by **David Milne** and **BC Binning**; the *Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery* is presenting drawings by acclaimed West Coast artist **Jack Shadbolt**; and the **Vancouver Art Gallery** is exhibiting drawings by Shadbolt and fellow BC modernist legend **Emily Carr**. Also on view at the VAG are a number of works on paper by Dutch masters, further enhancing the historical context.

While some of the featured artists are recognized as drawers, others are better known for their work in other media. The festival will cast new light on these artistic visions, revealing different dimensions and previously unexplored territories of expression. At the same time, the exhibitions will highlight the importance of drawing in the creative process.

Ruscheinsky is very excited about the way the whole event has come together in a relatively short period of time. "When we started organizing this festival last fall, we had no idea that we would end up with so many artists and so many galleries on board and fully committed," she says. "It's wonderful to see everyone coming together to make something like this happen." Ruscheinsky and her fellow organizers now say they want the event to become annual and are already looking ahead to 2010. "The enthusiasm in this inaugural year has been astonishing, and I've no doubt it will grow next year. Drawing's time has finally come and we're ready to make the most of it."

***Drawn / Artists and Drawings / Vancouver 2009* officially begins July 18 and runs through August 8. A special by-invitation-only launch party will take place on the evening of July 17 at a venue in Gastown. For detailed information regarding each exhibition in the series, and for a full listing of events, performances and tours, please visit Drawn's website: drawnfestival.ca.**

Drawn's full lineup of events will be announced June 22.

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High resolution images are available upon request

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