

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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British Columbia's Young Artists to Benefit from New \$2 Million Audain Emerging Artists Acquisition Fund – The Most Significant of its Kind for Emerging Artists in Canada

VANCOUVER, BC — The **Vancouver Art Gallery** is intensifying its longstanding commitment to emerging British Columbia artists as it continues to build its collection for a new expanded Gallery. At a **September 25th** press conference, the Gallery announced the **Audain Emerging Artists Acquisition Fund**, a **\$2 million endowment** that will allow the Gallery to purchase work by British Columbia's up-and-coming young artists in perpetuity—the largest fund of its kind in the country. The Gallery also announced the first work selected for purchase: Vancouver artist **Mark Soo**'s photo-based artwork, ***That's That's Alright Alright Mama Mama***, 2008.

“British Columbia's young artists produce some of the most exciting work in the world,” said Vancouver Art Gallery director **Kathleen Bartels**. “Acquiring work by emerging artists is a major element of our collections mandate and with this generous gift from the Audain Foundation we will be able to pursue it more aggressively than ever. **Mark Soo** is among the most talented visual artists living in the region and we are pleased to announce his work as the first to be selected for purchase with the fund.”

Established by the Vancouver based **Audain Foundation**, the Audain Emerging Artists Acquisition Fund will support the purchase of works by artists in the early stages of their career who have not yet displayed their work in solo exhibitions in major public galleries. The acquisition fund will provide for the purchase of works by British Columbia artists 35-years-old and younger who have lived in the province for at least five years and who have shown great potential. With the addition of these funds, the Vancouver Art Gallery Foundation will now hold a total of \$9.3 million.

“We are pleased to enable the Vancouver Art Gallery to make this important investment in the art of our region,” said Audain Foundation chair **Michael Audain**. “The Gallery consistently collects the best work of British Columbia's thriving visual arts community and presents it to the world. This endowment provides an essential tool to continue this tradition, ensuring that our province's younger artists will have a central place in the Gallery's future.”

Mark Soo works in a variety of media, often manipulating his images to prompt viewers to the psychological and physiological aspects of light and colour and their cultural value. *That's That's Alright Alright Mama Mama* depicts two views of a reconstruction of Sun Studios where Elvis Presley recorded *That's All Right (Mama)* in 1954. To shoot the photograph, Soo recreated the studio space using rented equipment and props. The different viewpoints of the same space create a strange doubling effect that is enhanced when viewers wear the prescribed cyan and magenta 3-D glasses, activating the work's three-dimension quality. The first work by Soo in the Gallery's collection, *That's That's Alright Alright Mama Mama* strongly relates to works by his peers already held by the Gallery, including Vancouver artists Robert Arndt, Tim Lee, Kevin Schmidt and Althea Thauberger.

The Vancouver Art Gallery has a long tradition of acquiring the work of British Columbia artists and originating exhibitions featuring their work, most recently in the shows *Rebecca Belmore: Rising to the Occasion*, 2008, *Roy Arden*, 2007, *Fred Herzog: Vancouver Photographs*, 2007, *Raven Travelling: Two Centuries of Haida Art*, 2006, *Takao Tanabe*, 2006, *PAINT 7 New Painters + BC Painting Since the 1960s*, 2006, *Arthur Erickson: Critical Works*, 2006 and *Brian Jungen*, 2006. In the fall, the Gallery will commission Kwakwaka'wakw artist Marianne Nicolson to create a large-scale projection work, *The House of the Ghosts*, for the Gallery's Georgia Street façade.

The Audain Emerging Artists Acquisition Fund builds on a 2004 grant to the Gallery of \$2 million to endow the position of Audain Curator of British Columbia Art. Michael Audain has also enabled the Gallery to acquire works by British Columbia artists Jeff Wall, Brian Jungen, Scott McFarland, Marianne Nicolson, Kevin Schmidt and Takao Tanabe.

Reappointed to the Vancouver Art Gallery Association's Board of Trustees in 2007, Mr. Audain earlier served as a Trustee for ten years, including two years as chair. He is currently chair of the Vancouver Art Gallery Foundation, and a trustee of the National Gallery of Canada.

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