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Vancouver Art Gallery Director Kathleen Bartels Signs on for Five More Years

VANCOUVER, BC — Kathleen Bartels, director of the **Vancouver Art Gallery**, has renewed her contract to lead the Gallery for another five-year term. The Gallery's Board of Directors was pleased to ask Bartels to continue in the position following her first five years, a period of exponential growth. From 2001 to 2006 the Gallery's endowment increased from \$200,000 to \$5.7 million, admissions revenue doubled from \$1 million in 2001 to \$2 million in 2006, the permanent collection expanded through key acquisitions, and the Gallery's programming evolved to present an increasingly international perspective. During the same time, Gallery membership more than doubled to 25,000 members, demonstrating the community's enthusiasm and support.

"I am very honoured to continue as the Director of the Vancouver Art Gallery. We have made great strides on so many fronts over the last five years, all of which were made possible by an extremely committed Gallery staff, an enthusiastic and supportive board and, most importantly, a generous and responsive community," said Bartels. "I look forward to another five years in Vancouver, working with the extraordinary artists here, and to further solidifying the Gallery's position as an internationally recognized art museum."

Now a landed Canadian immigrant, Kathleen Bartels joined the Gallery in 2001. Before arriving in Vancouver, Bartels served as the Assistant Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, where she led successful facility enhancement programs. With a willingness to embrace challenge and promote innovation, Bartels is leading a facility expansion initiative for the Vancouver Art Gallery that will realize the institution's full potential for the next 25 years and beyond. The plan will greatly increase the Gallery's capacity by doubling its size to more than 300,000 square feet in order to feature larger and more prestigious exhibitions, provide space for enhanced educational programming and enable the organization to better support Vancouver's finest artists, showcasing their work to the world.

"Canada is extremely fortunate to have such a dynamic and visionary leader working tirelessly to promote and elevate the visual culture of the country's west," said Vancouver Art Gallery Board Chair

George Killy. “Kathleen is a strong and determined leader. Looking forward to the next five years, she has the Board’s full support as we anticipate the exciting prospect of facility renewal and expansion, a project that will ensure an even brighter future for the Gallery and the art world of British Columbia.”

Bartels’ tenure has been punctuated with a series of landmark contemporary and historical exhibitions. Under her direction, strategically blended presentations of historic and leading-edge contemporary exhibitions have become the Gallery’s hallmark. Over the last five years, the Gallery has celebrated some of history’s most important artists in such exhibitions as *Carr, O’Keeffe, Kahlo: Places of Their Own* (2002), *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession* (2005), *Raven Travelling: Two Centuries of Haida Art* (2006) and *Emily Carr: New Perspectives on a Canadian Icon* (2006-2007), while presenting some of the most thrilling talent of today with *Gillian Wearing: a trilogy* (2002), *Baja to Vancouver: The West Coast and Contemporary Art* (2004), *Rodney Graham: A Little Thought* (2005) and other innovative contemporary offerings. Such blockbuster exhibitions as the landmark *Protean Picasso* (2005-2006), the largest exhibition of the artist’s work in Vancouver history, and *Brian Jungen* (2006), the critically acclaimed exhibition of work by the young Vancouver artist, shattered attendance records for the times in which they appeared. Reverberations are still being felt in the art world from Bartels’ 2004 project with Bruce Mau Design, *Massive Change: The Future of Global Design*, the international touring exhibition that departed from the traditional idea of an art exhibition, to take a radical look at how rapidly evolving technologies create the potential for design to affect change on a global scale.

More than 1,500 works valued at close to \$13,000,000 have been acquired during Bartels’ tenure, including works by internationally renowned Vancouver artists Jeff Wall, Rodney Graham, Ian Wallace, Ken Lum and Stan Douglas. In 2002, a major donation by Toronto collectors Allison and Alan Schwartz added signature works by Reinke Dijkstra, Andreas Gursky, Rachel Whiteread, Thomas Ruff, Cindy Sherman and other major artists to the Gallery’s permanent collection. The following year, a gift of 75 works from J. Ron and Jacqueline Longstaffe was secured by Bartels. A 2004 donation of 460 works by Vancouver collectors Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruft firmly established the Vancouver Art Gallery’s position as a repository for one of the most comprehensive photo-based collections in North America.

Born and raised in Chicago, Kathleen earned a BA in Photography at Columbia College, undertook graduate research in Pacific Art History at the University of Hawaii and later interned and studied at the University of Arizona’s Center for Creative Photography. Her early influences include

photographers Robert Frank, Edward Weston and Lee Friedlander. Kathleen Bartels has received numerous awards during her distinguished career. She has been named one of Vancouver Magazine's "Power 50" most influential leaders for the past five consecutive years and was honoured with the prestigious Hadassah-WIZO "Women of Achievement" award for 2005.

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