

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Body: New Art from the UK

Vancouver, BC – The Vancouver Art Gallery is the first and originating venue for the Canadian tour of *Body: New Art from the UK*, opening May 28. This exhibition explores new contemporary works by 14 influential artists, some of whom gained international notoriety as members of the yBa (young British artists). The principal focus for all the artists is the human body, both as a powerful site of social rupture and dissent and as a subject of complex social interactions. Emerging in the 1990s, the aggressive, in-your-face attitude of these artists united the forces of British youth culture, mass marketing and high art.

One of the persistent subjects that links art and artists across generations and over centuries is the theme of the body. In the past three decades, while the more traditional genres of still life, landscape and portraiture have maintained an enduring presence, it is "the body" that has emerged as the dominant subject of contemporary artistic practice. This theme is reflected in the work of the artists represented in the exhibition.

The union of these artists as a group presents two generations of artists who have approached this subject in distinct yet connected ways. Tracey Emin, Sarah Lucas, Cornelia Parker, Gillian Wearing, Jake and Dinos Chapman and Sam Taylor-Wood, often described as the yBa, are a loosely knit group of artists who emerged in the 1990s and identified the body, and often their own bodies, as a powerful site of social rupture and dissent. Their aggressive, in-your-face attitude united the forces of British youth culture, mass marketing and high art. A second generation emerged almost simultaneously. These artists too acknowledged the primacy of the body as a subject in contemporary art, but they chose to emphasize its social complexity and its multi-coded character. Tacita Dean, Douglas Gordon, Fiona Banner, Martin Boyce, Cathy Wilkes, Rebecca Warren and Carey Young are represented in the exhibition by works that engage with the body as a subject of complex social interactions—interactions that sometimes mask the body's presence and sometimes open it up in ways that reveal its diverse movements through the world.

Body: New Art from the UK is jointly organized by the British Council and the Vancouver Art Gallery. It is part of *UK Today: A New View*, a year-long series celebration of creative partnerships between Vancouver and the United Kingdom.

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The exhibition is one of four exhibitions on display this summer in the *Body Slam* suite, an international convergence of recent contemporary work focusing on the human form. Comprising works by artists from Austria, France, the UK and Vancouver, *Body Slam* explores the human condition through the mediums of sculpture, photography and video. *Body Slam* is being presented in juxtaposition with an exhibition of historical works by the legendary sculptor Rodin, providing visitors with a unique opportunity to explore the human body in all its many dimensions.

All media are welcome to attend the opening celebration at 7pm on Friday, June 24, 2005.

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Media contacts:

Sue Lavitt, Communications, Vancouver Art Gallery, 604 662 4700, x 309

Julie-Ann Backhouse, Communications Specialist, Vancouver Art Gallery, 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.

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