

Media Release

For Immediate Release
January 19, 2010

ATB Financial and Art Gallery of Alberta partner to celebrate Alberta art and artists Unique five-year agreement brings art to all Albertans

EDMONTON, AB –The **Art Gallery of Alberta (AGA)** announced today a new partnership with **ATB Financial**, which will help to tell the story of Alberta art. The five-year joint venture between the financial institution and the Gallery will support three substantial programs, including two new initiatives, featuring Alberta-based artists and celebrating Alberta art.

“This ATB investment in our programming will expand our ability to foreground the work, both historical and contemporary, of Alberta artists” said **AGA Executive Director, Gilles Hébert**. “We are thrilled to be able to celebrate the art of Alberta, art which tells our stories. Further, the exhibitions that are being supported by ATB will go a long way to help us meet a key strategic goal – that is to actively take part in the career development of our artists. We are very appreciative of ATB’s commitment to the AGA and our initiatives around Alberta artists.”

The three ATB Financial sponsored programs will display the on-going evolution of the province’s visual arts with the *Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art*, *Alberta Early Masters* and the *ATB Young Alberta Artists Competition*.

“At ATB, we are Alberta, and the AGA promises to be our province’s most significant cultural story of the new decade. It’s like having a stylish and creative and beautiful new friend. How could we resist?” said **Peggy Garritty, ATB’s Senior Vice-President of Communications and Corporate Responsibility**.

Garritty said the AGA partnership fits perfectly with ATB’s new emphasis on celebrating Alberta stories. Tuesday’s announcement means the institutions will work together to celebrate Alberta art in all corners of the province, not just in the Gallery’s landmark new building on Edmonton’s Sir Winston Churchill Square, she said.

The partnership will jointly present the **7th Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art**, which will feature the work of 22 Alberta visual artists. With a mandate to present original and inspiring works by regional artists, the *Alberta Biennial* has highlighted the talents of more than 115 different Alberta contemporary artists since its inception in 1996. Curated by **Richard Rhodes**, Editor of *Canadian Art Magazine*, this year’s Biennial is titled *Timeland*. The title reflects the spaciousness of Alberta, the cross-generational selection of artists and also provides a context for looking at how contemporary art is shaped by, and can shape, different perceptions of time, both personal and social. The list of the selected artists was unveiled as a part of today’s announcement (please see backgrounder document for artists’ names).

ATB Financial’s sponsorship will also allow for the development of two new programs that celebrate the past and the future of Alberta art. The *Alberta Early Masters Series*, launching in 2011, will build awareness and pride in our province’s rich heritage of art. The AGA-curated exhibitions in this new series will profile influential and groundbreaking Alberta artists from our shared past, such as H.G. Glyde, Walter J. Phillips and Marion Nicoll.

The partnership will also focus on the future of Alberta’s visual arts with the introduction of the *ATB Young Alberta Artists Competition*. Youth from around our province will be invited to submit their works of art to their local ATB branch

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on a selected topic. The winning submission from each community will then be displayed at the Art Gallery of Alberta, in the province's capital city. Details regarding participation in this competition will be released at a later date.

"The *Alberta Early Masters Series* is a new idea — bringing new recognition to three wonderful Alberta art stories — that wouldn't exist unless our two institutions worked together," Garritty said. "The *Alberta Biennial* is, of course, vitally important to the Gallery's role as THE champion of Alberta visual art. And the biggest branch network in the province will help us spread the Gallery's spirit of creativity to school children across Alberta in our new *ATB Young Alberta Artists Competition*."

The new Art Gallery of Alberta opens on January 31, 2010. For more information on the Art Gallery of Alberta, please visit the AGA website.

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ABOUT THE ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA

The Art Gallery of Alberta is creating a new gallery—a "New Vision" for Alberta's capital. After a global architectural competition, Los Angeles based Randall Stout Architects, Inc. was selected to design the new gallery. With opening exhibitions in early 2010, the new AGA will be an 85,000 square foot premier presentation venue for international and Canadian art, education and scholarship. The new AGA will be a centre of excellence for the visual arts in Western Canada in the 21st century, expressing the creative spirit of Alberta and connecting people, art and ideas.

Founded in 1924, the Art Gallery of Alberta (AGA) is the oldest cultural institution in Alberta and the only museum in the province strictly devoted to the exhibition and preservation of art and visual culture. Serving both the city of Edmonton and the province of Alberta, the Gallery maintains a collection of nearly 6,000 objects. The AGA is focused on the development and presentation of original exhibitions of contemporary and historical art; on building national and international curatorial partnerships for the creation of new exhibition projects; and on the development and delivery of a program of touring exhibitions that disseminate contemporary and historical art within Alberta and across Canada.

The AGA is a not-for-profit organization that relies on the generous support of its Members, donors, sponsors and government. The Art Gallery of Alberta is grateful for the generous support of the many public and private donors and sponsors who have made the AGA's New Vision possible, as well as the ongoing support of the City of Edmonton, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, The Canada Council for the Arts and our Members.

ABOUT ATB FINANCIAL

ATB Financial is the largest Alberta-based financial institution, with assets of \$27.2 billion. It provides Personal and Business Financial Services, Investor Services, and Corporate Financial Services to more than 690,000 Albertans in 243 communities. It provides service through 165 branches and 133 agencies, telephone and Internet banking, a Customer Contact Centre, and Automated Banking Machines.

ATB Financial was established in 1938 and has been a provincial Crown corporation since 1997. Alberta Venture magazine named ATB Alberta's Most Respected Corporation in the area of corporate social responsibility. ATB has also been named one of Canada's 50 Best Employers by Report on Business Magazine, one of the 75 Best Workplaces in Canada by the Great Place to Work Institute, and one of Canada's Top 100 Employers and Alberta's Top 50 Employers by Mediacorp Canada Inc.

Media Contact

Sarah Hoyles, Media Relations & Communications Coordinator
T: 780.392.2468 E: sarah.hoyles@youraga.ca