

Media Release

For Immediate Release
January 29, 2010

Art Gallery of Alberta opens

Architect, all three levels of government and community members join to mark the launch of Canada's newest art gallery

EDMONTON, AB –The **Art Gallery of Alberta (AGA)**, in downtown Edmonton, will open to the public on **January 31, 2010 at 9 am**. The remodeled 85,000 square foot gallery, designed by Los Angeles architect **Randall Stout**, features three floors of exhibition space that will showcase historical and contemporary Canadian and international art. The opening marks a major milestone in the AGA's New Vision project and fulfills its goal of creating an art gallery of national significance for the Province of Alberta.

"It is the AGA's dream that a rebuilt, renewed Art Gallery of Alberta will serve as a cultural centre of excellence for the Alberta community today and beyond, for generations to come," says **Allan Scott, Chair, AGA Board of Directors**. "Our new building was planned, designed and constructed by an extremely talented and dedicated project team and the tireless AGA staff. The team deserves a great big thank you from everyone."

An official ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place on **Saturday, January 30, 2010 at 10 am**. This significant occasion follows more than 10 years of planning and three years of construction. The Art Gallery of Alberta's New Vision building project has been funded by an \$88 million capital campaign, with major support from all three levels of government as well as tremendous private sector donations.

Presiding over the hour-long private ceremony will be the **Chair of the AGA's Board of Directors, Allan E. Scott**. In attendance will be Canada's Minister of Public Works and Government Services, **The Honourable Rona Ambrose**; Minister of State, Western Economic Diversification, **The Honourable Lynne Yelich**; Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, **The Honourable Norman L. Kwong**; Minister of Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, **The Honourable Lindsay Blackett**; and **His Worship Mayor Stephen Mandel** from the City of Edmonton, as well as the Gallery's architectural team, **Randall Stout Architects Incorporated**.

"As we open our doors to our new facility, we embrace a most ambitious agenda. It is an auspicious day for Edmontonians and Albertans as the AGA takes its place amongst great Canadian art museums with enormous enthusiasm and tremendous capacity," says **Gilles Hébert, AGA Executive Director**. "We are committed to being leaders in the field and to providing our visitors with exceptional experiences. And this facility is perfectly suited to the bold future we envision."

The Gallery will welcome the public on **January 31 and February 1, 2010** with free timed-ticket admission. Approximately 10,000 timed-tickets for the two-day opening were distributed via the Gallery's website. Released on January 18, 2010, these limited timed-tickets were fully booked in less than 24-hours. Gallery admission on the two opening days will only be possible with a timed-ticket. Regular admission hours will begin February 2, 2010.

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Celebrating its prominent location on Sir Winston Churchill Square in the heart of the Arts District in downtown Edmonton, the design of new AGA extends the Gallery into the community, welcoming visitors to experience art first hand. The design takes inspiration from the city of Edmonton's unique northern environment and urban grid. Angular windows are juxtaposed against a winding 190-metre steel ribbon that references the forms of the North Saskatchewan River and Aurora Borealis. The movement of this continuous stainless steel structure through the Gallery's interior and exterior reinvents the museum's public spaces, continually connecting visitors with their downtown surroundings. The building is crafted from three key materials: patinaed zinc, high performance glazing, and stainless steel. These materials reflect Edmonton's dramatic weather pattern and the extreme contrast of the long days of summer and the short days of winter, allowing the building to transform in response to its natural surroundings.

Randall Stout Architects, Inc. (RSA) was selected from 25 international submissions during the spring of 2005, to redesign the former gallery building originally designed by Edmonton architect **Don Bittorf** in 1969. The RSA design was chosen by a selection committee and announced on **October 15, 2005**. The new building has nearly doubled the area of the former gallery and its environmental controls meet the highest museum standards.

The new AGA also includes an expanded education facility, the **Singhmar Education Centre for Art Education**, as well as upgraded art-handling facilities and celebratory public event spaces. Highlights include a fully outfitted theatre; a museum store, **Shop AGA**; a 'floating' room, the **Borealis Lounge**; a relaxed fine dining establishment, **Zinc**; as well as the **L1 Espresso Bar** and 3rd floor **Terrace Café**. The AGA is directly accessible from Edmonton's underground light rail transportation system (LRT) entrance.

Inaugural exhibitions feature significant works by artists from Alberta, Canada and beyond, including masters **Edgar Degas** and **Francisco Goya**, celebrated Canadian photographers **Yousuf Karsh** and **Edward Burtynsky** and internationally renowned Canadian artists **Janet Cardiff** and **George Bures Miller**. The new AGA also includes *The BMO World of Creativity*, an interactive children's gallery that will focus on the theme of architecture for the opening year with the exhibition *Play on Architecture!* Two outdoor spaces have been added to the Gallery, which will feature sculpture by Alberta artists **Ken Macklin** and **Peter Hide**. A wide-range of public programs, including family activities, late night events, lectures, films and more, will animate exhibitions at the new AGA.

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ABOUT THE ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA

The Art Gallery of Alberta is a centre of excellence for the visual arts in Western Canada, connecting people, art and ideas. The AGA is focused on the development and presentation of original exhibitions of contemporary and historical art from Alberta, Canada and around the world. The AGA also offers a full-range of art education and public programs. Founded in 1924, the Art Gallery of Alberta maintains a collection of over 6,000 objects and is the oldest cultural institution in Alberta and the only museum in the province solely dedicated to the exhibition and preservation of art and visual culture. The AGA recently underwent a major re-building project. Designed by Los Angeles architect Randall Stout, the 85,000 sq foot (7,900 sq metres) new AGA opens to the public on January 31, 2010. The new Gallery features three floors of premiere exhibition space; the City of Edmonton Terrace; the Singhmar Centre for Art Education; Zinc resto lounge; shopAGA; Ledcor Theatre and an Art Rental and Sales Gallery.

The Art Gallery of Alberta is a not-for-profit organization that relies on the support of its Members, donors, sponsors and government. The AGA 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.

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