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Winners of British Columbia's Largest Visual Arts Awards Announced

Robert Davidson to receive Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts
Germaine Koh and Marina Roy to receive VIVA Awards

VANCOUVER, BC — British Columbia's most prestigious annual award for the visual arts, the **Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts**, and the **VIVA Awards** will be presented at the **Vancouver Art Gallery** on **May 12, 2010**. The seventh annual Audain Prize, awarded by the **Audain Foundation for the Visual Arts**, will be presented to renowned Haida artist **Robert Davidson**. The **VIVA Awards**, granted annually by the **Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation**, will go to Vancouver artists **Germaine Koh** and **Marina Roy**.

"The Audain and VIVA awards offer a tremendous opportunity every year to celebrate and focus attention on the extraordinarily talented artists living in British Columbia. By providing this much deserved recognition, the foundations that generously fund these awards are affirming and furthering the careers of the province's most deserving artists," said Vancouver Art Gallery director **Kathleen Bartels**. "The Gallery is extremely proud to be the host of this annual awards ceremony, which has become a tremendous hub of excitement for province's visual arts community."

Robert Davidson is renowned as one Canada's most distinguished contemporary artists for his work as a master carver, printmaker, painter and jeweler. An artist of Haida descent, Davidson has gained prominence for the creative development of his nation's traditional art forms. Having mastered the bold formline designs of classical Haida art over the past 30 years, Davidson now pushes the boundaries of the tradition to realize new and exciting levels. A leading figure in the renaissance of Haida art and culture, Davidson carved the first totem pole to be raised this century in Massett, Haida Gwaii in 1969—a catalyst for the flood of creative activity that has emanated from this community.

Davidson's exquisitely crafted work is held in public collections from the National Gallery of Canada to the Vancouver Art Gallery, which recently commissioned the artist to carve the large-scale transformation panel, *Killer Whale Transforming into a Thunderbird*, which was recently displayed in the exhibition *Visions of British Columbia: A Landscape Manual*. The winner of the 2010 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, Davidson lives and works in White Rock, British Columbia.

Germaine Koh is a Vancouver-based artist, whose conceptually-generated installations and public artworks illuminate the significance of everyday actions, familiar objects and common places. The artist has wrapped a bus in a camouflage that mimics the streetscape of its route, affixed a massive and elegant chandelier of weather-controlled lights to a streetlamp placed on the roof of the Vancouver Convention Centre, and moved the entire grounds of a vacant lot into a gallery space where plants and seeds continued to grow. Reframing common experiences, Koh's often amusing work exposes arbitrary boundaries between art and non-art and creates new appreciations of the everyday environment.

Koh's work was selected by Vancouver Art Gallery to appear in the 2009 exhibition *How Soon Is Now Contemporary Art From Here*, which presented the most exciting recent developments in British Columbia's contemporary art scene. She has exhibited her work in public art galleries across Canada, as well as in Europe, Asia, Australia and the United States. Her work was presented as a part of the Liverpool, Sydney and Montréal biennials, and she was a finalist for the 2004 Sobey Art Award.

Vancouver-based artist **Marina Roy** works across a variety of media, including drawing, painting, sculpture, animation and video, to find new ways of visualizing the unconscious mind. In her celebrated animated film, *Apartment*, Roy takes the viewer through each room of an opulent, but dilapidated apartment building, weaving together surreal narratives and images. This work was selected by the Gallery to appear in the exhibition *How Soon is Now* and was more recently chosen to appear as part of the project *CUE: Artists' Videos*. She has exhibited her work across Canada, as well as in Europe and the United States. Also a prolific writer, Roy's book *Sign After the X* was published by Arsenal Pulp Press and Artspeak in 2001. She has been an assistant professor of visual arts in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory at the University of British Columbia since 2002.

The Audain Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Visual Arts is funded by the Audain Foundation and grants \$30,000 annually to a senior British Columbia artist, selected by an independent jury. Over the last 20 years, Michael Audain, Chairman of Polygon Homes Ltd., has been a leading supporter of the visual arts in British Columbia. He currently serves as Chair of the National Gallery of Canada, the Vancouver Art Gallery Foundation, and the Audain Foundation for the Visual Arts. Previous winners of the Audain Prize include Liz Magor (2009), Jeff Wall (2008), Gordon Smith (2007), Eric Metcalfe (2006), E.J. Hughes (2004) and Ann Kipling (2003).

Funded by the **Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation**, the VIVA Awards are presented annually to celebrate exemplary achievement by British Columbia artists in mid-career. The Awards were founded by British Columbia painter Jack Shadbolt and Doris Shadbolt, whose significant work as a curator and writer helped to elevate British Columbia art to a national and international prominence. Created to nurture the advancement of the visual arts in British Columbia and their appreciation by the public, the award grants \$12,000 annually to practicing artists. Since its creation in 1988, 40 VIVA Awards have been granted in a program that continues in memory of the founders.

The May 12th award ceremony at the Vancouver Art Gallery will take place at 7pm and is open to the public.

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