



National Gallery of Canada

## Exhibitions Policy

Approved by the NGC Board of Trustees in December 1992  
Revisions approved by the NGC Board of Trustees on  
1 April 2003 and December 1, 2008

### 1. PREAMBLE

The National Gallery of Canada and its affiliate since 1985, the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, provide, through their exhibitions program, intellectual, physical and electronic access to the two institutions' national collections and the world's visual arts heritage, in Ottawa, across Canada, and beyond. The mandate derives from the Museums Act, 1990 (Part I, sections 5 and 6 (1)):

to develop, maintain and make known, throughout Canada and internationally, a national collection of works of art, historic and contemporary, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada; and

to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of art in general among all Canadians.

In furtherance of its purposes, the National Gallery of Canada has the capacity and, subject to this Act, the rights, powers and privileges of a natural person and in particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the National Gallery of Canada may:

- (d) lend or borrow works of art and other museum material on long-term or short-term loan;
- (e) organize, sponsor, arrange for and participate in travelling exhibitions, in Canada and internationally, of works of art and other museum material in its collection and from other sources;
- (f) undertake and sponsor any research, including fundamental or basic research and theoretical and applied research, related to its purposes and to museology, and communicate the results of that research;



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(h) promote knowledge of and disseminate information about works of art and other museum material in its collection and art in general throughout Canada and internationally, by such means of education and communication as are appropriate;

(i) share the expertise of its staff by undertaking and sponsoring programs or training and apprenticeship in the professional and technical skills involved in the operation of other organizations with purposes similar to its purposes;

(k) provide and arrange for professional and technical services to other organizations with purposes similar to its purposes;

(m) develop, operate and maintain branches or exhibition centres;

### Notes:

In this document "Gallery" includes the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography unless otherwise noted.

The Gallery's exhibition program is achieved with an understanding of the importance of the Gallery's Conservation Policy, and manages exposure of the artworks and related physical preservation issues accordingly.

The Exhibition Policy applies both to exhibitions shown at, as well as toured by, the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

Through a commitment to excellence in its presentation of a varied and balanced program of exhibitions, the Gallery seeks to develop audiences and make art broadly accessible for enjoyment, contemplation and understanding; and strives to ensure physical and electronic access to art for as large and diverse an audience as possible, throughout Canada and abroad. This objective is reached by the following:

### 2.1 NGC and CMCP Collections

Emphasis is put on the development of exhibitions which relate to the collections:



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by building on the strengths of the permanent collections, including recent acquisitions and gifts;

by affirming the presence of Canadian art, in Canada and abroad;

by presenting exhibitions from abroad and creating a dialogue between Canadian and International art.

by complementing underrepresented collecting areas; and showing art not represented in the collections.

### 2.2 Canadian Outreach

As part of its commitment to a national presence, the Gallery will undertake a variety of collaborations with art museums in Canada: These include partnerships in exhibition organization, full co-productions of exhibitions as well as inclusion of other institutions' exhibitions in the NGC and CMCP's travelling exhibitions programmes. The NGC and the CMCP will also present, as part of the National Capital Programme, major exhibitions and focus exhibitions organized by other Canadian art museums.

### 2.3 Contemporary Art

The Gallery promotes contemporary Canadian art, in particular, and contemporary art in general, through a significant proportion of its exhibitions.

The exhibition program of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography contributes more specifically to the public's understanding and appreciation of contemporary Canadian photography, as an art form, as well as its power to inform.

### 2.4 Indigenous cultures

The Gallery seeks to foster an awareness of the visual arts of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, and the art of Indigenous Peoples in general. It does so through:

- integration of Aboriginal art (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) within the chronological, historical installations of the Canadian art collections;
- dedicated curatorial resources and dedicated gallery space for ongoing installations and rotations of the permanent collections of Indigenous art;



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- periodic special exhibition programming highlighting Indigenous artists.

### 2.5 Research and Education

Exhibitions reflect the scholarly and academic role of the Gallery and serve as a platform for research, learning and excellence in many ways:

- by publishing new research on works in the NGC, CMCP and other collections; participating in research partnerships with other major museum partners; and making original contributions to art history in both Canadian and international areas of study.
- by promoting an understanding of the artistic process through related work in conservation and restoration; and expanded opportunity for physical study of works not usually seen together.
- by providing opportunity for learning at all levels of education, including both the general public and specialists.

### 2.6 Cultural Diversity

The Gallery acknowledges the broad cultural diversity of our Canadian population and audience today and is committed to presenting exhibitions featuring the visual arts of diverse cultures. This will occur where we have expertise and/or, by seeking specialized guest curators or externally organized exhibitions of high quality.

### 2.7 NGC and CMCP Profile

#### a) National and International Collaboration

One of the means by which the Gallery's reputation is maintained is through research, organization and presentation of exhibitions. This involves ongoing collaboration and partnership nationally and internationally on exhibitions, loans, and other professional exchanges. Exhibitions may be organized by the Gallery alone, in collaboration with other institutions, or solely by other institutions.

The Gallery responds as appropriate to anniversaries, festivals, current events, and the programming interests of art museums in Canada and abroad.



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As a member of the Canadian Heritage Portfolio, the Gallery also collaborates on the organization of exhibitions with other federal institutions and agencies.

### b) Sponsorship

The Gallery seeks private sector funding for exhibitions through its National Gallery of Canada Foundation; broadening the base both of financial support and of understanding in the community.

## 2.8 Travelling Exhibitions

Travelling exhibitions subscribe to the objectives outlined above, and are in support of Part I, Section 6 (1), Sub-sections d, e, f, h, i, k and m of the Museums Act.

### a) Clients

The travelling exhibitions serve galleries in Canada and their constituencies, and on a case-by-case basis, are offered internationally.

### b) Program

The Travelling Exhibitions Program responds, in terms of content and size, to the range of potential recipient institutions. The information on the Travelling Exhibitions Program is made available on a regular basis. The programming emphasis is on works from the permanent collections and on curatorial expertise at the Gallery as well as that of guest curators.

### c) Regional Distribution

The variety of travelling exhibitions ensures that there is, over time, a wide regional distribution within Canada to reach a broad range of art museums in Canada, including smaller galleries and Northern communities.

### d) Consultation

In the development of travelling exhibitions and other collaborations, the Gallery is committed to ongoing consultations with art museums in Canada and abroad.

### e) Public Education

In the development of travelling exhibitions, the Gallery is committed to providing supporting, corollary, educational programming for its exhibitions including lectures, teacher support, and web support through the Gallery's Educational web-site, Cybermuse.



### 3. CRITERIA

Exhibition decisions are based on the following criteria:

- a. exhibitions must reflect the mandate of the NGC and the CMCP;
- b. exhibition content and development must be based on artistic and scholarly excellence;
- c. exhibitions must reflect the Gallery's mission to provide knowledge, educate and communicate;
- d. the exhibition schedule must respond as much as possible to periods of maximum accessibility and suitability for visitors throughout the year; and
- e. exhibitions must be consistent with resources and time available.

#### Reference Documents for the Exhibitions Policy

1. Official Languages Act
2. Copyright Act June 1988
3. NGC Research Policy, 2004
4. Museums Act 1990
5. NGC Acquisitions Policy 2003
6. NGC Communications Policy
7. NGC Exhibition Policy, 2003
8. NGC Conservation Policy, 2007
9. NGC Education Policy, 2006