



Annual Public Meeting

Monday, September 17, 2012

Quebec City

Speaking Notes of Interim Chair Michael Tims

Michael Tims goes to the podium to begin the Annual Public Meeting portion of the evening.

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening and welcome to the sixth Annual Public Meeting of the National Gallery of Canada. I am Michael Tims, Interim Chair of the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada.

It's a great pleasure to be back to the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, with whom the National Gallery shares many goals, among others, to continually increase public access to the collections. It's an honor to invite to the podium Mrs. Line

Ouellette, Director of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

Madame Line Ouellette comes to the podium to present her welcoming remarks.

Mrs. Ouellette, thank you very much for your warm welcome. We are really delighted to be here tonight.

To begin, I'd like to introduce my colleagues on the Board of Trustees.

- first, from Quebec, Jean-François Béland from Gatineau and
- Guy Bourgeois from Saint-Bruno;
- our trustees from Calgary, Paul Baay and Howard Kroon;
- those from Winnipeg, Allan Benoit and Liza Maheu;
- from Kentville, Nova Scotia, Linda Hutchison; and
- from Toronto, Harriet Walker.

As you can see, the Board is not complete, because our Chair Michael Audain and our colleague Fred Fountain have left us both in June of this year, after two mandates. They received our deepest gratitude for their extraordinary leadership and their exceptional contribution to the Board's affairs. The Government of Canada will soon announce nominations to fill the vacant positions and the chairmanship.

This said, let me tell you how pleased we all are to be back in Quebec City, whose vitality and development is an inspiration for all.

I also want to thank Mrs. Line Ouellette, for her very warm welcome, as well as all of her team for their help in planning our public meeting. On behalf of the full Board, I would like to wish you the very best success for your wonderful extension project that will give art, as you said so well, more space!!

The Gallery and its affiliate museum, the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, have once again fulfilled their mandate, as this year exhibitions and acquisitions demonstrate so well.

But let us recall this mandate that already goes back more than 130 years:

Develop, maintain and make known, through all Canada and internationally, a collection of works of art, both 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.

Aimed to serve the Canadian population, this mandate guides every decision made by the NGC Board of Trustees and its director Marc Mayer and his management team.

Thus, in 2011-2012, the Gallery once again confirmed its reputation of excellence and scholarship by presenting the magnificent *Caravaggio and his followers in Rome* exhibition, which allowed thousands of visitors to discover and appreciate, for the first time in our country, the genius of the 17th century Italian master. This exhibition was a fine example of how important partnerships are to our ability to excel at what we do: they enhance our outreach here in Canada and around the world. Our 2012 summer exhibition, *Van Gogh: Up Close*, which has just closed, has also been a phenomenal public and critical success, and was organized with the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The acquisition of Christian Marclay's work, *The Clock*, is another example of the relevance of partnerships. Thanks to this joint acquisition with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts – and to the generosity of Jay Smith and Laura Rapp, and Carole and Morton Rapp of Toronto –, the collections of both museums are now

strengthened by a video masterpiece, winner of the Golden Lion at the 2011 Venice Biennial.

Moreover, this Biennial gave the Gallery the opportunity to distinguish itself in 2011-2012, thanks to a fruitful management of Canada's participation to this prestigious international exhibition of contemporary art. The partnership with the Canada Council, together with the generosity of private donors from all over the country, has played a crucial role in this accomplishment.

Turning to a less colorful but nonetheless crucial dimension of our work, the Gallery's financial landscape in 2011-12 presented challenges. Nevertheless, with due regard for the Canadian taxpayers' investment in its national institution, the Gallery exercised prudent financial management throughout the year in review: as a result, the Gallery achieved a net operating surplus, a milestone that must be underlined. The Gallery also negotiated

and signed new collective agreements with both unions representing its employees.

Unfortunately, financial concerns will still be present in the near future, because the Gallery must undertake a major retrofit of its installation and deal with the continuing rising cost of its operations, all the while maintaining its tradition of offering quality programs and services to Canadians all over the country.

In closing, on behalf of my colleagues from the Board of Trustees, I want to thank our director, Marc Mayer, his senior management team and, in fact, all the Gallery personnel for their hard labor and their unfailing devotion. We also want to express our gratitude to our patrons, the National Gallery of Canada Foundation and our corporate partners, whose generous support is evermore crucial to the development and sustainability of the Gallery.

Finally, my colleagues and I wish to express our appreciation to our government partners and to the Honorable James Moore, Official Languages and Heritage Canada Minister, for their permanent support and collaboration.

Thank you for your time and we will be happy to answer your questions after the presentations.