



National Gallery of Canada

**Joanne Charette - Director, Public Affairs**  
**Annual Public Meeting - December 1, 2008**

Thank you Karen and Martha.

As you can see from the short promotional video, the next presentation will showcase one of my areas of responsibility – our educational programs.

The Education and Public Programs Division seeks to engage visitors of all ages, interests and abilities in meaningful experiences with works of art. Programs at the Gallery and on-line, through the art education research site CyberMuse, encourage discovery and creativity. They promote the development of knowledge, skills, feelings, attitudes and behaviours that can lead to achievement, personal growth and life satisfaction.

With a range of offerings for toddlers through older adults, organized groups, family units or individuals, programs acknowledge the diversity of the Canadian museum-visiting public – both real and virtual. They are founded upon the twin beliefs in the importance of lifelong learning and the value of the visual arts.

I am pleased to report that it has been a very productive year for Education and Public Programs. We continued to develop and offer educational programs with 35% of our visitors participating. The Gallery’s school program is currently financially supported by the RBC Foundation and we are currently undergoing its review. We have conducted internal analysis and research of the content and have consulted teachers who have provided their input through a web survey, focus groups, and evaluation questionnaires.

While the number of school programs offered was reduced, the quality of the offerings has not decreased. We have developed and launched a comprehensive website to provide teachers with program information and the opportunity to book on-line. The final revised school program will be presented and launched in September 2009.



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As part of an ongoing collaboration with the Volunteer Circle, and in recognition of the Circle's 50th anniversary, 12 groups selected through a draw will receive a fully subsidized visit to the Gallery.

We also launched a full review of our adult programs in order to streamline and refresh our offerings. The programs were analyzed internally according to several criteria, as well as data gathered from adult program participants and target audiences. Look for new programs in 2009. We developed and offered a wide-range of educational activities in support of the exhibitions presented in Ottawa. These included, videos, audioguides, guided visits, workshops and films. Once again, our summer Bell audioguide featured verbal description stops for blind or visually impaired visitors.

We just launched a new lecture series entitled "Curators on the Collections" to provide visitors access to current research and thinking on the Gallery collections, through the staff who work most closely with them. To date, we have offered lectures on the Photography and European collections. Next, we will offer lectures on the Prints and Drawings and Contemporary collections.

Artissimo – the popular family program – celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2008 with an eye-catching purpose-built kiosk structure, and a series of engaging new activities. Art buddies, feely boxes, Art-from-above and the Animals at the Gallery self-guide encourage families to look closely at and learn about artwork in the collection. Then they explore their creativity through follow-up art-making activities at the kiosk. Watch for more new activities in the coming months. The Gallery's very own Teen Council continued to develop workshops, and presented Artistic Underground, a day-long event of music, art-making and social interaction on the theme of diversity and inclusion.

The event boasted its own website and poster with the tagline "Are you in?" and for the first time, was promoted through the social networking site Facebook. With their help, the Gallery plans to conduct research into, and develop more programs destined, for teens.

For the first time in 5 years, the Gallery recruited a new class of docents (volunteer guides). Interested candidates attended a half-day information/ orientation session followed by an interview. The new docents will begin delivering programs to children and adults next year.

The Gallery's award-winning program for people with disabilities, funded by The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, continues to set a Canadian standard for museum accessibility programming.



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The Gallery organized and hosted a day-long conference entitled Expressions: Creativity in Mental Health, which attracted 200 professionals and members of the mental health community. We will continue to conduct accessibility training and outreach with other museums in the National Capital Region and, will act as a trainer and advisor to the Art Gallery of Ontario as they seek to develop accessibility programming.

The Gallery's five websites experienced significant growth and recognition this year. Two projects on CyberMuse: Your Art Education Research Site won major international awards – Drawing with Light and Eye Spies. The latter is one of our new virtual offering for kids.

The Gallery understands the need to support its dynamic traveling exhibitions program with educational support. We developed two educational websites highlighting the work of Joe Fafard and Albrecht Dürer. These sites can be accessed by visitors across Canada and around the world. Our big project that will be launched in the spring is a site that will feature the restoration effort of the altarpiece by artist Veronese that my colleagues spoke of this evening.

The Gallery was the first Canadian Museum to offer podcasts to its visitors. I am pleased to say that we continue to do so and in order to better highlight the offerings, we have developed a new section on our websites called Gallery Channels. You can now find rich media like podcasts, and our plan is to continue to grow that section.

I now invite you to take your iPods, your MP3s and download artist interviews, talks on works of art-and enjoy!

For program updates, visit our website or subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter.

In conclusion, we look forward to seeing you at our daily guided visits, workshops, talks, lectures, and much much more.

Thank you.