



National Gallery of Canada

Michael Audain – Speaking Notes 2010 Annual Public Meeting September 13, 2010, Calgary, Alberta

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Gallery's fourth Annual Public meeting.

To begin, I'd like to introduce my colleagues on the Board of Trustees, starting with our Vice-Chair, Michael Tims, who is from Calgary.

- Also from Calgary, we have Paul Baay and Howard Kroon;
- Jean-François Béland, de Gatineau, Québec;
- Allan Benoit and Liza Maheu, from Winnipeg
- Guy Bourgeois, de St-Bruno, Québec;
- Fred Fountain, from Head of St. Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia
- Linda Hutchison, from Kentville, Nova Scotia; and
- Harriet Walker from Toronto.

And now let me say how pleased we are to be here in Calgary to share with you some of the Gallery's achievements over the past year and to look ahead at upcoming programs and plans.

This is the first time the National Gallery of Canada is holding its Annual Public Meeting outside Ottawa. You may wonder what brings us to your beautiful city for this meeting, beyond the fact that three of our Trustees hail from Calgary. Well, once a year in September, the Board of Trustees meets outside of Ottawa. Calgary was selected some time ago as the 2010 venue. Meeting outside Ottawa gives us an opportunity to visit galleries and museums and familiarize ourselves more personally with the vibrant visual arts scene across our country and it allows us to engage Canadians more directly. As well, we are involved in some interesting and exciting partnerships in your province, so it was timely for our Board of Trustees to visit Calgary.

As you may know, we've established an exciting partnership with the Art Gallery of Alberta. The National Gallery of Canada at the AGA initiative was launched last December. This innovative, three-year partnership enables the National Gallery to share on a semi-permanent basis selected gems from the national collection with visual arts enthusiasts and supporters who frequent the AGA.



National Gallery of Canada

And of course, here in Calgary, we enjoy a warm relationship with the Glenbow Museum, which has presented several of our travelling exhibitions over the years. So all in all, it made perfect sense to come to Calgary. I should add that this idea of holding our Annual Public Meeting outside Ottawa is a pilot that we hope to repeat in other major centers on a regular basis in years to come.

Before I offer my perspective on the past year, I'd like to highlight for you the Gallery's mandate, which also encompasses the Gallery's affiliate museum, the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography. Our mandate is to:

Develop, maintain, and make known throughout 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.

This mandate, with its focus on serving all Canadians, is the foundation for every decision made by the Board of Trustees and by our Director Marc Mayer and his senior management team.

As you will hear from the Director, the year 2009-10 was one marked by both important successes and great challenges in terms of delivering this mandate.

Among the accomplishments, I count the addition of several outstanding works to Canada's art collection. The result of generous gifts and careful purchases, these acquisitions strengthened the collection and enhanced its relevance to an increasingly diverse public – one of our most important corporate priorities.

I am also very pleased to tell you that again this past year, the Gallery showcased exceptional art from around the world and shared the national collection with Canadians through its installations and thought-provoking exhibitions, several of which were presented in cities from coast to coast as well as abroad.

It is to ensure that the Gallery can continue to deliver its national mandate in a fiscally responsible manner that the Board of Trustees approved an organizational realignment this past March. Designed to increase overall effectiveness, maximize efficiency and simplify Gallery operations, the realignment included the difficult decision to reduce staff levels through layoffs and attrition. It also brought about important changes to the way the Gallery and its Foundation



National Gallery of Canada

share fundraising activities, a move supported by the Foundation's Board of Directors. These decisions have left the Gallery better positioned to face the future.

In closing, on behalf of my colleagues on the Board of Trustees, I take this opportunity to thank our Director, Marc Mayer, his senior management team and indeed the entire staff of the Gallery for their hard work and commitment throughout this difficult year. Our deep gratitude also goes to our patrons and corporate partners for their generous support – which is more vital than ever to the continued success of this important national institution – as well as to the Gallery's Volunteers' Circle and to the National Gallery of Canada Foundation for their extraordinary efforts on our behalf.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Department of Canadian Heritage, our Minister, the Honourable James Moore, and to our government partners for their support as we continue to build this vibrant national institution, of which all Canadians can be justly proud.

Thank you very much for your time. We look forward to your questions following the presentations.