

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists

Curated by Alicia Boutilier, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, and Tobi Bruce, Art Gallery of Hamilton

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***The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists* makes AGGV first stop in Western Canada**

Opening October 2 at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, *The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists*, is making Victoria its first stop in western Canada and putting Canadian women artists front and centre.

This ground-breaking exhibition includes works from both settler and Indigenous perspectives. From Caroline Gros Louis's exquisite headdress through which she expresses her identity of a woman of the Wendat nation, to Emily Carr's painting of herself from the back at her easel; from Hannah Maynard's playful photographs of her multiple selves to Pitseolak Ashoona's sly comment on her participation in the Inuit art market, these works open up new avenues of inquiry and new understandings of the realities and perspectives of women in Canadian society before 1970.

"Audiences may be surprised at the variety of work in this exhibition," says Michelle Jacques, Chief Curator, AGGV. "When we hear "self-portrait" we most immediately envision painted images of the artist's face. *The Artist Herself* includes some striking examples of this type, but it also reveals that self-representation can take many forms."

The Artist Herself features the work of 41 artists, working in a range of media, including paintings, textiles, photographs and film, and other forms of self-representation. Some of the portraits in the exhibition were found in amateur sketchbooks or private diaries at Library and Archives Canada, such as an image of Katherine Jane Ellice (1813–1864), an accomplished amateur artist; the wife of an official with the North West (fur trading) Company, Ellice used the reflection from a mirror on the wall of her ship's cabin to capture a quick and very private self-portrait.

The project includes a fully illustrated bilingual catalogue, with an introductory essay by Boutilier and Bruce, as well as in-depth entries on individual works and themes by 35 invited specialists.

The exhibition's opening year, 2015, marks the 40th anniversary of *From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada*, a landmark exhibition in the history of Canadian art organized by the Agnes in 1975, International Women's Year. *The Artist Herself* will tour nationally before closing at the Art Gallery of Hamilton in the summer of 2016. *The Artist Herself* can be viewed at the AGGV until January 3, 2016.

Public programs around the exhibition include a curator's tour of *The Artist Herself* led by the exhibition co-curators Alicia Boutilier of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre and Tobi Bruce of the Art Gallery of Hamilton; October 2, 2015, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. A free workshop *Performing Femininity* will be held on November 21 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Pre-registration is required and will begin on-line November 2.

Taking inspiration from this exhibition, we are asking the public to submit their own self-portraits to us. But, there is a catch! We want people to think about more than just their face representing the self. We are looking for images that explore the definition of the self-portrait and representations of identity. Images received will be displayed as part of *The Artist Herself* exhibition. For more information on how to participate, please visit our Facebook page (facebook.com/artgalleryvictoria) or visit aggv.ca.

All programs are included with the price of admission. For more information visit aggv.ca.