

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 21, 2016

Major exhibition by Greg Staats to open at The TOM

OWEN SOUND (ONTARIO) CANADA: The Tom Thomson Art Gallery is pleased to announce that its fall exhibitions, ***On the Edge of the Woods: Condolence Towards Renewal*** by Greg Staats and ***A Driving Force: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Women's Gallery Committee***. These exhibitions open on Sunday, September 25, 2016 and run to January 8, 2017. An Opening Reception will take place on September 25, from 2 to 5 PM and Greg Staats will give an artist talk at 1 PM.



Everyone, at some point in their life, will deal with loss. When confronted with someone who has experienced a loss, we are often ill-equipped, feel awkward and may fall back on cliché expressions. Previous generations had protocols and expected ways of behaving when dealing with death that were ingrained and taught within societies. We have become largely disconnected from those protocols and ceremonies – a systemic loss in and of itself – and we often struggle because of that. That struggle is further complicated when what we are mourning is something that we have been disenfranchised from. We question ourselves and the legitimacy of our reaction in mourning what we

have never known but that we feel a disconnect from, regardless. In **Greg Staats: on the edge of the woods: condolence towards renewal**, Staats calls back to the Condolence Ceremony of the Haudenosuanees for inspiration in the creation of the photographs, sculptures and installations within this exhibition. His family histories and stories provide the sources that he draws upon, drawing out expressions and visualizations on the loss of home, family and traditions, and how that impacts throughout the generations. While intensely personal, Staats' works speak to the universal experience of loss and of disconnect from the past, and at the same time offers viewers the opportunity to find a means of acknowledging that loss and finding ways of coming to peace with it. This exhibition is curated by **Virginia Eichhorn**, Director and Chief Curator.

As well, The TOM is currently presenting Staats' **transformer** as a Canadian Spirit off-site project at **in/FUTURE**: a public art and music festival at Ontario Place in Toronto. The festival is presented by **Art Spin** in association with **Small World Music Festival** and runs until September 25 (see www.infuture.com).

Greg Staats, Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), (b. Ohsweken, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory). Solo exhibitions include: McMaster Museum of Art, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery,

Walter Philips Gallery (Banff Centre), Mercer Union, Gallery TPW, Trinity Square Video/Images festival. Group exhibitions include; National Gallery of Canada, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Art Gallery of Southern Manitoba and the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (Santa Fe). Staats is the recipient of the Duke and Duchess of York Prize in Photography. Staats has lived and worked in Toronto since 1985. The artist Greg Staats wishes to acknowledge the generous financial support of The Banff Centre during a thematic residency program, the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Also on view is ***A Driving Force: Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Women's Gallery Committee***, curated by **David Huff**. Even before the Gallery had opened in 1967, a group of dedicated and energetic women were hard at work to make sure it happened. Established in May of 1966, the Women's Gallery Committee aided the Gallery with fundraising, special events and education. For many years this Committee became the main source of funds, purchasing a total of 38 artworks for the Gallery, including Tom Thomson's *Near Lake Scugog*, Arthur Lismer's *Forest Scene* and Norval Morrisseau's *Shaman*. In addition to these purchases, the Committee was instrumental in arranging for the donation of hundreds of other artworks for the Collection. A driving force in the early years of the Gallery, this group provided leadership and tens of thousands of hours to raise funds and run programs. The TOM celebrates the visionary philanthropy and work by these extraordinary women with this exhibition of artworks from our collection, all purchased by the Committee.

For more information, or to request interviews and images, please contact Suzanne Watson, Partnership and Sponsorship Manager at swatson@tomthomson.org or 519-376-1932, ext. 221.

The **Tom Thomson Art Gallery** is a national cultural attraction, dedicated to the innovation and spirit of iconic artist Tom Thomson, strongly identified with the Group of Seven whose images are virtually synonymous with the very idea of 'Canada.' Our national identity is forged and fortified by our awareness and understanding of historical figures like Thomson, whose artwork has been described as being the "visual equivalent of our national anthem."

With over 50,000 visitors each year, the **TOM** is the region's main disseminator of contemporary art and provides a unique experience for its audiences. The TOM celebrates excellence in the visual arts locally, nationally and internationally, through exhibitions of historical and contemporary art, education programs and the enrichment and interpretation of its nationally significant permanent collection. The TOM supports Thomson's legacy through programs such as **Canadian Spirit** involving galleries, organizations and businesses across the country.

Admission to the TOM is free or by donation and more information about the Gallery's hours, collection, programs and events can be found at www.tomthomson.org.



The TOM's exhibition programming has been made possible in part by our **2016 Exhibition Sponsor**, the **Owen Sound Transportation Company**. The Gallery gratefully acknowledges its major funders and sponsors, partners, members and donors.

