



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

# communiqué

No: 13  
No.:

DIFFUSION: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
RELEASE: FEBRUARY 13, 1981

## NEW YORK SHOW-CASE FOR CANADIAN ARTISTS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan, announced today that Canada will soon have a show-case for its contemporary artists in New York. The Canadian Consul General in New York, Mr. Ken Taylor, signed on February 6 the lease for an art gallery to be called 49th Parallel: Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, located at 420 West Broadway, in the heart of the thriving art district of Soho in downtown Manhattan, a busy location that attracts thousands of New Yorkers every week.

The Minister indicated that 49th Parallel is a pilot project of the Department's Bureau of International Cultural Relations aiming at the establishment of permanent Canadian cultural facilities in New York, thus complementing the existing network of Canadian cultural centres in Paris, Brussels and London.

49th Parallel is intended to respond to the unique conditions in New York City, now widely regarded as the visual arts capital of the world. About two-thirds of the gallery's 7,500 square feet, on the fourth floor of the five-storey building which also houses four other well-known New York galleries, will be devoted to exhibitions of contemporary Canadian art, film and video screenings and studio performances.

- 2 -

49th Parallel will be directed by Guy Plamondon, Consul for Cultural Affairs at the Consulate General, assisted by Robert Handforth, Cultural Affairs officer of the Consulate.

The gallery's official opening will take place on Friday, March 20, with an exhibition of the works of Michael Snow. The gallery will be opened to the public the next day.

--  
Biographies of Guy Plamondon and Robert Handforth are attached.

- 30 -

GUY PLAMONDON

Guy Plamondon was born in Montreal and has a law degree from the University of Montreal, where as a student he organized several art exhibitions. After graduation he studied political science in Geneva and London and joined External Affairs in 1965. His first posting was to Canada's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

Mr. Plamondon has been with External's Cultural Affairs Division since its creation in 1966 and he laid the groundwork for the Department's first collection of prints and drawings. From 1968 to 1970 he was instrumental in the creation of the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris and supervised its operations for the first two years of its existence. From 1972 to 1975 he was Head of the Programmes and Cultural Agreements section of Cultural Affairs Division where he assisted in the acquisitions programme of works of art for use in Canadian missions abroad, as well as in the reorganization and growth of the Department's permanent collection.

Mr. Plamondon went to New York in 1975, first as legal counsellor and coordinator for the Canadian delegation to the Law of the Sea Conference and then as Consul for Cultural Affairs at the Consulate General. During the past four years under his direction, the Consulate General's cultural affairs programme has increased rapidly, encompassing such activities as concerts, exhibitions, film and book launchings aimed at acquainting the New York public with Canadian artists, painters, authors, musicians and film-makers.

ROBERT HANDFORTH

Robert Handforth was born in Ottawa and is a graduate of Carleton University. In the early 1970's, he worked for the Canada Council and the Stratford Shakespearean Festival.

In Toronto, Mr. Handforth was a co-founder and, in its initial years, publications manager of the Art Metropole Agency which specializes in books, videotapes and multiples by artists. He was also a director of "A Space", Canada's oldest parallel gallery, in 1976-77. He subsequently served as associate director of the New Theatre Foundation and as general manager of the Adelaide Court Theatre complex in its inaugural season. He has directed plays for Young People's Theatre, New Theatre and Toronto Free Theatre, and was for several years a reader for Playwrights Canada.