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CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE 49TH PARALLEL GALLERY IN NEW YORK

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, announced today the formation of a seven-member Advisory Committee for the Canadian contemporary art showcase gallery in the Soho neighbourhood of New York City. The Advisory Committee, to be composed of professional experts in the visual arts from across Canada, will informally contribute information and suggestions concerning artists and exhibitions appropriate to 49th Parallel/49^e Parallèle focus on contemporary Canadian art.

Appointed to the Advisory Committee, for an initial two-year term are: ALVIN BALKIND, art critic, curator and instructor at the Emily Carr College of Art in Vancouver; CLAUDE BOUCHARD, President of Lecha Art Publishing Inc., of Ottawa; ERIC CAMERON, artist, critic and Director of the Graduate Program at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax; THERESE DION, Liaison Officer for the Canada Council Art Bank in Ottawa; CHANTAL PONTBRIAND, art critic, curator, lecturer, and co-founder and Editor of the Montreal-based contemporary art magazine, Parachute; JEFFREY SPALDING, artist, art educator and Director of the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery; and ELKE TOWN, critic, curator and Video Director of the Art Metropole agency in Toronto. Committee members may be re-appointed at the end of the two years, but it is expected that at least two new members will be introduced in each subsequent term.

The formation of this Advisory Committee was proposed early in the planning of 49th Parallel/49^e Parallèle, by its Director Mr. Guy Plamondon, and in fact the informal consultations and expert advice which are the Committee members' primary duties have been part of

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the selection process at the New York gallery from its inception. In addition to serving as consultants, Committee members may occasionally be engaged as curators, and indeed this has already occurred: Alvin Balkind co-curated an exhibition of graphic works presented in December 1982, simultaneously with a program of art videotapes prepared by Elke Town; and "Fiction", a travelling exhibition curated by Ms. Town, will end its cross-Canada tour at 49th Parallel/49^e Parallèle in October 1983.

Established two years ago and inaugurated on March 20, 1981, 49th Parallel/49^e Parallèle occupies the fourth floor of a well-known commercial gallery building in downtown Manhattan and presents at five-week intervals exhibitions of work by leading and emerging contemporary artists from Canada to a large gallery-going public - usually numbering several thousands for each exhibition and including many international visitors. Its program includes both solo and group exhibitions, several of them prepared by Canadian museums and curators, as well as video screenings and occasional performances. Designated a Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, the gallery is a pilot project of the Department's Bureau of International Cultural Relations and is the unique counterpart in the United States to the existing network of Canadian cultural centres in Paris, Brussels and London.

Brief biographies of the seven members of the Advisory Committee are attached.

ALVIN BALKIND

The distinguished American-born curator and writer ALVIN BALKIND is a resident of Vancouver, where from 1955 to 1962 he was Director of the New Design Gallery and subsequently Curator of the Fine Arts Gallery at the University of British Columbia. He was commissioned to prepare the extensive "Canada Trajectoires 73" exhibition for the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1973, in which year he was appointed Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In 1975 Mr. Balkind returned to Vancouver to serve as Chief Curator of the Vancouver Art Gallery. Since 1978, he has devoted his time to free-lance and limited projects, such as the organization of Canada's participation in the 1980 Paris Biennale. Currently, he teaches a curatorial training course at the Emily Carr College of Art and is writing a major essay for a new book on Canadian art to be published this year.

Together with Doris Shadbolt of Vancouver, Alvin Balkind curated an exhibition of graphic works by four Toronto artists entitled "Fragments, Content, Scale" for the London Regional Art Gallery; this exhibition received its first showing at 49th Parallel/49^e Parallèle in December 1982, and will be seen this year in Vancouver and London, Ontario.

CLAUDE BOUCHARD

A former Vice Chairman of the National Parole Board, CLAUDE BOUCHARD has gradually in recent years retired from a professional career in criminology to pursue his longstanding interests in the visual arts. Besides writing for Vie des Arts, the Montreal-based art magazine where he also serves as a Member of the Board of Directors, Mr. Bouchard sits on the Visual Arts Committee of the National Capital Commission, on the Arts and Selection Committee of the Royal Canadian Mint and the Stamp Advisory Committee, Canada Post. He is president and Chief Executive Officer of Lecha Art Publishing, Inc. in Ottawa.

ERIC CAMERON

Born in Leicester, England, and a graduate of the Courtauld Institute in London, ERIC CAMERON was appointed Chairman of the Department of Fine Art at the University of Guelph in 1969. Since 1976, he has served as Director of the Graduate Program at the Nova Scotia College of Art and

Design in Halifax. His work as an artist, which includes a number of videotapes, has been exhibited in galleries and museums across Canada and abroad. Mr. Cameron has written frequently for all the major Canadian art magazines as well as for the influential American journal Artforum, and he is a member of the Editorial Board of Vie des Arts. He has participated in several international conferences and undertaken a number of lecture tours. Mr. Cameron is President of the Universities Art Association of Canada, and chairs that organization's Committee on Graduate Studies in the Visual Arts.

THERESE DION

THERESE DION holds a Master's degree in Art History from the Université de Montréal, where she has been a part-time lecturer for the past three years. Her work as a corporate art consultant led her to the Canada Council Art Bank in Ottawa where, since 1976, she has served as Liaison Officer.

CHANTAL PONTBRIAND

CHANTAL PONTBRIAND is known internationally as the Editor of Parachute, the bilingual, Montreal-based magazine of contemporary art which she co-founded in 1975. Since 1970, she has organized or collaborated in the presentation of numerous exhibitions, concerts, performances and colloquia in Montreal including, prominently, the international symposium "03.23.03" in 1977, and the two-month long "Performance" series in 1980. From 1976 to 1978, Chantal Pontbriand directed an international programme of art shows at the Musée des beaux-arts in Montreal; in 1980 she was invited to serve as one of four guest curators for the extensive exhibition of contemporary Canadian art, "Pluralities/ Pluralités", at the National Gallery of Canada. A frequent lecturer in Canada and abroad, she has published numerous articles in Parachute as well as in several other art magazines and anthologies.

JEFFREY SPALDING

JEFFREY SPALDING was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and studied fine art and art education at the University of Guelph, Ohio State University and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. His paintings and video works have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions at galleries and museums in Nova Scotia, Ontario and Alberta. He has taught in a number of capacities at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and elsewhere. Besides other curatorial

projects, Mr. Spalding has served as Assistant Curator at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia; Director of the Anna Leonowens Gallery in Halifax; Curator of the Art Department at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary; and, since last year, Director of the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery. His reviews and articles have appeared in several Canadian art magazines.

ELKE TOWN

ELKE TOWN was born in Bromberg, Germany, and studied at York University in Toronto. From 1974 to 1976, she coordinated the activities and exhibitions at A Space, the first and one of the most prominent of Canada's 'parallel galleries', in Toronto. Ms. Town worked subsequently with the Extensions Services of the Art Gallery of Ontario, developing exhibitions for circulation within the province and coordinating the "Artists with their Work" programme. In her present position as Video Director of the Art Metropole agency in Toronto, which represents many of the best known Canadian video artists, she writes and lectures frequently.

Elke Town curated the inaugural video programme at 49th Parallel/49e Parallèle, presented during December 1982. She has also, among other curatorial projects, prepared for the Art Gallery of Ontario a travelling exhibition of four Toronto artists, entitled "Fiction", which will end its Canadian tour with a showing at 49th Parallel/49e Parallèle this coming October.