

Alberta Arts Leader to Head Art Gallery of Burlington

Burlington, Ontario, 7 April 2015 – The Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) has appointed Robert Steven as its new President & CEO following an extensive search. Mr. Steven will assume his new post on 4 May 2015.

“The Board of Directors was looking for a very special leader who is capable of taking the Art Gallery of Burlington to the profile appropriate for the home of Canada’s largest collection of contemporary Canadian ceramics and to the level of community engagement that will best contribute to the quality of life of this city and region. We have found that leader in Robert Steven,” said Sandra Edrupt, Chair of the AGB Board. “We value Steven’s strategic business mind and believe that he can build synergy from our unique identity as both an art gallery and the home to the guilds of Arts Burlington.”

One of only 50 Canadian alumni of the prestigious Getty Museum Leadership Institute in Los Angeles, Steven’s educational background includes a Master of Museum Studies at the University of Toronto and a Fine Arts degree from the University of Waterloo.

Steven currently manages the Culture and Heritage Department of the City of Grande Prairie, where he oversees the City’s various cultural and heritage infrastructure and investments, including the three branches of the municipal museum. He caught the attention of the City of Grande Prairie, and now the Board of the Art Gallery of Burlington, through his impressive leadership of the Art Gallery of Grande Prairie, an organization that he transformed, expanded, professionalized, and modernized over his seven and one-half years of service as both its Executive Director and Curator. His successes in Grande Prairie led to his recognition with a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal from the Premier of Alberta in 2012 and the Alberta Venture Magazine’s selection of him as one of Alberta’s 50 Most Influential People for 2013.

“I look forward to working with the Art Gallery of Burlington team and stakeholders to deepen and share the art experience across all generations and demographics. The AGB is a unique arts institution, well positioned in Ontario’s Golden Horseshoe, with great potential to build upon,” said Steven. “My interest in Burlington is rooted in both family and community, as well as in this exciting professional opportunity,” he continued.

Originally from Ontario, Steven’s earlier professional arts experience included rapidly increasing authority and responsibility at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery during a period of significant growth and change from 2001 to 2006. This encompassed roles as Preparator, Collections Management Project Manager, and Registrar.

“Combining Robert’s strong arts executive and municipal leadership experience, with the strength of our Chief Curator, Dr. Denis Longchamps, who also heads collections and educational programming, we will have the leadership team that we need to take the Art Gallery of Burlington to the next level,” said Edrupt.

About the Art Gallery of Burlington

The Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB) is a unique organization that combines quality gallery programmes with a range of creative activities, including being the home of seven active guilds and related studios, and a range of educational programmes. With 2,400 pieces, the AGB’s collection distinguishes itself as the nation’s largest collection of Canadian contemporary ceramics. Ranging from functional pieces to conceptual sculpture, from fine craft to fine art, the reach of the collection was suggested by the name of its recent exhibition ‘Coast to Coast to Coast’; and, like Canada, its diversity reflects many international influences. The AGB also manages social enterprise initiatives in support of its programmes. Its Board of Directors is committed to continuing to grow the Gallery’s impact on the various aspects of the quality of life that the arts can extend across the community, and to the differences that it can make to the community’s economic development.

Known as the Burlington Art Centre since 1993, a new chapter was launched in May 2014 with its exciting re-brand as the Art Gallery of Burlington. With over 44,000 sq. ft. of public space, the AGB has three galleries and two exhibition spaces: the Lee-Chin Family Gallery displays its largest curated exhibitions that span the full range of the visual arts; the Perry Gallery and Permanent Collection Corridor focus on rotating ceramic exhibitions, including from the AGB’s own collection; an indoor conservatory is beautifully populated with works by Canadian ceramicist Sally Michener; a three-season open-air courtyard celebrates special installations; and a community gallery exhibits the work of emerging artists and local groups. Seven well-equipped studios are shared among the guilds and the Gallery: as home to many of the region’s working artists and ‘makers’, and for public courses and workshops organized by Gallery staff and/or guild volunteers. The Creative Hub includes drop-in art-making activities for families and individuals, and a Children’s Clay Studio is a favourite for youth.

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