

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Exhibitions at the TOM Make Natural World Personal

OWEN SOUND (ONTARIO) CANADA: The Tom Thomson Art Gallery is pleased to announce its winter line-up of exhibitions, opening on January 17 and running to March 27, 2016.



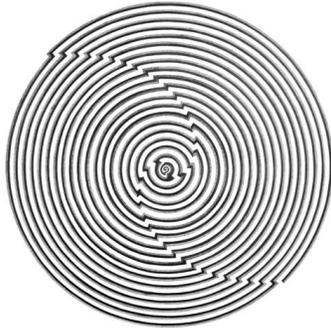
Artists and their attractions to the natural world are fabled in Canadian art history and their personal stories are deeply embedded in our culture. ***Crossing Natures***, curated by **Paul Petro**, is an exhibition that explores the influences and affinities of **Joyce Wieland** (1931 - 1998), **Christiane Pflug** (1936 - 1972), **Janet Morton** (b. 1963) and **Mélanie Rocan** (b. 1980) – three generations of artists whose work defines a particular lineage in contemporary Canadian art, one that speaks to their individual temperaments as well as to the subjects that they share. Their work is characterized by their relationships to the natural world and to the domesticated spaces within it. Their paintings, drawings, sculptures and photographs can be further understood as representing personally charged psychological spaces of longing and hope that speak to our collective sense of selves. Like windows and doors, they are thresholds to experience.

Paul Petro is a Toronto-based independent curator and, since 1993, has operated **Paul Petro Contemporary Art**, a private gallery exhibiting Canadian and international artists on an invitation basis. He has been extensively involved in the artist-run sector in Canada, as a founding member of **Inter/Access**, with the programming committee at **A Space**, and as a board member and past president of **C Magazine**. His gallery has hosted over three hundred cultural projects since its inception.

Also opening is ***The River in the Tree***, a series of sculpted and painted plywood bas-reliefs by Montreal artist **Yechel Gagnon**. Inspired by a line from a poem by **Emily Dickinson** (1830 - 1886) to her friend in which she describes the changing of the seasons, Gagnon opens an artistic dialogue with **Tom Thomson's** work about nature and changes to the landscape, whether natural or man-made. In her artistic practice, she explores and experiments with the potential of a material that is simultaneously natural and artificial. Like an excavation, she carves, gouges and even burns the plywood, exposing the natural strata of the wood grain to reveal a new world, reclaimed through destruction. Her process is forceful – even violent, yet the resulting abstract and complex works are seductive, refined and even



transcendental. She believes that one needs to destroy in order to create yet creation and destruction are integral and cyclical to both nature and the creative process.



In *Our Cosmic Geometries*, Dermot Wilson and Leszek Wyczolkowski explore the “Two Worlds” of the 16th century physician, philosopher and mage, **Sir Robert Fludd** (1574-1637). Their works offer up a different (and very ancient) way of visualizing our place in the natural world by imagining spherical perspectives, as if we exist in bubbles of perception. While the paintings, prints, and drawings illustrate these spherical perceptions of nature, they also refer to expanding and contracting circles of human experience (physical and metaphysical) evolving from an individual’s central core being.

Finally, **John Bell**, Board Member of the **Royal Canadian Mint**, will present the Gallery with a \$20 Fine Silver Coin - **Tom Thomson: *Spring Ice*** (1916). The precise engraving of this coin masterfully recreates every brushstroke from the original Thomson landscape painting, with beautiful detailing and raised elements recapturing its depth and subtleties. Crafted in one-ounce of 99.99% fine silver, this coin retails for \$114.95 CAD, is limited to a world-wide mintage of 8,500 and can be purchased in the Gallery’s shop.



Artist talks will begin with Dermot Wilson at 1 PM followed by Yechel Gagnon at 1:30. Introductions to the opening, talk by Paul Petro and official presentation of the Royal Canadian Mint coin will begin at 2:30 followed by a curator’s talk by Paul Petro.

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 (1877 – 1917), 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, and another 40,000 visitors to our off-site programming, 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 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 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 **2015 Exhibition Sponsor**, the **Owen Sound Transportation Company**. The Gallery gratefully acknowledges its major funders, major sponsors, partners, members and donors.



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