

For Immediate Release: Friday, June 7, 2019

**FIRST COMPREHENSIVE RETROSPECTIVE OF INFLUENTIAL SASKATCHEWAN ARTIST VICTOR
CICANSKY OPENS AT THE MACKENZIE ART GALLERY**

Regina, Saskatchewan - Friday, June 7, 2019: The MacKenzie Art Gallery (MAG) is pleased to present *Victor Cicansky: The Gardener's Universe*. The opening reception will take place on Friday, June 7, at 8 PM. The evening will include remarks from artist Victor Cicansky, as well as a special performance by New Dance Horizons and Rouge-gorge, entitled *A Seasonal Journeying* by Robin Poitras. Dedicated to Victor Cicansky's: *The Gardener's Universe*, *A Seasonal Journeying* features live music and dance with Robin Poitras and guest artists Krista Solheim, Albert Surjik, Cameron Lowe and Djo Louise Mercado Anacio.

Organized by the MAG, and curated by Timothy Long and Julia Krueger, *The Gardener's Universe* brings together over 100 ceramic and bronze works that present a richly layered picture of Cicansky's career. Drawn from 39 public and private collections in Canada and the United States, the selections embody the energy of Cicansky's varied production.

The opening reception will also include a celebration of the highly anticipated exhibition, *The Permanent Collection: Walking with Saskatchewan*, guest curated by Bruce Hugh Russell, who will be in attendance. This ten-month long exhibition will examine the history of Saskatchewan art and culture through Indigenous and settler perspectives, featuring a rotating selection of works primarily from the MAG's permanent collection and University of Regina Collection.

Both *The Gardener's Universe* and *Walking with Saskatchewan* are testaments to the MacKenzie's core values. They are exhibitions that go beyond tradition and create transformative experiences of the world," says Johanna Salloum, President of the MacKenzie Art Gallery's Board of Trustees. "They are rooted in our past, as a province and as a Gallery. We are proud and excited to celebrate this past, while also looking ahead to many new developments on the horizon."

Over the past fifty years, Victor Cicansky has created memorable ceramic sculptures inspired by his childhood experiences of pantries, outhouses, gardens, and "working class" people. In the mid-1980s, he added bronze to his repertoire, and gained further recognition for his elegantly constructed bonsai trees, tables, and wall works, among others.

"The artistic universe of Regina artist Victor Cicansky is firmly rooted in his garden and the environment," says Anthony Kiendl, CEO and Executive Director of the MacKenzie Art Gallery. "His work is extremely relevant to society today as it speaks to a range of contemporary environmental concerns, and points to ideas of ecological resilience, class and cultural identity."

After studies with noted Regina ceramist Jack Sures, Victor Cicansky pursued graduate studies at the University of California, Davis, where he expanded his artistic vocabulary under iconoclastic Funk ceramist, Robert Arneson. Returning to Regina in 1970, Cicansky became one of the main instigators of the Regina Clay Movement. Major public commissions from late 1970s and early 1980s include ceramic murals for the Sturdy-Stone Centre in Saskatoon, and The Co-operators and CBC building in Regina.

“Victor Cicansky grew up in Regina’s “Garlic Flats” — an area of East Regina that lacked many basic amenities, including indoor plumbing, but had a strong sense of community and an abundance of food in its gardens,” says Timothy Long, Head Curator of the MacKenzie Art Gallery. “It was here, among the immigrants of Central and Eastern Europe, that Cicansky was introduced to issues of urban ecology, sustainability, and food security — issues that continue to resonate in his work today.”

Cicansky’s work has been recognized with numerous honours and awards including the Order of Canada, Saskatchewan Order of Merit, and the Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

“I’m interested in trying to find out how far I can push clay and make it interesting,” says Victor Cicansky. “I just think in terms of my own work: what can I do to make an impression, get people thinking about their own lives and what they can do.”

The Gardener’s Universe will be accompanied by a fully illustrated bilingual (French/English) publication, the first monograph to be devoted to the complete range of Cicansky’s production, with essays by Trevor Herriot, Alison Calder, Garth Johnson, Susan Surette, SC Dam, Julia Krueger and Timothy Long. The exhibition will also be accompanied by a newly commissioned film by Ian Toews of 291 Film Company, a documentary which will look at Cicansky’s life and work through the lens of the garden, with a special emphasis on the artist’s public artworks.

On June 8 at 1 PM, join the MacKenzie Art Gallery and artist Victor Cicansky for a lively exploration of his creative universe with catalogue essayists Alison Calder, Trevor Herriot, Julia Krueger, Timothy Long, and Susan Surette.

This exhibition is on view until October 23, 2019. This project has been made possible in part by the Government of Canada.

The MacKenzie Art Gallery is grateful for the support of South Saskatchewan Community Foundation, Canada Council for the Arts, SaskCulture, City of Regina, University of Regina, and Saskatchewan Arts Board.

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About the MacKenzie Art Gallery:

The MacKenzie Art Gallery is Saskatchewan's original public art gallery: an immersive centre for engaging people through transformative experiences of the world through art, with an ongoing focus on Indigenous culture and diversity. The MacKenzie is located in Regina's Wascana Park, Canada's largest urban park and home to the Provincial Capital Commission. It is located within Treaty Four territory, the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. The permanent collection, which includes the University of Regina's extensive collection as well as the Kampelmacher Collection of Indigenous Art, contains over 5,000 works of art spanning 5,000 years of culture.

In reimagining the role of a public art gallery, the MacKenzie Art Gallery seeks to become an immersive, community-engaged centre for art, focusing on visitors and artists, Indigenous culture and diversity, and engaging people in transformative experiences of the world through art.

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