

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Koffler Centre of the Arts presents a solo exhibition by acclaimed Toronto artist Akira Yoshikawa at the Koffler Gallery, September 11 to November 30, 2008**

Toronto, Ontario, July 22, 2008 – The Koffler Centre of the Arts proudly presents *the way of now* at the Koffler Gallery, opening Thursday, September 11, 2008 at 7 pm with an artist talk by Akira Yoshikawa at 7:30 pm.

Organized for the Koffler Gallery by guest curator **Georgiana Uhlyarik**, *the way of now* comprises an installation conceived by Toronto artist Akira Yoshikawa during a month-long residency in the exhibition space. Incorporating drawing and three-dimensional elements executed directly on the gallery walls and floor, this project builds upon the artist's recent concerns with temporality, duration, and transition.

"The Koffler embraces culture as a living thing, as a means to understand both ourselves and others," said Lori Starr, Executive Director of the Koffler Centre of the Arts. "During this exciting time of transition for the Koffler, we are thrilled to be able to present the work of Akira Yoshikawa, whose residency and exhibition will surely resonate with all visitors, young and old alike."

Since 1974, Yoshikawa has been making work that integrates the artistic influences of North American Modernism with the spiritual depths of Japanese culture. For the past few years, he has been exploring Eastern philosophy that emphasizes the "present moment" and encourages stripping away the excessive to seek the core of the matter and to see perfection in the imperfect daily life. Pursuing this principle of appreciating the realm of "now" rather than focusing on the obsolete past or the unknown future, Yoshikawa derives inspiration from the immediacy of our both simple and complicated daily surroundings. The resulting artworks may be used as "tools" to reflect and think about one's life.

In his recent works, Yoshikawa applies his understanding of Japanese aesthetic principles installing objects mounted on the wall or grouped on the floor to establish formal and symbolic relationships that the viewer can approach unmediated. Reminiscent of ritual elements, the artist's simple objects and materials are charged with reverential meaning. Integrated to his installations, Yoshikawa also produces layered drawings made of successive coats of carefully applied graphite or oil-stick. The persistent repetition of gesture and the accumulation of densely textured marks create mysterious works that operate as meditative devices, setting the stage for contemplation, while retaining the traditional values of "beautiful things to look at."

**Akira Yoshikawa** was born in Hiroshima, Japan in 1949 and immigrated to Canada in 1961. He graduated from the Ontario College of Art in 1974 and has since exhibited nationally and internationally. His solo exhibitions include *Select Works* (2006) at the Gendai Gallery, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto; *Random and Imposed Order* (2004) at the Art Gallery of Peterborough; *The Champions of the Freedom Seekers* (1997) at Red Head Gallery; and *Akira Yoshikawa* (1993) at the Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, Owen Sound. Group exhibitions comprise *order/disorder* (2008) at the Latcham Gallery, Stouffville; *In Case of Rapture* (2002) at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston; and *Take a Closer Look* (2001) at the Robert Langen Gallery, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo. Yoshikawa's works are in the collections of numerous art galleries in Ontario as well as in private collections. He is represented by Leo Kamen Gallery in Toronto.

**Georgiana Uhlyarik** is a curator at the Art Gallery of Ontario where she has been working on the installation of the Canadian collection for the reopening in November 2008. Independently, she has recently curated *order/disorder* at Latcham Gallery, Stouffville, ON, as well as *transient* at Terminal One, Pearson International Airport, Toronto, both featuring the work of Akira Yoshikawa. She is also the co-organizer, along with Flavio Trevisan and Scott Sørli, of the Parkdale International Art Fair at convenience, Toronto, in October 2008. Uhlyarik received her MA in Art History from York University in 1998, and her Honours BA from University of Toronto. This summer she traveled to Japan to visit Kyoto temples as well as Hiroshima, Yoshikawa's native city.

The Koffler Gallery of the Koffler Centre of the Arts gratefully acknowledges the support of its patrons and members, Cultural Season Sponsor CIBC Wood Gundy, the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Artist Residency:** Akira Yoshikawa will be in residency at the Koffler Gallery from August 5 until the opening of the exhibition. Media and public are invited to visit by appointment.

**Exhibition:** Akira Yoshikawa: *the way of now*, September 11 – November 30, 2008, FREE.

**Opening Reception:** Thursday, September 11, 7 – 9 pm, FREE.

**Artist Talk:** Thursday, September 11, 7:30 pm, FREE.

**Tours and Workshops:** Gallery talks are free with regular guided tours every Sunday at 2 pm during exhibitions. Group tours and workshops in both French and English are also available.

**Location:** The Koffler Gallery, part of the Koffler Centre of the Arts, is located at the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre (BJCC), 4588 Bathurst Street, three stoplights (two TTC stops) north of Sheppard Avenue. The Gallery is accessible by TTC via the Bathurst 7 bus north from the Bloor/Bathurst subway station, or the 160 Bathurst north bus from Wilson subway station. Buses stop at the BJCC.

**Hours:** Tuesday to Friday, 10 am to 4 pm, Sunday noon to 5 pm. Additional visitor hours by appointment. Closed Sept 30, Oct 1, 9, 14, 15, 21, 22 and Saturdays. Admission is FREE.

### About the Koffler Centre of the Arts

Koffler Centre of the Arts brings people together through arts and culture to create a more civil, global society. By examining the arts across disciplines and cultures, the Koffler strengthens identity and community while fostering an appreciation of difference. Currently housed at the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre near Sheppard Avenue and convenient public transportation, the Koffler Centre of the Arts features: the Koffler Gallery with changing contemporary exhibitions; the Loggia Gallery with photography exhibitions, student exhibitions, and more; fully-equipped studios for ceramics, stone-carving (the only studio in Toronto using pneumatic tools), painting and drawing, dance, and music rehearsals; and the Leah Posluns Theatre. The 2007-2008 season includes major visual arts exhibitions, artist talks, lectures, film, music, dance, and literary performances often presented in partnership with other arts organizations. The Koffler presents the annual Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards and the Jewish Book Fair as part of its growing literary repertoire along with over 65 classes for all ages as part of the Koffler Schools of Dance, Visual Arts, and Music. Koffler Centre of the Arts is supported by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and its season sponsor, CIBC Wood Gundy.

Construction is underway on a brand new 40,000 square foot, architecturally innovative Koffler Centre of the Arts on the present site soon to be known as the Sherman Campus. More information at <http://tomorrowcampaign.com>

### KOFFLER ON THE ROAD!

Watch for Koffler on the road beginning in 2008! As we prepare for our new facility to be completed in 2011, the Koffler Centre of the Arts is continuing to program exhibitions, events and performances both at our current facilities and at various downtown sites in Toronto. Check our website for details and watch out for Koffler events in *your* neighbourhood!

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