

An Art for Healing Foundation initiative: Two renowned Canadian artists unveil art donated to The Montreal Children's Hospital

06:00 EDT Monday, October 06, 2008

MONTREAL, Oct. 6 /CNW Telbec/ - Today, October 6, 2008, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm, at The Montreal Children's Hospital, the Art for Healing Foundation and The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation will hold a vernissage for the Veronica Tennant / Rita Briansky, "On Stage, Please" Gallery, a permanent installation on the ground floor, D-Wing of The Montreal Children's Hospital. This very special gallery - a true healing environment - was made possible thanks to the donation of fourteen etchings by Rita Briansky.

Artist Rita Briansky and the celebrated prima ballerina with the National Ballet of Canada Veronica Tennant began collaborating in 1977. Tennant had recently written the children's story "On Stage, Please" about a young girl's quest to become a professional ballerina. Having seen and admired Briansky's work, she requested that the artist illustrate her book. That summer, Briansky traveled to Toronto, where she studied and sketched young dancers in their ballet classes. Fourteen of the resulting tender etchings of the young dancers are now permanently on display at The Montreal Children's Hospital.

About the Art for Healing Foundation

For the past six years, two very special "doctors" have been making rounds in the halls, waiting rooms, treatment and examining rooms of The Montreal Children's Hospital. These two volunteers may not actually have medical degrees, but none-the-less they have been nicknamed the "Art Doctors" by grateful staff. Earl Pinchuk and Gary Blair, two Montrealers, have combined their business acumen and deep appreciation of art to create the Art for Healing Foundation. Their goal is to transform the hospital environment and thus reduce patient anxiety and foster a sense of well-being. Thanks to their on-going efforts, original art and reproductions grace the walls of The Children's and of twenty-three other Montreal institutions.

About Veronica Tennant

Prima ballerina with the National Ballet of Canada for 25 years, Tennant danced with both Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov. Since 1989, she has garnered acclaim as a gifted filmmaker, writer, producer/director, winning several awards, including the prestigious International Emmy Award. Tennant has also produced and directed a large body of arts performance for television. Lauded as a "great communicator", she has built an extensive reputation as narrator, actor, broadcaster, and lecturer. In June 2005 Tennant received her fifth honorary degree from McGill University. In 2001 she was inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame, and recent honours include: Canada Council's recipient of the Walter Carsen Prize for Excellence in the Performing Arts and the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement. Privileged to be Canada's National Ambassador for UNICEF, Veronica Tennant was the first dancer to be appointed to the Order of Canada as Officer in 1975. In 2004, she was elevated to the rank of Companion, the country's highest honour.

About Rita Briansky

Rita Briansky claims that she drew before she could write, a statement all the more credible because her long and illustrious career reflects the depth of her passion. At age four, Briansky immigrated to Canada from Poland with her parents who struggled to provide their children with the promise of their adopted country. It was Briansky's dream to study art but to do so she would have to earn the five dollars to cover the cost of high school. Through the kindness of the Yiddish poet Ida Massey, young Briansky found various jobs, earning not only the coveted tuition fee, but also the additional six dollars needed to enrol as a member of the "Y", where she met her mentor, Alexander Bercovitch. Briansky's artistic journey took her through years of study in Montreal and New York, where she honed her painting and etching techniques. Rita Briansky's art has been shown in solo and group exhibitions in Canada, the United States, Norway and France. She has been awarded two Canada Council Art Awards and three Purchase Awards.

Media are invited to schedule an appointment for a personal interview with Veronica Tennant and Rita Briansky and/or Earl Pinchuk and Gary Blair on October 6, between 2:00 and 2:45 pm at The Montreal Children's Hospital.

For further information: Danielle-Gabrielle Roy, Director of Communications, The Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation, (514) 934-4846, ext. 29236, Cellular: (514) 238-4760, droy@mchf.com