

GERARD JENNINGS, Executive Director - BIOGRAPHY

Gerard Jennings brings to Ecotecture more than 25 years of international experience in the fields of both charitable fundraising and development for cultural organizations as diverse as the 'British Friends in Support of Art & Education'; 'The Canadian Society for International Artistic Exchange'; 'Art with Heart'; and 'Big Ideas'.

Jennings began his career in the world of Canadian Arts in 1977, working as an art consultant at Waddington Galleries in Montreal, in the Inuit and Native Art department. At the end of the first year, he transferred to Waddington Galleries, Toronto branch where he remained until 1981, when he started his association with the venerable art dealer Walter Moos

As Gallery Director of the prestigious Gallery Moos in Toronto from 1981 – 1993 (<http://www.gallerymoos.com/>), Jennings' uncanny eye and passion for building both corporate and private art collections led to a satisfying and fruitful period in the history of Gallery Moos. During that time, his energy, drive and passion for the arts, allowed Jennings to play a critical formative role in CANSIAE (the Canadian Society for International Artistic Exchange) – an organization created to explore and implement a multi-disciplinary Art Exchange Program with Soviet Russia. As President of CANSIAE, and the official head of a Canadian delegation to Moscow, Jennings enjoyed extraordinary access to artists in all disciplines including painting, sculpture, performance art and photography.

His vast experience in both the private and public domain, has gained Jennings an extensive and invaluable knowledge of Art and Culture. In the early 1990's, Jennings was Managing Director and co-founder with his partner, Ira Hopmeyer, of Hopmeyer & Jennings Auction House, which specialized in contemporary art. In 1995, Jennings and Hopmeyer acquired Ritchies Auction house, and as President and CEO respectively, they quickly established the firm as one of the most notable and successful auction houses in North America. Having achieved so much in the commercial art world, Jennings' interests began to move back toward the charitable and non-profit sector.

In 1998, Jennings, with a like minded group of colleagues, founded Ecotecture, a registered Canadian charitable organization based in Toronto, Ontario. Principal within its mandate is the goal of art education, with a focus upon educating the public on topics ranging from sustainability, resource conservation, public art and how it relates to the environment.

A flagship program from the earliest days of Ecotecture was to collaborate with the Maclaren Art Center in Barrie, Ontario on their vanguard project ArtCity. Jennings contributed

his wealth of experience, to serve as a Project Facilitator of ArtCity. This project involved both the temporary and permanent placement of art in public spaces throughout Barrie; transforming the entire city into a giant sculpture park. The Art City Project evolved into Shore/lines, a major exhibit of environmental art by internationally acclaimed artists. These projects raised the public's awareness of the joint significance of ecology, historically significant sites, and prominent artists and their work. It is equally fair to say these projects were well ahead of their time. As project facilitator for Art City, Jennings effectively supported the program by arranging donations of artworks from contemporary Canadian artists including, Iain Baxter and Larry Middlestadt (and international artist Nils Udo and Allen Sonfist).

Jennings also played a key role with ArtCity in facilitating the documentation, archiving and subsequent gifting of some 23,000 vintage Soviet press photographs from the Sovfoto archive to the Maclaren Art Centre in Barrie, Ontario (<http://www.sovfoto.com/>; <http://maclarenart.com/>). His experience in facilitating the delivery of such a rich, cultural resource into the public domain, only served to make Jennings increasingly appreciate and understand the collection and its place as an unparalleled educational and cultural resource.

In 2005 Jennings became the founding President of ' British Friends in Support of Art and Education' (<http://www.britishfriends.co.uk/>), a UK Registered Charity established to break down the barriers between collectors, curators and the general public through the gifting and lending of contemporary art to expand and diversify public collections .

On his return to Canada in 2009, at the invitation of the Board of Directors, Jennings returned to the helm as the Executive Director of Ecotecture: Centre for Ecological Art and Architecture. (<http://www.ecotecturecanada.org/>). Jennings was asked by the board to refocus Ecotecture with the mandate to drive the organization forward, with a return back to its original goals and mandate. The highlight of Jennings first year has been the development of a very exciting program, The VIA Project.

"The making and viewing of art satisfies the fundamental human need to communicate"
Gerard Jennings.