

MEDIA RELEASE

September 26, 2003



The LAB 3.4 Familiars:

Ann Newdigate

October 3 – November 23, 2003

Artist's Talk & Opening Reception

Thursday, October 2
Talk: 7:30pm
Reception: 8:00pm

Art Gallery of Greater Victoria
1040 Moss Street
Victoria, BC, V8V 4P1
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aggv.bc.ca

ADMISSION
Adults \$6 | Seniors/Students \$4
Children Under 12 Free

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International artist brings tapestry to the fore-front of contemporary art

Ann Newdigate is a celebrated international artist, educator, lecturer, adjudicator, mentor and writer is known across the world for her textile-based art and her role in having tapestry recognized as an expressive contemporary art form.

Ann Newdigate brings her love of textile and ancient languages to the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's latest LAB project in *Familiars*. Her exhibition reflects on the past and the future simultaneously by using decorative capital letters from medieval illuminated manuscripts, miniature tapestry portraits, and digitally scanned tapestries of ancient fonts. Together these elements create an installation that weaves a story of journey, travel and ideas of the "familiar" with references to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

"The word "familiar" is a term that emerges from the shady realities of the non-verbal, or unsayable," says Newdigate. "It slides between benign and malevolent, cosy and sexual, superstition or faith, knowledge or fear, domestic or outside, sorrow or joy, the quick and the dead, familiar or other. Its numerous meanings are mediated according to who one is, or is not ... in the same way, interpretations of various histories are consistent with differing perspectives...."

Newdigate also draws upon the Art Gallery's permanent collection with the inclusion of "Canterbury Pilgrims", an engraving by William Blake which centres on the themes of journey and storytelling, as well as two never-before-exhibited 13th & 14th Century illuminated manuscripts.

Ann Newdigate's vast experience has raised the status of textiles and tapestry in contemporary art. She has exhibited in solo and group-curated shows in Canada, USA, Australia, France, Germany, Norway, England and Scotland. In 1994, she represented Canada in the Lodz Biennial in Poland. Born in South Africa, she received a BA from Cape Town University in African Studies and English Literature including the study of Xhosa (a South African language), archaeology, Anglo Saxon and Chaucer. In 1990, Newdigate inaugurated tapestry as a discipline within the Fine Art Department at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. In 1992 she completed a major commission for Ottawa's new City Hall. In 1995, she received a Life Time Achievement Award for Excellence in the Arts from the Saskatchewan Arts Board.