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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

PAT DUMAS-HUDECKI **'BEARING WITNESS: Totems of Communication'** is on view at The Campbell House Museum Gallery from **July 23 - August 31 , 2011**. Opening Reception will take place **Saturday, July 23, 1 - 4 p.m.**

*We're living mythically now. We've continued to think in old rational patterns of the older technologies. But we are suddenly forced to live in such complex, compressed and high-speed systems that we inevitably switch into mythic patterns.*¹ – Marshall McLuhan

*"Telephone poles. Telegraph Poles. Utility Poles. Hydro Poles. By whatever name, they are and have been a part of our urban and rural landscape since the last spike was pounded into our national railway line. Like the railway, the poles have helped define us – carrying every thing a nation needs to survive."*² – Pat Dumas-Hudecki

'BEARING WITNESS: Totems of Communication', is a three part exhibition which takes various trajectories of meaning derived from the act of rendering representational, abstract and imaginative Canadian art history and theory featuring the nation's mass communication poles.

The trinity of figurative work that makes up Ontario College of Art graduate and Ontario Society of Artists executive member, Pat Dumas-Hudecki's first solo exhibition with Propeller, was painted in the artist's studio on Niagara Street near Bathurst and King, not long after or far from where the massive fire of February 2008 gutted a Queen West block.

Working with acrylic, photo media, wood, paper and staples as well as Canadian art history and theory, Dumas-Hudecki pictures what she refers to as *"these proud standard bearers (or totemic structures)"* in winter through spring, from the turn of the last century to the 21st.

Dumas-Hudecki describes her first suite of paintings – *urban totems* – comprising seven 90 x 45 cm acrylics as literal portraits of our city poles AS THEY STAND NOW.³ One work depicts a telephone pole against a frozen and burnt cityscape sheathed in icicles and emitting magic real light. This is a beautiful suite perhaps because of, not in spite of, the tinge of loss, time and the winter fire that lingers like a spectre in this work.

The artist's second suite – *sounding boards* – depicts abstracted photographic close-ups or extreme details of our urban poles as they take on different and unique characteristics in the final act of change (before becoming obsolete). This suite includes: seven 40 x 32 cm mixed media collage works decorated with bits of paper, staples and rust, which gives the almost abstract wood panel series humour and pathos.

Dumas-Hudecki creates these pieces by incorporating photo transfers, metal and paper onto wood, which requires as well as reads as time and texture. Consequent to these material and theoretical applications, a series of fictions and truths can be seen acting out imagery and deferral on the same surface.

With this second suite Dumas-Hudecki tries to convey the idea of how new forms of communication have been added to these poles and how their original purposes have changed. Here and again in Part 3 of **'BEARING WITNESS'** Dumas-Hudecki explores McLuhan's view that the content of any new technology inevitably being the older technology from which it is derived. According to both artist and theorist, new media goes around old media turning the old one into an art form.⁴

As pure poetic gesture Dumas-Hudecki's third suite – *rural totems* – enclosing four paintings returns her emblematic cedar poles to the time and landscape from which they were harvested. She accomplishes this by enacting a metaphoric reforestation of famous Emily Carr, Tom Thomson and Lawren Harris landscapes that were created a century ago, with telegraph poles sent out to pasture from our current vantage point in history.

Pat Dumas-Hudecki's trilogy succeeds in expressing the mythic potential of our nation's communication poles in a body of work that conflates the image of the ubiquitous wooden pole that once crossed all Canada with a resonate slice of our country's critical theory and art history.

– Carla Garnet, May 2010, A.O.C.A., M.A.

¹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Me/Lectures and Interviews*, McLeod & Stewart Ltd., Toronto 2003, pp 63

² PAT DUMAS-HUDECKI *'BEARING WITNESS: Totems of Communication'* Artist Statement, May 2010.

³ Dumas-Hudecki, *Ibid.*

⁴ McLuhan, *Ibid.* pp 91

Pat Dumas-Hudecki: *BEARING WITNESS: Totems of Communication*
 Campbell House Museum Gallery July 23rd - August 31st, 2011

FIRST SUITE



Pole #161
 Queen West & Bathurst



Pole #37
 Tecumseth & Niagara



Empire of the Night I



Pole #204
 Adelaide Street West



Pole #153 Queen West I,
 Bearing Witness



Pole #153 Queen West II,
 Bearing Witness

SECOND SUITE



Pole#304 Queen East & Curzon I



Leslieville TOTEM I



Leslieville TOTEM II



Pole#61 Shaw Street, Spring



Kensington TOTEM I

THIRD SUITE



Canadian Art History TOTEM I



Canadian Art History TOTEM II



Canadian Art History TOTEM III



Canadian Art History TOTEM IV