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OCAD professor to join international Arctic trek on climate change

(Toronto—August 7, 2008) Colette Laliberté, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Art at the Ontario College of Art & Design (OCAD), will join 16 Canadian high school students on a two-week Arctic voyage to study the effects of global warming, the university announced today.

Laliberté is one of two artists selected to participate in this year's Cape Farewell Youth Expedition. The international climate-change awareness program will give 28 high school students from Canada, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Brazil, Ireland, India, and Germany a unique opportunity to travel from Reykjavik to Iqaluit with top scientists, artists, and educators.

"My role will be to help the students capture and communicate their Arctic experience — what they see, hear, feel and learn — through art," said Laliberté, whose drawings, paintings, wall installations and site-specific art interventions have been exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at the Galeria de Arte Universal, Santiago de Cuba in 2007.

"Through their artwork, the students will be able to share what they've learned with people back home and hopefully raise awareness and action on global warming."

Since 2003, artists, scientists and students have travelled on Cape Farewell's voyages, watched the Arctic change, and recorded it in film, photography, music and words, as well as through scientific observation. This year's expedition — the first to the Canadian Arctic — will sail from Iceland to Baffin Island via Cape Farewell on the southern coast of Greenland.

"This will also be an inspirational and eye-opening journey for me, both as an artist and as a professor of art," admitted Laliberté, who will maintain a blog to keep in touch with her students and colleagues at OCAD. "I've never been to the Arctic before and being able to see first-hand the startling changes I've only read and heard about will influence my work and inform my teaching."

The expedition, an initiative of the British Council Canada, sets sail from Reykjavik on September 7 and arrives in Iqaluit on September 20. For more information, please visit www.capefarewellcanada.ca. Laliberté's blog will be available on the OCAD website at www.ocad.ca.

About the Ontario College of Art & Design (OCAD)

The Ontario College of Art & Design (www.ocad.ca) is Canada's "university of the imagination." OCAD is dedicated to art and design education, practice and research and to knowledge and invention across a wide range of disciplines. The university is building on its traditional, studio-based strengths, adding new approaches to learning that champion cross-disciplinarity, collaboration and the integration of emerging technologies. In the Age of Imagination, OCAD community members will be uniquely qualified to act as catalysts for the next advances in culture, technology and quality of life for all Canadians.

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