

April 2, 2007

History of Toronto floor coverings at the Market Gallery

Wall-to-Wall: A History of Carpeting in Toronto opens at the Market Gallery July 14, 2007 and runs through to October 14, 2007. This exhibit will showcase rarely seen artifacts from the Collection of the City's Museums and Heritage Services, Toronto Culture in conjunction with objects on loan from other public and private collections. With a focus on domestic carpeting, the show explores 19th- and early 20th-century philosophies of home comfort, decorative fashion and domestic hygiene. In addition to floor coverings, *Wall-to-Wall* includes a host of carpet-related artifacts such as early vacuum cleaners and sweepers, carpet bags, and upholstered furnishings.

Wall-to-Wall: A History of Carpeting in Toronto surveys imported and domestic wool floor coverings common in Toronto from the 1850s to the 1920s. The exhibition charts the progression of carpet styles and weaving technologies that ultimately made textile floor coverings widely available and affordable to middle class households. An exploration of carpet sweepers and early vacuum cleaners demonstrates the relationship between the changing trends in domestic carpeting and advances in the treatment of household cleanliness during this period. In addition to carpeting as a floor covering, the show investigates the use of carpeting in the production of chair seats, carpet bags, door stops and other household items. Period photographs illustrate local department store buyers in the Middle-East in search of Oriental rugs for the local market, images that highlight how retailers used imagery to boast the product's exotic pedigree.

Guest curator Neil Brochu has pursued an interest in domestic textiles and carpeting through several web-based exhibits and research projects. *Wall-to-Wall: A History of Carpeting in Toronto* is the culmination of his work over the past several years cataloguing and studying carpeting in the City of Toronto Historical Collection.

The Market Gallery is a program of Toronto Culture and presents changing exhibitions dedicated to Toronto's art, culture and heritage. Located in Toronto's oldest neighbourhood, the main gallery occupies the 19th-century city council chamber, which is all that remains from the City Hall that stood on this site from 1845 – 1899. The gallery offers educational programs for school groups and adults.

Admission is free. The Market Gallery is located on the second floor of the South St. Lawrence Market, 95 Front St. E. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday noon to 4 p.m.

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of more than 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. In the past three years Toronto has won more than 50 awards for quality and innovation in delivering public services. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and livability for all its residents.

- 30 -

Media contact: Pamela Wachna, Co-ordinator of Collections & Outreach, 416-392-7604