

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

McMichael Canadian Art Collection Announces 2025 Exhibition Lineup

Kleinburg, ON – January 11, 2025 – The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is proud to unveil its 2025 exhibition schedule, which showcases the dynamic interplay between Canada's rich artistic heritage and the voices shaping contemporary art today. This year's lineup spans a broad spectrum of Canadian creativity, offering visitors the chance to rediscover beloved masterpieces and engage with fresh perspectives that challenge and inspire.

From vibrant drawings from the Arctic community of Kinngait (formerly Cape Dorset), to the bridges and canals of Venice a century ago as seen through the eyes of James Wilson Morrice, to the contemporary explorations of Toronto-based artists Derek Sullivan and Sandra Brewster, the 2025 program is a testament to the depth and diversity of Canadian art. With this range of exhibitions, the McMichael reaffirms its role as Canada's premier institution celebrating, and reinterpreting, our country's artistic legacy.

Upcoming



Left: Derek Sullivan (b. 1976), *Out Standing in a Field* (detail), 2021–22, coloured pencil on Rising Museumboard, 133.4 x 101.6 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchased with funds from the Dr. Michael Braudo Contemporary Canadian Fund, 2024, 2024/21.4. © Derek Sullivan.
Right: Derek Sullivan (b. 1976), *Out Standing in a Field* (detail), 2021–22, coloured pencil on Rising Museumboard, 133.4 x 101.6 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, purchased with funds from the Dr. Michael Braudo Contemporary Canadian Fund, 2024, 2024/21.5. © Derek Sullivan.

Derek Sullivan: Field Notes

February 8, 2025 – June 29, 2025

This February, the McMichael will present a solo exhibition of recent works by acclaimed Toronto-based conceptual artist Derek Sullivan. The show is rooted in Sullivan's year-long exploration of *Shift* (1970), a landmark land art installation by the celebrated American sculptor Richard Serra that is located in suburban King, Ontario—just a short distance from Sullivan's childhood home and sixteen kilometers east of the McMichael. Using *Shift* as a conceptual springboard, Sullivan's reflective large-scale drawings critically engage with this iconic piece of international modernism while probing its complex local implications.

"I used Serra's *Shift* as an orienting device to examine the complex networks of interconnection tied to this location—colonial land expropriation, agricultural impacts, property development, preservation strategies, trespassing, community use, and imported artistry," Sullivan explained. "It also drew out my own tangled histories in this region. The project aimed to put Serra in his place, so to speak, while allowing me to better understand my own."

Sullivan's multidisciplinary practice spans drawing, sculpture, book works, and installation. Known for his critical engagement with modernist art and design, his work interrogates familiar forms and genres, often uncovering unexpected intersections between artistic disciplines.

Curated by McMichael Associate Curator of Collections and Research, John Geoghegan, the exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue. The richly detailed publication features all the artworks on display, photographs of *Shift* across the seasons, a brief interview with the American artist Joan Jonas – Serra's partner in life and art at the time that *Shift* was made -- and an in-depth interview with Sullivan. The publication offers a deep exploration of Sullivan's artistic practice, the legacy of Serra's *Shift*, and the intertwined narratives that inspired this thought-provoking project.

[Learn more.](#)



Left: Kingmeata Etidloolie (1915–1989), *Untitled*, acrylic paints on paper, 51.6 cm x 65.3 cm, collection of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd., on loan to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection CD.23.4020. © Dorset Fine Arts Right: Pudlo Pudlat (1916–1992), *Untitled*, 1985-86, graphite, coloured pencil and felt-tip pen on paper, 51.1 cm x 66.5 cm, collection of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd., on loan to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection CD.24.4012. © Dorset Fine Arts

Worlds on Paper: Drawings from Kinngait

March 8, 2025 – August 24, 2025

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection proudly stewards the Kinngait Drawings Archive, a monumental collection of more than 89,000 original drawings from the Arctic community of Kinngait (Cape Dorset) in

Nunavut. The recent digitization of this archive, accessible online at inigitillagait.ca, has allowed for unprecedented new insights into the early works that laid the foundation for Kinngait's global artistic legacy.

Curated by Emily Laurent Henderson, Associate Curator of Indigenous Art and Culture at the McMichael, this once-in-a-generation exhibition of more than 200 works charts the cultural transformation of life in Kinngait in the face of dramatic societal change, unfolding over the span of more than five decades. The adaptability and resilience of this unique community has been documented in works that depict intergenerational knowledge transfer, community building, and boundless imagination.

This exhibition will reveal overlooked bodies of work by some of the country's most beloved artists including Kenojuk Ashevak, Pitseolak Ashoona, Kananginak Pootoogook, and Pudlo Pudlat, while also introducing audiences to hitherto unknown artists whose work was suppressed by the demands of the print program, which prioritized the tastes of settler markets in the South.

Accompanying the exhibition is a comprehensive publication featuring essays and reflections by a mostly Inuit team of contributors, including Susan Aglukark, Tarralik Duffy, Jimmy Manning, Kyle Aleekuk, Napatsi Folger, Jamesie Fournier, Janice Grey, Jocelyn Piirainen, Krista Ulujuk Zawadski and Taqralik Partridge. A lead essay by Henderson examines the archive as a living testament to Inuit adaptability and creativity in the face of change, while shorter contributions from artists, scholars, hunters, and designers provide unique perspectives on the Kinngait studio and individual works. The lavish publication also includes reproductions of many artworks never before published—offering a fresh lens on this archive's enduring relevance as a record of societal transformation.

[Learn more.](#)



Left: Annie Pootoogook, *Three Generations*, 2004-2005, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 65.7 x 101 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection TD2024.31.1 Right: Ohotaq Mikkigak (1936–2014), *School Bus and Houses*, 2012, 110.5 x 151.1 cm, Christopher Bredt & Jamie Cameron. © Dorset Fine Arts.

Dreaming Forward: Contemporary Drawings from Kinngait

March 8, 2025 – August 24, 2025

Accompanying *Worlds on Paper*, the adjoining exhibition *Dreaming Forward: Contemporary Drawings from Kinngait* will bring the work of Kinngait artists into a contemporary context. Since the transfer of the 90,000 works on paper from the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative to the McMichael in 1990, the

practice of drawing has continued to flourish in Kinngait, often on a dramatically larger scale than before. New generations of artists have emerged onto the contemporary art scene, offering compelling visions of their evolving community in the 21st century.

From the precise, illustrative style of artists such as Itee Pootoogook and Tim Pitsiulak, to the dreamscapes of Ooloosie Saila and Shuvinai Ashoona, Kinngait artists have continued to innovate with drawing as a medium unto itself—transcending its role as a preparatory step in the printmaking process. The introduction of large-scale works on paper in the 2000s marked a significant evolution in these artists' practice, as they created their candid and often humorous portrayals of contemporary Inuit life. Rendered in graphite, ink, and coloured pencil, these works depict the rhythms of daily life in Kinngait—prefabricated houses, snowmobiles, and trips to the co-op store—while also capturing the enduring values of cooperation, care, and connection that define the hamlet.

Through their art, the creators of Kinngait offer a vivid and heartfelt perspective on the present moment, while keeping a sharp eye on the future of their community.

Sandra Brewster: FISH

Opening April 12, 2025 – January 2026

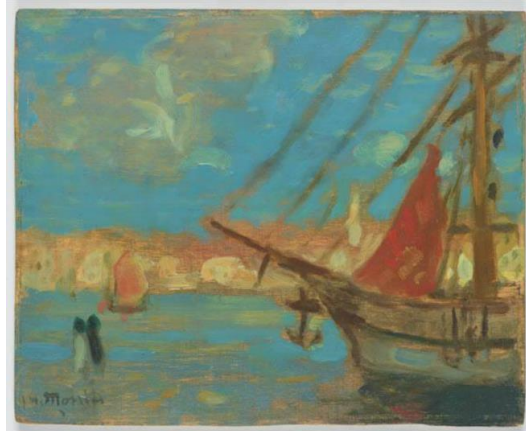
This spring, Toronto-based artist Sandra Brewster will create a site-specific wall installation in the McMichael's permanent collection galleries. The artwork— a drawing and photo-based gel transfer— will depict images of the Essequibo River in Guyana as well as its unique fish species. Evoking the serene yet dynamic flow of the river, the artwork serves as a metaphor for movement and migration. Drawing inspiration from her Guyanese heritage, Brewster's photo-based practice offers a deeply personal exploration of the migration stories of Caribbean people.

Sandra Brewster is a Canadian artist whose work explores the nuanced interplay between identity and environment. Her multidisciplinary practice—spanning drawing, photography, and sculpture—examines the lived experiences of movement and migration, often using gel transfer techniques to create textured, layered surfaces that reflect the unfixed, dynamic nature of diasporic identity.

The McMichael is proud to host Brewster's intervention in its galleries, which have historically celebrated landscapes by white settler male artists of the modern period. Brewster's installation offers a transformative, relational perspective on land, water, and history—one rooted in the diasporic experience and the complexities of belonging.

Visitors will have the rare opportunity to witness the creation of this artwork during the McMichael's open hours, gaining firsthand insight into Brewster's gel transfer technique and her artistic process. This installation also serves as the foundation for a new educational initiative for Grade 5 students from the York Region and Toronto District School Boards. After a guided viewing of the work in progress, students will engage in hands-on workshops, creating their own photo-transfer projects inspired by Brewster's practice.

Sandra Brewster: FISH is presented in partnership with [CONTACT Photography Festival](#).



Left: James Wilson Morrice, *Card Players, Chioggia*, c. 1901, oil on wood panel, 17.8 x 25.2 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1979.3.3
Right: James Wilson Morrice, *Study for Port of Venice*, 1906, oil on wood panel, 12.4 x 15.4 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1969.5.1

Morrice in Venice

May 31, 2025 – September 21, 2025

Building on the pioneering research of Sandra Paikowsky, as featured in her acclaimed publication *James Wilson Morrice: Paintings and Drawings of Venice*, the McMichael is delighted to present a new exhibition dedicated to Morrice's captivating depictions of the city of Venice. Showcasing a selection of his extraordinary canvases, pochades, and sketches, this exhibition celebrates Morrice's artistic legacy and his vision of one of Europe's most enchanting cities.

James Wilson Morrice (1865–1924) was the first Canadian artist to make regular visits to Venice, traveling there frequently from the mid-1890s to around 1908. In an era when Venice was the premier destination for artists across Europe, Morrice distinguished himself as one of the few foreign painters who returned repeatedly to its storied canals and piazzas. His Venetian works earned widespread acclaim, appearing in exhibitions throughout Europe, including Paris and London, as well as in Toronto and Montreal, his hometown.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, who gravitated toward sweeping, picturesque views of Venice, Morrice focused on capturing its quieter, more intimate moments. His paintings reveal the subtle beauty of the city's secluded calles, tranquil squares, and lively public spaces, rendered with a masterful interplay of light and colour. Whether viewed from a café table or through the winding paths of Venice's labyrinthine streets, Morrice's works offer a deeply personal and atmospheric glimpse into the soul of the city.

Guided by the expertise of Paikowsky, a preeminent authority on Morrice's Venetian art, this exhibition explores the artist's themes, inspirations, and his use of Venice as a site for creative experimentation. Organized as a visual journey through the city, the exhibition offers a window into the artist's creative process and an opportunity to see Venice through the eyes of one of Canada's most accomplished artists.

Rita Leistner

July 5, 2025 – January 5, 2026

This summer, the McMichael is proud to present *The Tree Planters*, a captivating series of works by award-winning photographer Rita Leistner. Created between 2016 and 2019, the project documents the gruelling and heroic work of professional tree planters in British Columbia. Through her lens, Leistner explores themes of human endurance, environmental stewardship, and Canada's evolving relationship with its forests.

Tree planting is an intense and physically demanding profession. Traversing rugged terrain, planters plant thousands of seedlings daily, battling biting insects and carrying heavy loads. This work demands exceptional stamina, technical skill, and resilience. Born from reforestation efforts in the 1970s and influenced by Indigenous environmental perspectives, professional tree planting reflects Canada's leadership in sustainable forestry.

Leistner immersed herself in remote planting camps in British Columbia, capturing the world of tree planters through her innovative photographic techniques. Her dynamic lighting and real-time action photography create painterly portraits that highlight the planters' connection to the land. Complementing these *Portraits* is *Enchanted Forests*, a series of large-scale photographs that juxtapose clear-cuts and untouched forests, transforming the landscapes with dramatic lighting to create otherworldly scenes. As Leistner notes, "You would never see the forest this way with your naked eye, but you would *paint* it this way."

Having planted over half a million trees herself, Leistner considers this work a tribute to the generations of Canadian tree planters who have reshaped not only the country's geography but also its cultural identity.

Leistner's celebrated career spans photojournalism, art, and education, and her work has been featured in *National Geographic*, *The Globe and Mail*, and in various international exhibitions. *The Tree Planters* invites viewers to witness the resilience and artistry of tree planters, offering an extraordinary perspective on Canada's forests and the human spirit.



Left: Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun, *New Climate Landscape (Northwest Coast Climate Change)*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 193 × 243.8 cm, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Purchase, BMO Financial Group, 2020, 2020.10, Photo: Craig Boyko, © Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun Right: Dana Claxton (b. 1959), *Headdress—Shadae*, 2019, LED firebox with transmouted lightjet chromogenic transparency 152.4 × 101.6 cm, Purchase, BMO Financial Group, 2020, 2020.5, Photo: Craig Boyko, © Dana Claxton

Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael

September 20, 2025 – January 5, 2026

This fall, *Early Days* makes its highly anticipated return to the McMichael after its acclaimed tour across the United States. As the first comprehensive survey of Indigenous art from present-day Canada to be presented internationally, and comprised entirely of works from the McMichael's collection, this groundbreaking exhibition highlights the richness, diversity, and vitality of Indigenous artistic traditions from coast to coast to coast. Organized by the McMichael in collaboration with Indigenous stakeholders—including scholars, traditional knowledge keepers, and contemporary artists—*Early Days* bridges centuries of cultural expression.

The exhibition presents a dynamic selection of works ranging from 18th-century ceremonial regalia to the innovative creations of trailblazing artists of the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, such as Norval Morrisseau, Carl Beam, and Alex Janvier. The exhibition also features cutting-edge new acquisitions made by today's leading contemporary Indigenous artists, including Kent Monkman, Nadia Myre, Dana Claxton, Meryl McMaster, and Rebecca Belmore.

As Canada's only museum dedicated exclusively to Canadian art, the McMichael's collection offers a definitive account of Indigenous art today, revealing the powerful tensions and continuities between the past and present. *Early Days* delves into themes of connection to the land, ancestral relationships, and intergenerational dialogue, creating a resonant narrative that speaks to shared histories and enduring legacies.

Accompanying the exhibition is a richly illustrated award-winning publication, co-edited by McMichael Chief Curator Sarah Milroy and Anishinaabe artist Bonnie Devine, Associate Professor Emerita at OCAD

University and Founding Chair of its Indigenous Visual Culture Program. Featuring contributions from more than fifty voices in Indigenous art and scholarship, this publication is an essential resource for understanding the profound impact of Indigenous art on Canada's cultural landscape.

Stan Douglas

Fall 2025

Details forthcoming.

Ongoing



Left: John Scott (1950–2022), *Untitled*, 1997, latex, acrylic, and collage on paper, 61.6 x 91 cm, collection of Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa, gift of Ari Gold, 1997, 1997.31.28. Photo: Justin Wonnacott. © Estate of John Scott. Right: John Scott (1950–2022), *Untitled*, 1997, latex and acrylic on paper, 101.7 x 76 cm, collection of Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa, gift of Ari Gold, 1997, 1997.31.21. Photo: Justin Wonnacott. © Estate of John Scott.

John Scott: Firestorm

December 7, 2024- May 11, 2025

This powerful and timely retrospective of the late Canadian artist John Scott (1950–2022) foregrounds his lifelong examination of cycles of conflict, retaliation and resilience, and the complexities of human experience. Spanning four decades of work, *Firestorm* features paintings, drawings, and sculptures that reveal Scott's preoccupation with violence, surveillance, and the omnipresent threat of nuclear conflict. Known for his bold and provocative imagery, Scott offers a stinging critique of militarism and authoritarianism while expressing deep empathy for human vulnerability.

Firestorm is the first major retrospective to focus on Scott's potent imagery of modern warfare and its consequences—a body of work as meaningful today as when it first appeared in the 1970s. Through his signature imagery of stealth bombers, firearms, and tanks—what he called the “engines of history”—Scott challenges viewers to confront the stark dichotomy between the destructive force of modern weaponry and the fragility of human life.

Guest-curated by Dr. John O'Brian, *Firestorm* positions Scott's legacy within an international context, underscoring his impact as one of Canada's most distinctive artistic voices.

The exhibition is accompanied by a scholarly catalogue, edited by Sarah Milroy, with new essays by John O'Brian, Richard Hill, and Robert Jacobs. Published by Figure 1 Publishing, the catalogue features more than 100 works as well as a comprehensive biography.

[Learn more.](#)



Left: Clarence Alphonse Gagnon (1881–1942), *The Chapdelaine Farm*, 1928/1933, watercolour and gouache with pastel or coloured pencil ? on paper, sheet: 20.4 x 26 cm; image: 16.4 x 22.2 cm, Gift of Colonel R.S. McLaughlin, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1969.4.7

Right: Clarence Alphonse Gagnon (1881–1942), *Church at Peribonka*, 1928/1933, gouache and watercolour on paper, sheet: 20.1 x 27.8 cm; image: 15.5 x 22.6 cm, Gift of Colonel R.S. McLaughlin, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1969.4.2

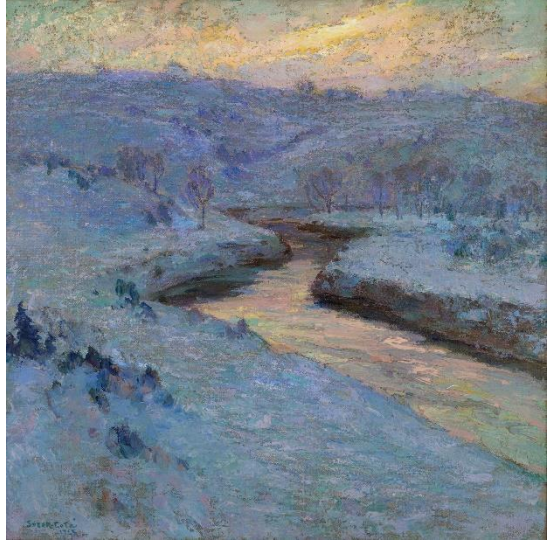
Maria Chapdelaine

November 23, 2024 – February 17, 2025

Clarence Gagnon's celebrated series of 54 miniature paintings illustrating Louis Hemon's 1913 novel *Maria Chapdelaine* stands as a pinnacle of Canadian book illustration. Created in the early 1930s, these exquisite works capture the beauty and spirit of Quebec's countryside, enchanting art lovers and readers for generations.

Drawn from the McMichael's permanent collection, this rarely displayed series offers visitors a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in Gagnon's lyrical vision of rural Quebec. Due to conservation requirements, these delicate paintings are exhibited only once every three years, making their return an extraordinary occasion.

[Learn more.](#)



Left: Robert Pilot (1898–1967), *St. Patrick's Church*, Montreal, oil on canvas, 71.7 x 91.4 cm, Comsatec Inc. Photo: Heffel Fine Art Auction House.
Right: Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, *Sunset, Nicolet River | Coucher de soleil, rivière Nicolet*, 1925, oil on canvas, 116 x 116 cm, Collection of the Musée d'art de Joliette, Gift of the Clerics of St. Viator of Canada, 2012.043, Photo: Guy L'Heureux.

River of Dreams: Impressionism on the St. Lawrence

June 22, 2024 – February 17, 2025

In the late 19th century, the Impressionist movement found a footing in Canada, and Quebec artists quickly responded with works of rare beauty and sophistication. Many Quebec artists trained in France during this period, and carried the pollen of European modernism back with them to Canadian soil. Landscape and city scenes were staples of their work, and this show assembles a choice collection of master works that trace a journey from the bustling streets of Montreal—then Canada's financial capital—down the St. Lawrence River to Quebec City and through the Côte de Beaupré to the beloved Charlevoix region.

River of Dreams offers not just a magisterial statement on the outstanding quality of Quebec painting in this period, but also a glimpse into the heart and soul of a culture, seen through the eyes of her most beloved and foundational artists. The survey includes works by William Brymner, Ozias Leduc, James Wilson Morrice, Henrietta Mabel May, Robert Pilot, Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, Maurice Cullen, Clarence Gagnon, and others, and is drawn from a host of public and private collections. To accent these works, archival photography, and objects of material culture from the period deepen the viewer's experience. The result is an immersive time-travel experience like no other.

[Learn more.](#)



A.Y. Jackson (1882–1974), *First Snow, Algoma*, between 1919 and 1920, oil on canvas, 107.1 x 127.7cm, In memory of Gertrude Wells Hilborn, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1966.7

Jackson's Wars: AY Jackson Before the Group of Seven

May 25, 2024- February 2, 2025

Jackson's Wars is a rare examination of the formative creative years of painter Alexander Young (A.Y.) Jackson (1882 – 1974), spotlighting the decade leading up to the Group of Seven's formation in 1920. This exhibition chronicles Jackson's early career as he navigated the art scene in Montreal, contending with galleries, critics, and collectors. Co-curated by historian Douglas Hunter and Sarah Milroy, *Jackson's Wars* features paintings made during the artist's trips abroad to Italy, his time as a war artist during World War I, as well as his evocative depictions of rural Quebec and Ontario made after his return. Hunter is the author of [Jackson's Wars](#), a historical account of A.Y. Jackson's formative years as a soldier and artist, from which the exhibition takes its name and inspiration. This is a rare opportunity to look afresh at the legacy of one of Canada's most significant painters, refocusing attention on his early accomplishments, struggles, and triumphs.

[Learn more.](#)

Ces informations sont aussi disponibles en français.

Media wishing to request interviews, media tours, obtain high-resolution images or review copies of publications are asked to contact Sadie Evans at sevens@mcmichael.com or 905.893.1121 ext. 2290.

ABOUT THE McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is an agency of the Government of Ontario and acknowledges the support of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, and the McMichael Canadian Art Foundation. It is the only major museum in the country devoted exclusively to Canadian art. In addition to touring exhibitions, the McMichael houses a permanent collection of more than 7,000 works by historic and contemporary Canadian artists, including Tom Thomson, the Group of Seven and their contemporaries, Indigenous artists, and artists from the many diasporic communities. The gallery is located on 100 acres of forested landscape and hiking trails at 10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg, north of Major Mackenzie Drive in the City of Vaughan. For more information, please visit mcmichael.com.

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