

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael

Major exhibition showcasing two centuries of Indigenous art opens September 20



Left: Norval Morrisseau (1932–2007), *Artist's Wife and Daughter*, 1975, acrylic on hardboard, 101.6 x 81.3 cm, Purchase 1975, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1981.87.1. Photo: Craig Boyko © Estate of Norval Morrisseau Right: Native Art Department International (founded 2016), *Aanzinaago (Caught in a Transformation) 01*, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 121.9 x 152.4 cm, Purchased with the generous support of Hatch, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 2024.37. Photo: Toni Hafkenschid © Native Art Department International

Kleinburg, ON - The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is proud to announce the presentation of *Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael* opening on September 20, 2025, following a landmark international tour with stops in Phoenix, AZ, Albuquerque, NM, Norfolk, VA, and Québec, QC.

This critically acclaimed exhibition of more than 100 works is a resounding affirmation of the depth, diversity, and vitality of Indigenous art in Canada, and includes many acquisitions new to the McMichael's permanent collection. The presentation spans more than two centuries -- from 18th-century ceremonial regalia and trade items to the groundbreaking work of artists from the 1960s through the 1980s, to powerful contemporary pieces by the leading artists of today. The exhibition showcases work by Norval Morrisseau, Tim Pitsiulak, Robert Houle, Carl Beam, Shelly

Niro, Faye HeavyShield, Rebecca Belmore, Duane Linklater, Jeneen Frei Njootli, Kent Monkman, Meryl McMaster, and many others. Including painting, sculpture, printmaking, textile, and video— the exhibition reveals the cultural continuity, resilience, and innovation of Indigenous artistic practice across the generations. This is a repeat presentation of *Early Days*, which initially opened during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the exhibition was unable to be experienced by many visitors due to prolonged gallery closures during its original run.

As the only museum in Canada devoted exclusively to Canadian and Indigenous art, the McMichael collection offers a unique lens on Indigenous art in Canada, past and present. *Early Days* invites visitors to explore relationships to land, ancestry, and community, while also engaging with the challenges, tensions and transformations that have shaped—and continue to shape—Indigenous experience today.



Left: Bob Harris, Chief Xi'xa'niyus, "Gives All His Blankets Away" (1870–1930) & Johnny Davis, Chief Lq̓lak̓inx'idi, "The One Who Always Went Too Far" (1867–70–c. 1921), *Kumugwe'*, "Wealthy One," *Chief of the Undersea Kingdom Mask*, c. 1890, western red cedar, paint, 66 x 35.5 x 62 cm, Purchase 1977, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1977.2.1.A–B. Photo: Craig Boyko Middle: Carl Beam (b. 1943–2005), *Various Concerns of the Artist*, 1984, photo etching on paper, 121.7 x 80.5 cm, Purchase 1985, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1985.29.3. Photo: Craig Boyko © Estate of Carl Beam (CARCC, Ottawa, 2023) Right: Dana Claxton (b. 1959), *Headdress—Shadae*, 2019, LED firebox with transmounted lightjet chromogenic transparency, 152.4 x 101.6 cm, Purchase, BMO Financial Group, 2020, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 2020.5. Photo: Craig Boyko © Dana Claxton

The exhibition is accompanied by an award-winning catalogue co-edited by Anishinaabe artist and scholar Bonnie Devine, McMichael Executive Director and Chief Curator Sarah Milroy, and McMichael Associate Curator, John Geoghegan. This landmark publication brings together the voices of more than 60 Indigenous artists and cultural stakeholders, offering insights into topics ranging from goose hunting techniques and Northwest Coast mask making, to the rise of the

Woodland style and the challenges of artmaking in the Arctic. Collectively, these contributions illuminate the enduring richness and diversity of Indigenous art across Turtle Island.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Title: *Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael*

Dates: September 20, 2025 – March 29, 2026

Location: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg, Ontario

Admission: Included with gallery admission. Tickets available at mcmichael.com

Curatorial Credit: Organized by the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. Catalogue edited by Bonnie Devine and Sarah Milroy.

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 sevans@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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