

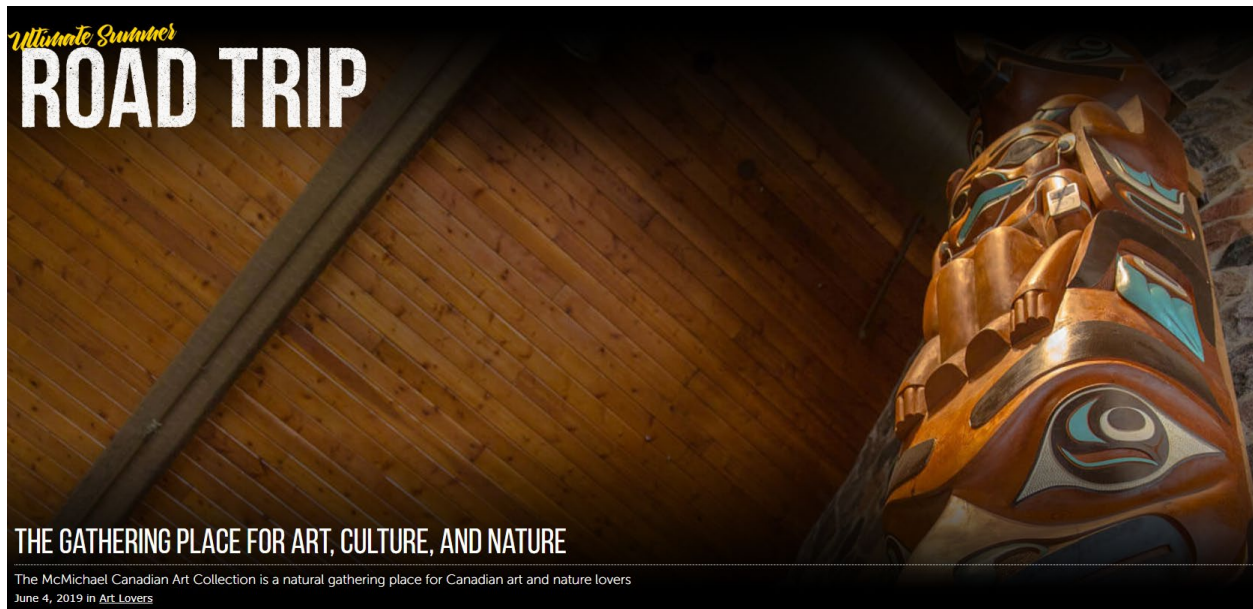
The Gathering Place for Art, Culture, and Nature

By: Bri Mitchell

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Whether it's something in the air or the water, generations of Canadian artists are inspired to capture our surroundings and their effects on us.

Margaret Atwood wrote poetry about the strong and sometimes dark forces of Canadian nature. Neil Young wrote songs about relationships and connected them to places in Canada. Tomson Highway wrote plays depicting life in small towns and communities, and their connection to nature.

It isn't surprising that the Canadian wilderness has had a profound effect on our shared history, and has made our art intensely impactful. It is what prompted Robert and Signe McMichael to purchase their first Lawrence Harris painting in the early 1950s. They bought the piece because it represented Canada to them.

As their collection of Canadian art grew, they purchased a large plot of land northwest of Toronto in Kleinburg in 1952 to house the works. The McMichaels went on to collect artwork by Tom Thomson, The Group of Seven, and a variety of other artworks including sculptures. Before long, neighbours and community members began bringing their collections to them to be kept in a place they felt it belonged. Thus, the modern-day [McMichael Canadian Art Collection](#) gallery was born.





Their goal with the gallery was to provide future generations with the opportunity to appreciate the artworks as a reflection of our connection to nature and our shared Canadian identity. The collection now includes a variety of historical and contemporary pieces, including a wide range of Indigenous art and Inuit sculptures.



Although many associate museums and galleries with winter or colder months, visiting the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in the summer is a must since it sits on 100 acres of forested land along the Humber River. Built on the grounds of the Ojibwe Anishinaabe People, it was once a part of the Carrying Place Trail, an integral connection for Indigenous people travelling between Lake Ontario's shoreline and the Lake Simcoe-Georgian Bay regions.



The gallery's permanent collection consists of over 6,500 paintings and sculptures done by both historically and contemporarily noted Canadian artists.

There are a host of special exhibitions year-round at the gallery, including feature exhibitions such as *"Itee Pootoogook: Hymns to the Silence"*, and *"Louie Palu: Distant Early Warning"*. Both speak to the gallery's geographical focus for this season, the Arctic, and include drawings and art which captures the strikingly beautiful Canadian north.

Outside the gallery are various trails to explore. You can venture down to the Tom Thomson Shack, the historic structure that Thomson lived in at one time. You can also find the final resting place for six members of the Group of Seven in the cemetery nearby. Or enjoy a picnic or quiet time in the gallery's outdoor Sculpture Garden.



The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is a natural gathering place for Canadian art and nature lovers. It is the perfect spot to appreciate Canada's national treasures and contemporary art and culture.

By [Bri Mitchell](#)

Bri Mitchell is a freelance travel and lifestyle writer. She has travelled to over 50 countries, and doesn't have plans of stopping anytime soon. Bri currently lives in Toronto with her partner in life and travel, Christopher Mitchell (travelingmitch.com), and their Turkish street cat turned Prince of the Great White North, Kotu. You can follow her travels and meanderings around Ontario and beyond on Instagram @mstravelingmitch.