

McMichael

CANADIAN ART COLLECTION D'ART CANADIEN

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MCMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION ANNOUNCES A FALL SERIES OF SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS EXPLORING THE HISTORY, DIVERSITY, AND SPIRIT OF INDIGENOUS ART



Christi Belcourt, *This Painting is a Mirror*, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 198.1 x 274.3 cm, collection of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, Photography by Lawrence Cook.

October 2, KLEINBURG, ON – The McMichael Canadian Art Collection is pleased to announce a series of fall exhibitions and installations that explore the vivid storytelling, cultural impact and artistic diversity of Indigenous art from the historical past to the present moment.

Uprising: The Power of Mother Earth

October 24, 2020 – Spring 2021

Opening on October 24, 2020, *Uprising: The Power of Mother Earth*, co-produced by the Thunder Bay Art Gallery and Carleton University Art Gallery, is the first retrospective of the work of Michif (Métis) artist Christi Belcourt (b. 1966). The exhibition spans more than 25 years of the artist's career, tracing her practice from its beginnings in the early 1990s to the present, and brings together more than 30 major paintings from public and private collections including the National Gallery of Canada, Wabano

Centre for Aboriginal Health, Art Gallery of Ontario, Canadian Museum of History, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

Uprising concludes with recent works made by Belcourt in collaboration with Anishinaabe knowledge keeper and emerging visual artist Isaac Murdoch. A selection of Murdoch's iconic works that have been featured prominently on the front lines of the Indigenous resistance movement against resource extraction will also be on view. Together, these two artists produce powerful images that champion the restoration of balance between all living beings and the natural world, reflecting the deep traditions of Indigenous culture.

"Everything that drives me and drives my art and the mishmash of everything I do in my life is my love for the earth and my awe of it all." - Christi Belcourt

Belcourt traces her ancestry back to the historic Métis community of Manitou Sakhigan (Lac Ste. Anne) in Alberta. Drawing inspiration from generations of Indigenous heritage, many of her works explore the symbolic properties of nature while expressing the artist's admiration for the power of the natural world. Belcourt's work draws heavily on the Métis tradition of floral beadwork, using subjects found in nature as metaphors for the human experience. The artist's work reflects her passionate views on biodiversity, spirituality, the environment and the rights of Indigenous people. In 2008, the Government of Canada commissioned Belcourt to create a mural that recognized the historic significance of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's June 11, 2008 apology to the former students and survivors of the Indian Residential Schools. The resulting stained-glass piece, titled *Giniigaaniimenaaning* (2012), is installed in the Centre Block of Parliament.

Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael
November 28, 2020 – June 6, 2021

Opening on November 21, 2020, *Early Days: Indigenous Art at the McMichael* will tell the story of the Gallery's long engagement with the art of Canada's Indigenous peoples, reaching back to the collecting policies of the founders, Robert and Signe McMichael. Their first early forays into collecting Indigenous arts included major acquisitions of Inuit art (prints and sculpture); of masks, historic rattles, headdresses and totem poles from the Northwest coast of British Columbia; as well as extensive acquisitions of paintings and prints by the Woodland School of artists in Ontario, in particular the work of Norval Morrisseau, who was artist-in-residence at the Gallery in 1979.

Since those days, the McMichael's collection has grown to include exceptional works of contemporary art by such leading artists as Carl Beam, Alex Janvier, Bill Reid, Robert Houle, Daphne Odjig, Arthur Schilling, Shelly Niro, Faye HeavyShield, and Gerald McMaster, as well as historic materials from the Great Lakes Region, donated to the Gallery by Phil Nuytten in 2013. More recent acquisitions have included works by leading contemporary artists Shuvinai Ashoona, Rebecca Belmore, Dana Claxton, Maria Hupfield, Duane Linklater, Meryl McMaster, Kent Monkman, Nadia Myre, Janeen Frei Njootli, Tim Pitsiulak, Lawrence Yuxweluptun and others.

As an institution, the McMichael was at the forefront of collecting Indigenous art as fine art back as the 1980s, and continues to lead the discussion today, with landmark contemporary exhibitions of the drawings of Iteé Pootoogook and Annie Pootoogook, and a planned exhibition of the Tlingit/Tsimshian carver Dempsey Bob. Thanks to the McMichael's long history of strategic acquisitions and carefully cultivated donations, the McMichael is now ready to intrigue and engage audiences in an exhibition that touches the heart of our Canadian story.

From Water to Water: A Way Through the Trees
TBD, Spring 2021

Looking to the ability of art to uncover and illuminate present and past histories of the land, the McMichael will also present *From Water to Water: A Way Through the Trees*, a site-specific mural installation by Anishinaabe/Ojibwa artist Bonnie Devine (b. 1952) in the Grand Hall Alcove beginning in October. Devine and her assistant, Mariah Meawasige, will conduct research on the Carrying Place Trail, which historically provided an integral connection for Indigenous people between Ontario's Lakeshore and the Lake Simcoe-Georgian Bay Region and which runs alongside the Humber River, and the surrounding lands on which the Gallery is located. The results of their research will inform the design and content of the mural. Inspired by the Gallery's natural surroundings, this multi-media work will combine painting, archival collage, and printmaking techniques. The project will be launched on October 19 at 10 am with an outdoor opening ceremony hosted by Ojibwe Elder Garry Sault. Following its completion, the mural will remain on view in the McMichael's Grand Hall Alcove.

"Ontario offers the world in one province, and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection is providing a unique opportunity to learn about our shared culture and heritage, from the historical past to the present, through the spirit of Indigenous art," said Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. "As we continue gradually reopening the province safely, I encourage everyone to visit McMichael this fall to explore the legacy and diversity of Indigenous art and celebrate these powerful, rich and creative artworks."

Media wishing to speak with Christi Belcourt, Bonnie Devine, or Chief Curator Sarah Milroy, or to request high-resolution images are requested to contact Sam Cheung at scheung@mcmichael.com or 905.893.1121 ext. 2210. Media appointments by request.

Uprising: The Power of Mother Earth

Presenting Sponsor

BrookMcIlroy
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UPRISING is co-produced by Thunder Bay Art Gallery and Carleton University Art Gallery with the financial assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council



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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 Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, and the McMichael Canadian Art Foundation. It is the foremost venue in the country showcasing the Group of Seven and their contemporaries. In addition to touring exhibitions, its permanent collection consists of over 6,500 artworks by Canadian artists, including paintings by the Group of Seven and their contemporaries, as well as First Nations, Métis and Inuit artists. The gallery is located on 100 acres of northern 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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