

## McMichael Canadian Art Collection and York Region Arts Council Launch Art Mentorship Project

July 8, 2013 Kleinburg, ON - The McMichael Canadian Art Collection has partnered with the York Region Arts Council (YRAC) on an exciting new initiative that provides support to emerging artists in the form of mentorships. They are paired with established Canadian artists and given professional development assistance on-site over the course of three two-day sessions. The mentor and apprentice collaborate on a piece or body of work that will be displayed in the gallery from December 20, 2013 to March 2, 2014.

"The Art Mentorship Project represents an invaluable opportunity for emerging artists to receive technical assistance and engage in productive discussion with established members of Canada's rich artistic community," explained Anna Stanisz, Assistant Curator, Education and Programs at the McMichael. "It embodies the McMichael's current vision, which defines the institution as an extraordinary place to experience the connection between art and nature."



Samantha Rodin, Associate Director at York Region Arts Council, also emphasized the project's importance for emerging artists: "Partnering with the McMichael on the Art Mentorship Project has enabled YRAC to advance its commitment of providing unique and qualitative professional development experiences for artists at a very pivotal point in their budding careers."

For the project's inaugural term, Canadian landscape painter and former Richmond Hill resident, David McEown, will take on the role of mentor. McEown is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design and has worked in the watercolour medium for the past 25 years. His paintings can be found in collections worldwide and represent some of the earth's most beautiful and fragile

ecosystems.

McEown will mentor the program's first successful applicant, recent Nipissing University BFA graduate, Ben Barak. Barak, who lives in Newmarket, is a figurative painter working in a variety of media, including painting, drawing and printmaking. McEown will help Barak fine-tune his artistic practices through technical assistance, theoretical discussions, critiques, and exhibition preparation.

Both McEown and Barak have expressed their excitement about the program and the unique opportunity for collaboration which it affords. Visitors will be able to observe the two artists working on the gallery grounds on a series of days throughout the summer and fall. McEown and Barak will also participate in a panel discussion about the mentorship project on Sunday, September



29, 2013 at 2:30 p.m., during the Culture Days and Doors Open Vaughan free admission weekend at the McMichael.

On Thursday, July 11, 2013, members of the media are invited to interact with the artists, who will be having their first formal meeting at the gallery.

The project is an opportunity for the McMichael and YRAC to promote local talent and encourage artistic exchange. The gallery, situated on 100 acres of conservation land and housing a renowned collection of Canadian art, is an ideal setting for the project. It reflects the gallery's commitment to nurturing new talent and acting as a creative hub in the community.

Applications for project's second session will be accepted between January 3 and February 29, 2014.

### **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 Sport, 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 almost 6,000 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: [mcmichael.com](http://mcmichael.com)

### **About the York Region Arts Council**

Incorporated in 2008, the York Region Arts Council (YRAC) is a nonprofit charitable umbrella organization serving the regional arts and culture community. YRAC is committed to fostering a vibrant regional arts and culture sector and supporting the arts, culture and heritage in York Region in all their forms-literary, visual, performing, media and heritage-in an inclusive manner. As the regional liaison and central information resource for arts, culture and heritage, YRAC delivers value to its stakeholders and the regional arts, culture and heritage community as a whole, through marketing, communication, education, consultation and networking facilitation and coordination. For more information: [yorkregionartscouncil.com](http://yorkregionartscouncil.com)

*Images: Top: David McEown, Greenland Ice, watercolour, 20" x 30"*

*Bottom: Ben Barak, Persistently aggressive memories of the Sea, 2012, oil on canvas, 5' x 6'*

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### **Media Contacts:**

Wendy Campbell

Manager, Media Relations and Online Presence

905.893.1121 ext. 2201

[wcampbell@mcmichael.com](mailto:wcampbell@mcmichael.com)

Rachel Weiner

Communications Coordinator

905.893.1121 ext. 2210

[rweiner@mcmichael.com](mailto:rweiner@mcmichael.com)