

New director arrives at the McMichael Canadian Collection



Internationally respected art historian Ian A. C. Dejardin has officially joined the McMichael Canadian Art Collection as its new executive director.

Dejardin, 61, was selected following an extensive global search conducted by the McMichael last spring. He is fresh from his 12-year leadership of the renowned Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, England.

While at the Dulwich, Dejardin launched the critically acclaimed *Painting Canada: Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven* exhibition, which set record attendance at the 200-year-old gallery before equally successful stops at the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Norway and the Groninger Museum in the Netherlands, finishing to similar acclaim at the McMichael in 2013.

"The global interest and fervour for Canadian art is alive and well," he said. "I'm excited to share my personal passion for The Art of Canada to the world as executive director at the McMichael."

"Like many new Canadians, Ian was born outside Canada, but has a natural affinity for all things Canadian. He shares his deep expertise in a casual, collaborative way, and his quirky, self-deprecating sense of humour and unassuming but enthusiastic style make him literally the perfect leader for the McMichael right now," Andrew W. Dunn, chair of the McMichael's Board of Trustees, commented. "Ian's international perspective brings a sense of confidence about The Art of Canada and its world-class stature that many Canadians accept only when acknowledged outside Canada. We are excited to have Ian take on the leadership of the gallery as we embark on our second 50 years, surprising our visitors with contemporary art, international comparisons, sculpture, and music, while celebrating and showcasing our outstanding collection of Group of Seven and historical art and Inuit and First Nations art, which we call collectively and inclusively, The Art of Canada."

Dejardin's fascination with Canadian art began decades ago when he stumbled upon a book featuring images of works by members of the Group of Seven and Tom Thomson. When he became director of the Dulwich in 2005, Dejardin took it upon himself to assemble the first big Group of Seven and Tom Thomson exhibition outside of Canada in almost 100 years, beginning a multi-year collaboration with the McMichael, which culminated in the record-breaking *Painting Canada* exhibition. Two years later, Dejardin co-curated *From the Forest to the Sea: Emily Carr in British Columbia*. He is currently collaborating with Sarah Milroy on a 2018 exhibition featuring the works of Canadian master David Milne, which will show at the McMichael in 2019.

Dejardin holds a Master of Arts degree in the history of art from the University of Edinburgh, and a postgraduate diploma in art gallery and museum studies from Manchester University.

Dejardin succeeds Nathalie Mercure, who took on the interim executive director role in September 2015.

"Nathalie has been an outstanding contributor to the McMichael in her 18 months of leadership," Dunn said. "Her positive attitude, collaborative leadership style, and methodical attention to detail have created a strong foundation for future growth, with a talented and engaged management team, an excellent exhibition schedule masterminded by Dr. Sarah Stanners, our chief curator, and a pervasive sense of optimism across our staff, our volunteers, and our visitors and patrons. We are forever grateful to Nathalie for her efforts and very happy that she has agreed to join our Board in the fall to capture her expertise and energy for the McMichael."