

Charles Summer 25 # 12:

Charles' Last Hurrah for 2025



I still have to write up a blog about the last part of our Maritime adventure. Which I hope to do – one of these days.

But, in the meantime, here's a short report on a recent jaunt. Sadly, we won't be travelling south to avoid the upcoming winter, so we decided to have one last trip before letting Charles hibernate for the winter.

Our friend Paul kindly offered us the opportunity to park Charles beside his cottage and enjoy the lake view up near Havelock. So, we decided to plan a trip starting there.

Unfortunately, this photo shows the last time we got out of Charles for the two days we were there. It rained heavily and continuously. And was rather cold. Still, we appreciated the generous offer.

And, with no distractions, we were both able to get some writing done.



On our way to our next destination, we saw this sign and couldn't resist finding out what we might find.

We can only guess that those people in the cemetery took lots of memories with them. The road itself wasn't particularly memorable!



We always like to look for picturesque spots where we can overnight for free. Since we're now into November, all the campgrounds are closed, so free spots were all we could count on.

Fortunately, we found this lovely spot in Napanee.



The slightly warmer weather and the beautiful sunlight really helped.



And we even got a surprise sunset!



The next morning, we took a little walk along the Napanee River and discovered there were Napanee Falls!





It being the Fall, the salmon were attempting to make their way up to their spawning grounds. From what we could see, there didn't seem to be any that made it. But we saw one hopeful camouflaged fisher in the water. Can you spot him?



We were impressed with the park in many ways.

One particularly nice feature was that throughout the park and along the walkway, there were pieces of art done by local artists.



After leaving Napanee, we drove farther east to find our friends Rob Torr and Stephanie Graham, who had bought a “farm” about a half hour from Napanee. We had heard about the farm for a few years and were eager to see them and the property.



We had a fabulous meal and catchup with Rob and Stephanie and the next morning, Rob took us on an ATV tour. Unfortunately, I wasn't fast enough to snap any shots while we were roaring around the acreage. But I got a couple of pics of Rob and two of his prized possessions – his Lynch Lineback cattle.





It was lovely to see them both. The people I mean.



From there, we made a short drive to Kingston to visit Jim's sister Margaret. We saw this really interesting piece of art in the nearby town of Yarker. Not sure what to call it and I can't find any information about it.



After a nice lunch, we headed west, in search of our next overnight stop and found a picturesque spot by the lake in Quinte West.



We got a colourful sunset...



Followed by more rain.



But the next day arrived bright and clear, just in time for our last day of travel.



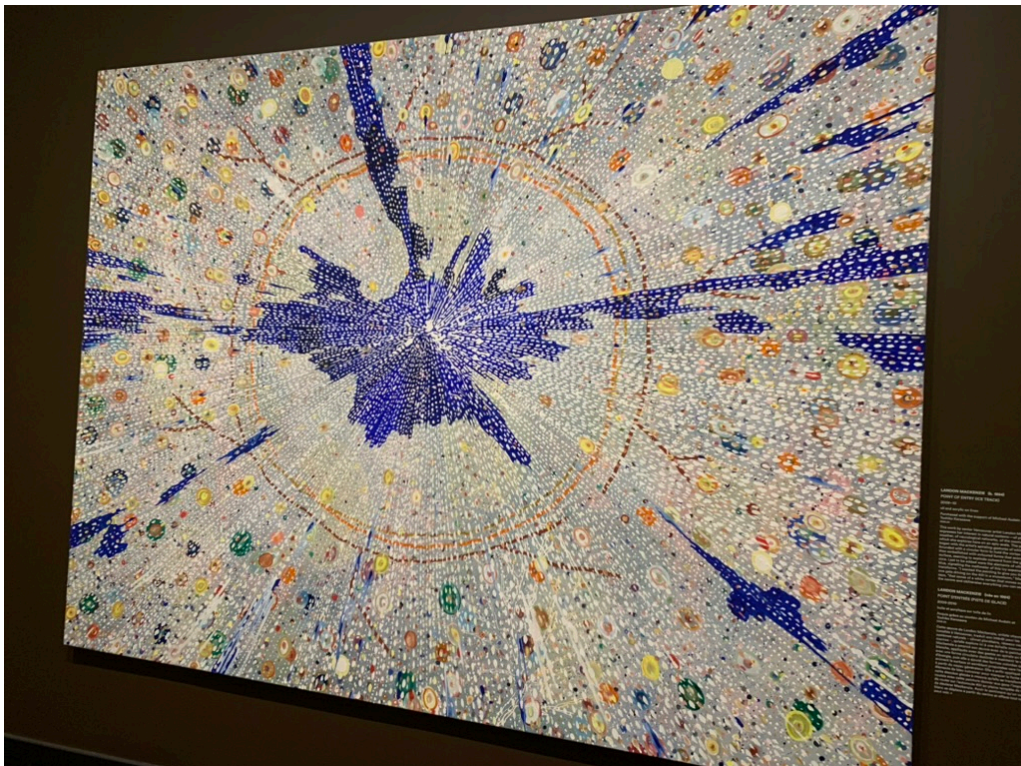
We drove up and around Toronto on a zigzagging route of country roads. It was a perfect, beautiful day. And there would be more pictures, if it weren't for the fact that I was driving.



Our destination: One of the best art galleries in the country. The McMichael Canadian Art Collection. (And finally, Jim got to point!)



Neither of us had been for a long time, and we were so glad we went. Of course, the architecture of the building is spectacular and shows off the art so beautifully.



From Lawren Harris...



To Fred Varley...



F.H. VARLEY (1898-1972)
NORTHERN LIGHT
between 1936 and 1940
oil on wood panel
Purchased by the Musée
Canadian Art Foundation
funds from the Robert
Memorial Art Fund
1972
AURORES BOREALES
entre 1936 et 1940
huile sur panneau de bois
Acquis par la Fondation
McMichael d'art canadien
à un financement du F
commémoratif Robert
pour l'art
1972

And David Milne...



And a wall full of Tom Thomson "sketches".

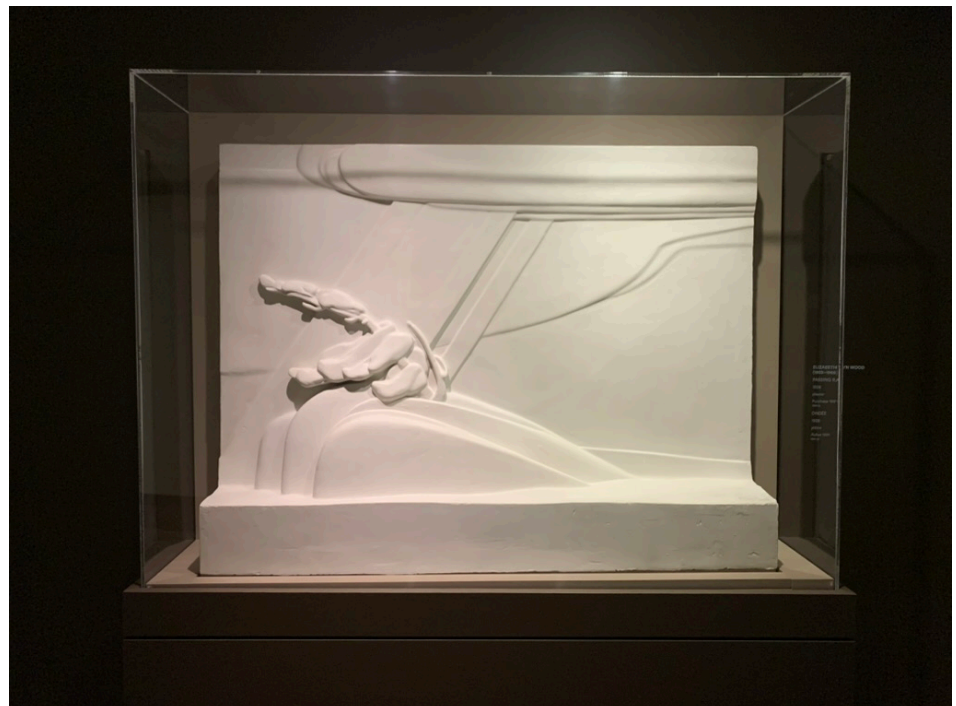


One of the best things about the gallery is that the views outside often reflect the views inside. And even if they don't, they're always beautiful.

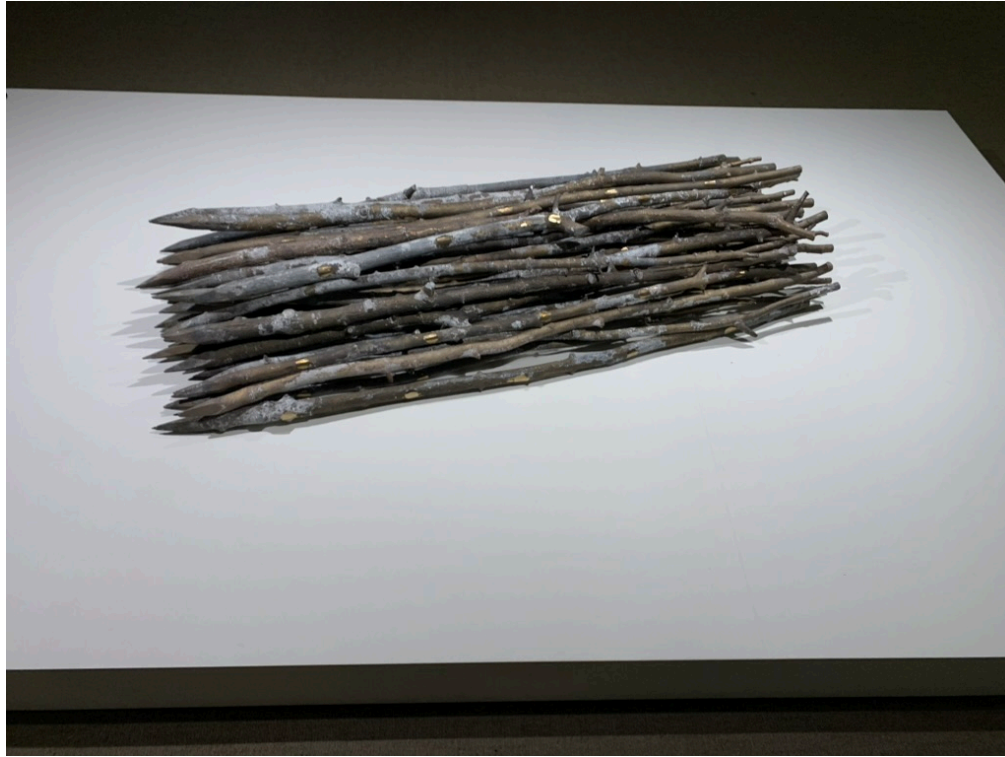


You expect to see Group of Seven art here. But there's so much more.

This stunning piece called "Passing Rain" is made of plaster. It's done by an artist I'd never heard of: Elizabeth Wyn Wood. She lived from 1903 to 1960.



This was one of those pieces you look at and think “This is art?” But then you read the description and look more closely.



ABBAS AKHAVAN (b. 1977)

STUDY FOR A GARDEN

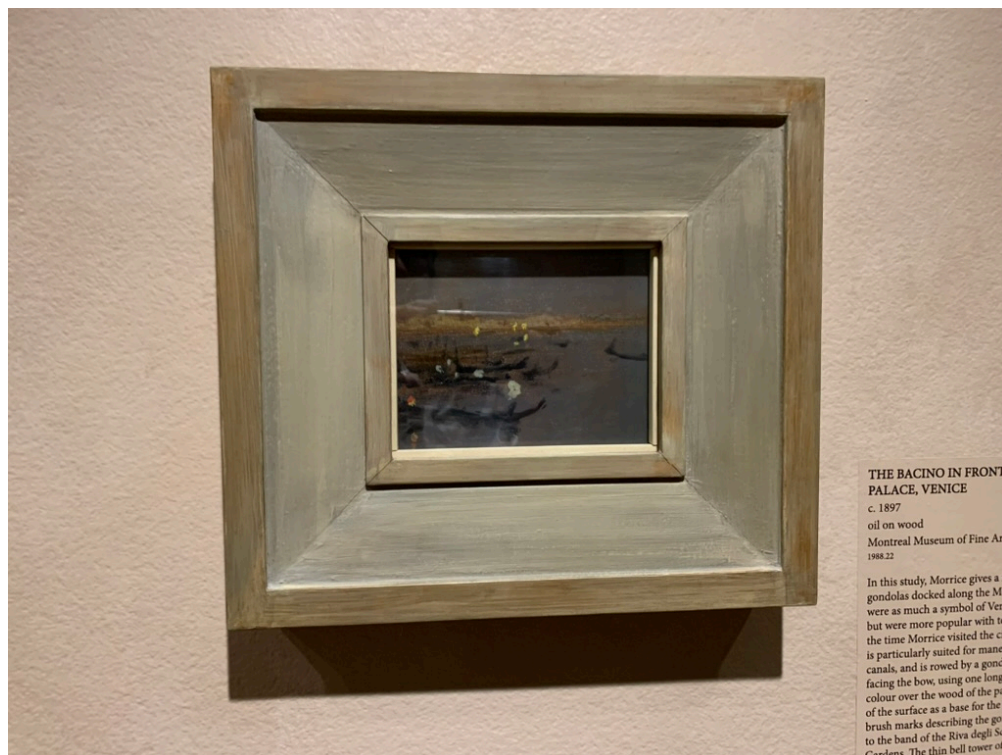
2017

cast bronze, 50 unique pieces

Purchased with the assistance of Francis and Eleanor Shen, Jane Wells and Mark Bursey

Study for a Garden is a signal work from the early career of Iranian-Canadian artist Abbas Akhavan, a Montreal based artist now enjoying a robust international career. *Study for a Garden* is redolent of both conflict and cultivation, suggesting crude weaponry, garden stakes, and bundles of wood gathered for making fire. Human territoriality is the work's powerful theme, expressed with purposeful ambiguity. It evokes a very human story of claiming and cultivating land and speaks of deep time in the very ancient medium of bronze, exalted with shiny flickers of gold.

One of the current exhibitions displays work by James Wilson Morrice, the first Canadian painter to be known internationally. He moved to Paris to study in 1891 and spent much of his time painting there and in Venice. It's a large and impressive exhibition.



Indigenous art makes up a large percentage of the collection, and it's really impressive.



Of course, there's lots of Morrisseau and his work is always powerful.



But I was really blown away by some of the other works. Particularly the sculptures carved out of skulls and antlers and turned into art of such delicate beauty.



BILLY GAUTHIER
INUIT
b. 1978

SWIMMING LOONS (MY TRIBUTE TO KENOJUAK ASHEVAK)
2010
muskox horn, moose antler, serpentine, labradorite
Collection of Christopher Bredt and Jamie Cameron

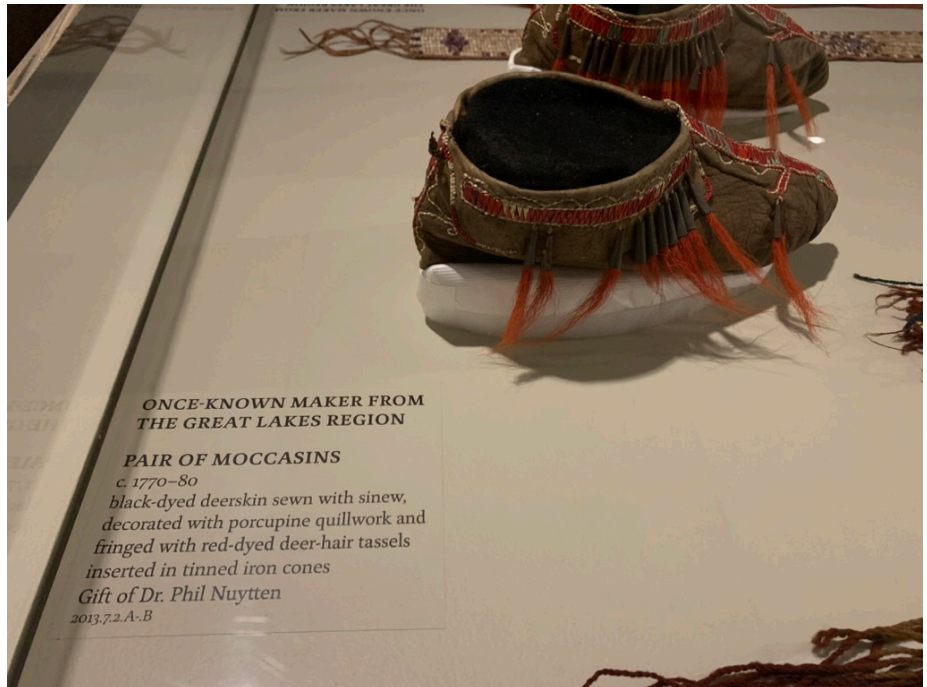
In this work, two loons carved from muskox horn perch upon what appear to be delicate ribbons suggestive of water or kelp, delicately carved from a single piece of moose antler. Each of the loons has a long neck and exuberant, stylized tail feathers, which the artist tells us were inspired by the prints and drawings of the Kinngait artist Kenojuak Ashevak (1927–2013). Here, in one of his most technically astounding works, Gauthier pays tribute to one of the first Inuit artists to gain worldwide recognition, paving the way for the generations of artists who have followed her.

And of course, much of the art offers commentary on the treatment of our Indigenous people.

This is called "Giving Without Receiving".



And this just blew me away. All of the ancient pieces of art or craft were attributed to a "Once-Known Maker". What a brilliant way to acknowledge artists. Another one of those indigenous practices that we should adopt!



ONCE-KNOWN MAKER FROM THE GREAT LAKES REGION
PAIR OF MOCCASINS
c. 1770-80
black-dyed deerskin sewn with sinew, decorated with porcupine quillwork and fringed with red-dyed deer-hair tassels inserted in tinned iron cones
Gift of Dr. Phil Nuytten
2013.7.2.A-B



What a great way to end our final trip in Charles in 2025.



Our drive back into Toronto was less stressful than usual – and was brightened by the spectacular “Beaver Moon” which rose between the towers. Made more breathtaking by the reflections of the setting sun.

And the next day, I was reminded that there's beauty right here in Toronto, in our own Monarch Park.



Till the Spring, Charles!