



Reykjavik Meets Helsinki,
an exhibition

Description

MacLeod's paintings and Donohue's images come together at Café de Mercanti show

MacLeod 9 Productions and Café de Mercanti presents **Reykjavik Meets Helsinki**, an exhibition featuring oil paintings and drawings of Iceland by **G. Scott MacLeod**, and photographs of Helsinki by **Joe Donohue**. These works are based on MacLeod's 2017 art residency at sim.is in Reykjavik, Iceland and Donohue's recent trip to Helsinki, Finland.

Both MacLeod and Donohue were inspired by the light and design in both Iceland and Finland and also by the Nordic social welfare system with universal health care and free education. The UN states that the Nordic countries are the most-developed countries on the planet and that their natural worlds and green energy policies are well in place. These facts are wise reflection for other nations as we move further towards the more dramatic effects of climate change. These paintings, drawings and photographs are a celebration and reminder of how better we can mind our society and planet.



G. Scott MacLeod – Faxa Bay Midnight Sunset II

G. Scott Macleod

G. Scott Macleod is a multimedia artist in the truest sense of the term. A critically acclaimed painter and photographer whose work has been exhibited around the world, he is also a performing songwriter and recording artist. Born in Red Deer, Alberta, MacLeod's family spent time in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia before relocating to Montreal, where he was educated in both English and French. His many-faceted career in the arts, along with his lifelong love of history and storytelling spurred an interest in documentary filmmaking and animation. His work has reflected social, political and historical themes with an aim to promote education and accessibility to art and culture. MacLeod holds a BFA and a Masters in Art Education from Concordia University. His artwork is in many permanent collections, including that of the National Gallery of Canada. He lives in Montreal. His work can be seen at macleod9.com

Artist Statement – Iceland Series IV by G. Scott MacLeod

“My journey of exploration into my Celtic and Norse roots began in 1999 when I received the William Blair Bruce European Travel Scholarship from the Canadian Scandinavian Foundation and a travel grant from The Canada



Council for the Arts. These grants enabled me to travel to Norway to research my Norse heritage from the Viking period.”



G. Scott MacLeod – Reykjans Peninsula

“My early ancestors, the sons of Leod, (which translates from Old Norse as the sons of the ugly), colonized and then integrated into the Celtic culture and landscape of my Scottish ancestors on the Isle of Lewis in the Hebrides, a one time Norse stronghold. After my experiences in Norway, I went on to study the Icelander, Greenlander and Vinland sagas, and my Ancestral Homes art exhibition took shape. This painting series has since become a long-term adventure, which began in Scandinavia (Ancestral Homes Series phase I), moved on to Scotland (Scottish Memory Series phase II) then to Newfoundland (Vinland Series phase III) and now in Iceland (Iceland Series IV). This collection of artwork surveys the history of Norse Vikings and Celts in Scotland, and the Europeans’ first contact with the indigenous peoples of Canada, proving that there is no pure race, but rather, that we are a part of a greater whole comprised of a myriad of cultures and traditions.”

“I had the great pleasure of attending SIM Seljavegur artist residency in Reykjavik during the month of June 2017. This series of oil paintings and charcoal drawings are based on my day-to-day sagas on the Reykjans Peninsula which were chronicled in a sketchbook, illustrated with pencil drawings, photos, museum ticket stubs and other curios I collected during my stay.”



'This series of oil paintings and charcoal drawings are based on my day-to-day sagas on the Reykjans Peninsula which were chronicled in a sketchbook...'

"Additionally I took photos each day during my 29 days on the Reykjans Peninsula, thus this exhibition. Thanks to my good friend and driver Einar Hedinsson from Akureyri, the second largest city in the North of Iceland, I was able to have a local show me the tourist sites yet more importantly, the off-road sites with his in-depth commentary on particular cultural curiosities and traditions from the old and new Iceland. Together we saw boiling geothermal steam and power plants, rows of buses and tourists with selfie sticks waiting for their geyser and waterfall moments, black beaches, remote costal cliffs with many varieties of birds, and tasted roadside gas station hotdogs and so on."



G. Scott MacLeod – Vik Beach II

"Some of these experiences I have now turned into oil paintings and charcoal drawings. During this residency I came to realize that I was experiencing one of the last places on earth with clean air, water and wilderness. Shocking to say so coming from Canada but it is the truth, when I consider the impact the Alberta Tar Sands and other non-sustainable industries have had on the Canadian landscape. Iceland is an urgent reminder of how to live



sustainably in a Nordic social welfare system with universal health care and free education. The UN states that they are the 13th most-developed country that runs mostly on renewable energy, with no military and a lightly armed coast guard – a remarkable record and country by all standards. These facts are wise reflection for other nations as we move further towards the more dramatic effects of climate change.”

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“My journal entries, photos, drawings and paintings are an outsider’s chronicle of these issues aforementioned, the people, their communities, buildings, history, lore and nature. I took great care to tell a story as a film director does when he storyboards a story. Here is my saga in paintings and drawings, delivered by the hand of an artist. I hope you enjoy my Iceland experience as much it as much as I did.”

G. Scott MacLeod – November 2017
macleod9.com/iceland-series.html



Joe Donohue – The Tree Ghosts



Joe Donohue

Joe Donohue is the man behind the lens, captivating viewers with his stunning landscapes, cityscapes, and abstract experimental photography. From his hometown in Montreal, Quebec, to what he considers his second home, Paris, France, Donohue's photography leaves a lasting impression with astounding composition, beautiful use of colours, and intriguing subject matter. Having completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Concordia University in Montreal, Donohue went on to have his first photography exhibition in 1980. Since then, as his photos have diversified and grown, his work has been widely exhibited throughout North America and in Europe. His work can be seen at joedonohuephoto.com

Artist Statement – Helsinki Series by Joe Donohue

“The first thing that struck me about Helsinki was the calm and order but foremost, the remarkable light. There's a freshness and crispness in the air that I don't remember ever feeling in Canada even in northern areas and certainly not in a city.”

‘The first thing that struck me about Helsinki was the calm and order but foremost, the remarkable light.’



Joe Donohue – The Punishment of Time

“The city of Helsinki has several large green spaces that contribute to that all pervasive sense of calm and a non-denominational chapel in the centre of town. I could have spent a day just shooting around that site. Even the graffitied walls and postered over construction sites seem to have elements of design in their random order. There’s also a sense of timelessness in the outskirts of the city. The landscape appears older, more settled.”

“My approach to shooting was dramatically different when I was in Helsinki. Was it the different light that shifted my point of view or the similar but entirely different city and landscape I was looking at? What I remember of my time in Helsinki, besides the wonderful people we saw, was a feeling of calm as I meandered through different areas, combined with an excitement about what I’ll see around the next corner.”

Joe Donohue – November 2017

joedonohuephoto.com



The **Reykjavik Meets Helsinki** exhibition opens on **Thursday, November 30, 2017** at Café de Mercanti, 6128 Monkland, Montreal. Vernissage from 6 pm to 8 pm.

Read also: [Winter photo gallery: Joe Donohue](#)

Feature image: Joe Donohue – Helsinki Fence

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