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**THE ORDER-IN-COUNCIL APPOINTMENT OF
REGAN HAYWARD TO THE McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES ***

Prepared for:

Standing Committee on Government Agencies

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INTRODUCTION

This document was prepared to assist Members participating in the Committee's review of the Order-in-Council appointment of Regan Hayward as a part-time member of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection – Board of Trustees. It describes the operations of the corporation, the role of the Board, presents information about the appointee, and suggests possible lines of questioning.

McMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

Enabling Statute	Responsible Ministry
<u>McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act, 1990</u>	Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
Agency Type	Most Recent Annual Report
Operational enterprise	<u>2019-20</u>
Activities of the Agency	
The corporation acquires and preserves art works, objects, and related documentary materials for the collection, by or about artists who have made or are making a contribution to the development of Canadian art, with a focus on the Group of Seven and their contemporaries and on the aboriginal peoples of Canada; exhibits art works, objects, and documentary materials, including but not limited to the collection; conducts research on and provides documentation for the collection; stimulates interest in the collection; conducts activities that enhance and complement the collection; and holds, maintains, and uses the land described in the schedule of the act as a permanent site for a public gallery (and related facilities) for the collection.	
Board Membership	
Statutory Number of Members: Up to 23 Appointed by Cabinet: All Current Members: 13 part-time Term of Office: three years with possibility of reappointment for one or more further terms Remuneration: None (Reimbursement for expenses incurred)	

BACKGROUND

The McMichael Canadian Art Collection began as the personal art collection of Robert and Signe McMichael at their home in the village of Kleinburg, Ontario. In 1965, the McMichaels donated their collection of Canadian art, as well as their home and 14 acres of surrounding land, to the Province of Ontario. The expanded collection now includes approximately 6,700 artworks, making the McMichael “the largest publicly funded art gallery in Canada that focuses exclusively on Canadian and Indigenous art, both historical and contemporary.”¹

¹ McMichael Canadian Art Collection (McMichael), [“Collection.”](#)

CURRENT OPERATIONS

In 2019-20, the McMichael had 119,211 visitors, including adult groups and school groups. There were four exhibitions drawn from the regular collections, and 12 special exhibitions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, McMichael has offered many art classes, tutorials, curatorial talks, and other events online.

Regular activities at McMichael include special exhibitions, programs such as art education, classes, and workshops for children and adults, curatorial talks, special events, and performances, as well as family-oriented events and community celebrations. McMichael also offers a children's ArtVenture Summer Camp and ArtVenture March Break Camps using both the indoor and outdoor facilities of the museum as well as the surrounding park and trails of the Humber River Valley. Recent community engagement initiatives include working with schools to plant an Indigenous Garden.

McMichael's Creative Learning partnerships with the York Region District School Board and with the Alzheimer Society of York Region reached 1,200 people.

The museum's website received more than 387,000 visits in 2019-20 while its social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) each had 15-27,000 followers. The museum's social media strategy

focuses on creating stories about exhibitions, the permanent collection, programs, and special events in order to engage followers in conversations about Canadian identity and to educate audiences about the art of Canada, driving interest in the historical and contemporary art of our nation.²

Current exhibitions include:

- 'A Like Vision': The Group of Seven at 100
- Tom Thomson
- Denyse Thomasos: Odyssey
- Jon Sasaki: Homage
- Uninvited: Canadian Women Artists in the Modern Moment.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Like other institutions in the culture, heritage and tourism sector, the McMichael was severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown. In mid-March 2020, the McMichael closed its doors to visitors. A planned major summer loan exhibition—a principal revenue driver—was postponed and key fundraising events were cancelled. Other sources of revenue such as weddings, summer

² McMichael, [2019-20 Annual Report](#), p. 37.

camps, and public programming were also cancelled or postponed. There were also emergency layoffs of staff and reduced work weeks.³

In July 2020, the McMichael began gradually reopening to very limited numbers of visitors. In September 2021, in accordance with provincial public health guidelines, the McMichael reopened to larger numbers of visitors.

While the continued need for public health measures such as social distancing “calls into question many of the assumptions of previously accepted performance measures, particularly around visitor numbers,” says the McMichael, the months of lockdown necessitated by the pandemic “has reaffirmed more strongly than ever the deep-seated need for cultural stimulation.”⁴

ROLE OF THE BOARD

According to the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between the Board Chair and the Ministry, the Board of Trustees is responsible for, among other things:

- Establishing the goals, objectives, and strategic directions for the Agency within its mandate.
- Making decisions consistent with the business plan approved for the Agency and ensuring that the Agency operates within its budget allocation.
- Establishing such Board committees or oversight mechanisms as may be required to advise the Board on effective management, governance, or accountability procedures for the Agency.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The [2021-22 mandate letter](#) from the Minister notes that, like other provincial agencies, the McMichael is “expected to act in the best interests of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers.”

According to the Auditor General, in operating as a charitable corporation, McMichael is required to prepare a balanced budget each year, where budgeted revenues equal budgeted expenses. In 2019-20, McMichael’s budgeted revenues and expenses were approximately \$8.7 million.⁵ According to the audited financial statement in its 2019-20 annual report, the McMichael Collection’s revenue in 2020 included a \$3.5 million operating grant from the Province (30% of total revenue).⁶ Along with annual provincial funding from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, McMichael also receives private-sector funding support from the McMichael Canadian Art Foundation.

³ McMichael, [“2020-21 Business Plan \(updated August 31, 2020\),”](#) p. 3.

⁴ McMichael, [“2020-21 Business Plan \(updated August 31, 2020\),”](#) p. 3.

⁵ Auditor General of Ontario, [Value-for-Money Audit of Museums and Galleries](#), p. 87.

⁶ McMichael, [2019-20 Annual Report](#), p. 2.

Value-for-Money Audit

In December 2020, the Auditor General of Ontario released a *Value-for-Money Audit of Museums and Galleries* (Art Gallery of Ontario, Royal Ontario Museum, and McMichael Canadian Art Collection).

The chapter 4 audit of the McMichael museum included 19 recommendations and 34 action items. The Auditor's findings included that the McMichael

- did a good job of safely storing the artworks in line with best practices (i.e., adequate environmental controls, temperature and humidity levels);
- offered a variety of public education programs related to its collections;
- did not have an accurate valuation of its collections to ensure it maintained sufficient insurance coverage;
- did not have policies in place to conduct regular inventory checks to verify the existence of the items in its collections;
- could not always demonstrate that the acquisitions it made were needed to meet its collection of objectives; and
- could not demonstrate how it selected exhibitions that are most likely to be successful.⁷

THE WITNESS

According to information provided by the Office of the Premier, the witness, of Brampton, is a managing Director for Beaux Arts Brampton, and a former special projects manager for Brampton Arts Council. Her community involvement includes serving as gallery chair for Alton Mills Arts Centre Headwaters Arts.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

What motivated the witness to apply for this position?

What particular skills and experience does the witness bring to the Board of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection?

In the witness's view, what are the challenges facing the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in the immediate future?

⁷ Auditor General of Ontario, [Value-for-Money Audit of Museums and Galleries](#), p. 4 and Chapter 4.