

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**August 21, 2017**



## ***Maori artist Brett Graham examines Canada's legacy of colonization with Pioneer***

**REGINA, SK** — This fall, the MacKenzie continues its lineup of programming for *Transformative Landscapes* with *Pioneer* by New Zealand artist Brett Graham. *Pioneer* considers the prairies as an ocean and the tide of settlers as a flood that overwhelmed and devastated the Plains First Nations. A hybrid sculpture approximating a life-sized prairie grain wagon, the work was inspired by the artist's reading of Regina author James Daschuk's best-selling *Clearing the Plains* (University of Regina Press), a book which describes, in chilling detail, the politics of ethnocide by which the Canadian plains were cleared for settlement. The artwork gives form to the lingering racism and misunderstanding that permeates the national consciousness to this day. *Pioneer* is a promised donation by the artist to the MacKenzie's Permanent Collection.

"Brett's piece was done in response to James Daschuk's *Clearing the Plains*, and the impact of colonization on Indigenous populations – first through the spread of diseases, whether it was by contact or intentional, then later government policies that were put in place to eradicate the population of their food sources," says Michelle LaVallee, the MacKenzie Art Gallery's Curator. "The implications of those attitudes and policies resonate today and influence assumptions and values that are meant to positively guide our society and the actions of those given power over others — but instead — have had devastating effects on Indigenous lives. In the context of *Transformative Landscapes* and intercultural relations, this exhibition is happening while the country is given pause to think about these things on the occasion of Canada 150 — as we look back at where we have come from, contemplate what Canada is today and, most importantly, where it is going."

While at the MacKenzie, *Pioneer* will be presented alongside Winnipeg artist Jeff Funnell's *Notes from the Inquest*, which opens on September 30.

"Brett Graham is one of New Zealand's leading contemporary artists and sculptors, so it's an important and rare opportunity to present a large-scale work by a Maori artist in Canada," says Anthony Kiendl, the MacKenzie Art Gallery's Executive Director and CEO. "We're pleased that this major work of art by a leading international artist has been promised as a gift to our permanent collection. The MacKenzie continues to build our burgeoning international reputation as a leader in Indigenous art."

*Brett Graham: Pioneer* is on view from September 2, 2017 to January 28, 2018.  
For more information about this and other exhibitions, visit [mackenzieartgallery.ca](http://mackenzieartgallery.ca)

### **Related Events: Fall Exhibition Reception and Celebration | Friday, September 29, 2017**

5:30 PM | Welcoming Performance with community barbeque to follow  
7:30 PM | Welcoming Remarks and announcement of *Transformative Landscapes* final design  
8:00 PM | Reception and Exhibition Viewing

Everyone welcome!



**Brett Graham, *Pioneer*, 2015.** installation at First Nations University of Canada as part of *Performing Turtle Island*, 2015. Photo: Eagleclaw Thom

### About Brett Graham

Brett Graham is an artist from the sub-tribe Ngati Koroki Kahukura, Aotearoa (New Zealand). His work explores his dual Maori and European heritage and the issues affecting Pacific and Indigenous peoples today through installations that distill complex histories into striking sculptural forms. Graham has exhibited at the Sydney Biennale (2010, 2006) and his collaboration with Rachael Rakena was exhibited at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007). His work is included in the collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the National Gallery of Australia and Te Papa, Museum of New Zealand.

### About Transformative Landscapes

As this year marks a time of transformation in which we contemplate the past, examine the present, and visualize the future, the MacKenzie Art Gallery launches *Transformative Landscapes: Contemplating Space, Time and Connection*. This programming series highlights the development and creation of a public artwork on the grounds of the MacKenzie, on Treaty Four Territory, in spring 2018. The project features leading Indigenous artists who will participate in workshops, screenings, panel discussions, and artist talks, exploring the themes of public art, reconciliation, intercultural relations, and national commemoration.

### About the MacKenzie Art Gallery

The MacKenzie Art Gallery is Saskatchewan's oldest and largest public art gallery: an immersive centre for engaging with the world through art, with an ongoing focus on Indigenous culture and diversity. Located in Regina's Wascana Park, the MacKenzie's permanent collection contains over 4,500 works of art by such internationally renowned artists as Mary Kelly, Agnes Martin, Anthony McCall, Pablo Picasso, Auguste Rodin, and Frank Stella, as well as an impressive Canadian collection with pieces by Shuvina Ashoona, Bob Boyer, Victor Cicansky, Greg Curnoe, Joe Fafard, the Group of Seven, Dorothy Knowles, William Pehudoff, Edward Poitras, the Regina Five, David Thauberger, Jeff Wall, Joyce Wieland, and many others.

Free admission. [mackenzieartgallery.ca](http://mackenzieartgallery.ca)

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### Media Contact

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### MacKenzie Art Gallery Hours and Admission

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays: 10 am - 5:30 pm  
Thursdays: 10am - 9pm  
Fridays and Saturdays: 10 am - 5:30 pm  
Sunday and Holidays: 12 - 5:30 pm  
FREE ADMISSION | Suggested Donation: \$5