

Richmond Art Gallery  
SCHOOL ART PROGRAM  
TEACHERS' GUIDE



Landon Mackenzie, *Neurocity (Aqua Blue)*, 2008-09, 218.44cm x 330.2 cm, Synthetic polymer on linen

September 9 – October 30, 2011

*Crossing Over,  
Why Cloud The Whites*

Landon Mackenzie

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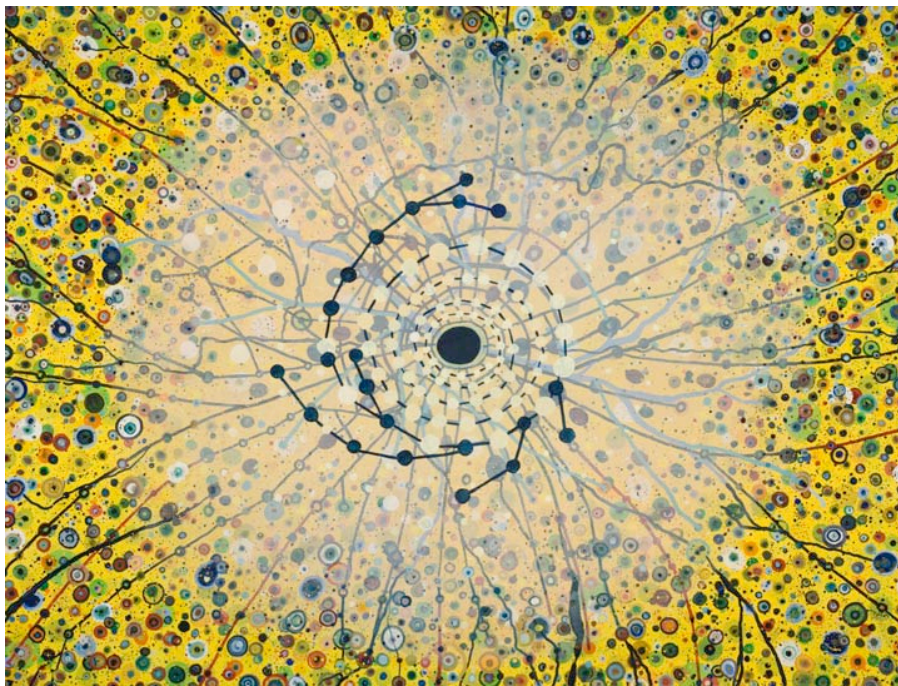
# THE EXHIBITION: BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS

*Crossing over, Why Cloud the Whites* is an exhibition of paintings by Canadian artist Landon Mackenzie. Her work deals with the themes of mapping and networks, both geographical and personal, drawn from her own experiences and from her extensive research into the subjects of cartography, history, and neuroscience. The paintings are created over a period of months, and consist of multiple layers, both opaque and translucent, which create a finished work of complexity and depth.

## Concepts to Explore:

- How scale affects our experience of an artwork
- How the way in which the world is represented shapes our view of the world
- Creating our own meaning when we look at an artwork, based on our own experiences

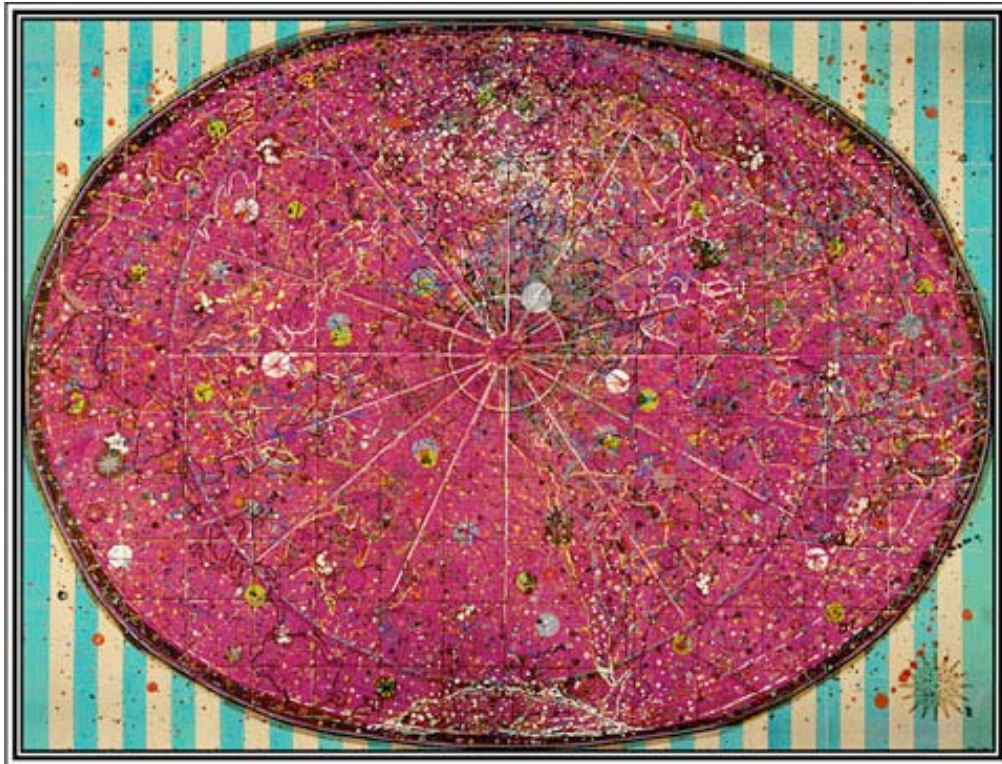
The first thing you notice about the paintings is how large they are; most of them stand 7 ½ feet tall by 10 ¼ feet wide. Mackenzie has chosen this large-format in order to create paintings so large that they fill our field of vision, or as she describes it, are “big enough to get lost in”. In today’s world, we rarely have the opportunity to interact with images this size, as we almost exclusively receive images from small screens, be they computers, cell phones, or televisions, and Mackenzie is deliberately trying to counteract this tendency, and creating work that can be experienced by the body as well as the eyes.



Landon Mackenzie, *(Spin) Otis and Ash*, 2010, 210 cm x 280 cm, Oil on linen

- **How is the experience of looking at a large painting different than looking at a small one?**
- **What do you see when you stand close to the painting? When you stand back?**
- **How does a different perspective change how you view the artwork?**

The theme of mapping is most explicit in the work entitled *Vancouver as the Centre of the World*, which was commissioned by the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad, and which was installed on the Canada Line rapid transit system during the Winter Games.



Landon Mackenzie, *Vancouver as the Centre of the World*, 2009, 220 cm x 300 cm, synthetic polymer on linen

All the world maps she had seen growing up had always featured Europe in the centre, with Vancouver located on the far left, at the very edge of the map. With the Olympic Games being hosted by Vancouver in 2010, Mackenzie wanted to re-draw this map, with Vancouver as the centre because the world would be coming to Vancouver for the games, and to also draw our attention to the way maps privilege one location over another by what is placed at the centre. Maps seem benign, but can be used as very political instruments, through what information is shown, how it is shown, and what information is excluded. For example, during her research into historical Canadian maps, she discovered that maps that originally included First Nations land holdings and place names were replaced with maps excluding this information, as it was no longer in the political interest of the map makers to acknowledge their presence and claim to the land. In *Vancouver as the Centre of the World*, Mackenzie includes all sorts of information normally left off maps, but that draw our attention to the networks that connect all different parts of the world, such as world shipping lanes, satellite networks, airline routes and underwater internet and phone cables.

- ***In what ways is this map of the world different than ones you have seen in the past?***
- ***What words would you use to describe the world that you see in Landon's painting?***
- ***Landon includes unconventional information in her maps. What information would you choose to include in a map of the world? How would you decide what is important to include?***

Mackenzie is also interested in the way in which scientists are currently mapping the brain, drawing parallels to the challenges of the early mapmakers as much of the human brain is “terra incognita” or uncharted territory. We think and we feel, but science has very limited ways to visually show how this happens in our brains, and it is precisely this unknown territory that interests Mackenzie as she creates pictures of things that cannot exist in a photograph or be captured by a brain scan. In *Circle of Willis*, the painting’s title references the circle of arteries that supply blood to the brain, and we can see the form of the brain and brain stem in pink in one of the layers of the painting. Mackenzie wants us to bring our own experiences and thoughts into creating the meaning of the artwork. What is this brain thinking about or feeling? What do the colours, shapes, and forms mean to you?

- **Do you see any shapes or forms that remind you of certain things or objects, like trees, roots, webs, bridges, galaxies, etc.?**
- **Is there a sense of movement or motion in the artwork? What direction or path does the movement follow? Is the movement fast, or slow?**
- **What do you think is happening in this artwork? If this was the illustration for a story, what would the story be about?**



Landon Mackenzie, *Circle of Willis*, 2006, 218.44cm x 330.2 cm, synthetic polymer on linen

## About the Artist

Landon Mackenzie is an acclaimed Vancouver artist and passionate educator. Originally from Toronto, she has been an exhibiting painter for thirty years. As Professor in Visual Arts at the Emily Carr University of Art + Design, she has been instrumental in dialogues about painting in Canada. At 17, Mackenzie was a student of Conceptual Art at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD 1972-76). After completing an MFA at Concordia University in Montreal, she turned to painting in the late seventies. Her work has been extensively written about and she has received numerous grants and awards. Mackenzie has built an impressive body of work and is best known for her large-format paintings, which combine mapping and abstraction. Her works have been shown throughout Canada and internationally, and are held in many national collections.

### *Richmond Art Gallery School Art Program - Teachers' Guide*

# BEFORE YOUR VISIT

## Key Ideas for Discussion: Abstraction

Children, especially as they get older, often think that the aim of painting, and of art itself, is to create drawings and paintings that look “real”. Historically, artists painted their subjects as realistically as possible, however this changed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century after the advent of photography. At this time, artists began to explore creating artwork that deliberately did not represent reality in a realistic manner. This departure from accurate representation is called **Abstraction**. Abstraction can be partial, as in the case of the work of impressionistic painters such as Claude Monet, where you can still recognize the landscape and subjects of the artwork, or it can be complete, when an artwork is composed purely of colour, shape, line, or other formal elements, but no longer has a recognizable subject.

Landon Mackenzie’s paintings are not completely abstract, because she paints representational images, symbols, and landscapes, and often refers to real places, maps, and medical diagrams in her work. These elements are then layered on top of one another, becoming increasingly abstract as more layers are added.

When first viewed, it may be difficult to determine what each painting is depicting as Landon is not trying to paint something as it exists in our world. Rather, she is trying to paint a picture of some thing or experience that we don’t have a name for yet, or that exists only in the imagination. A good topic of discussion for your students is **Why would an artist choose to paint this way?** Some ideas are listed below:

***To express emotions***

***To create a sense of movement***

***To draw our attention to a specific aspect of a subject (like it’s colour or shape, or the way light plays on it’s surface)***

***To encourage the viewer to use their imagination***

## Activity

**Pre-K-Primary:** Using a storybook with colourful, simple illustrations (such as books illustrated by Eric Carle & Charley Harper), look at the way in which the illustrator has created a picture of something using shapes. Have students look at and identify the objects in the pictures, and then identify the shapes that make up those objects. Next look around the classroom, and see how everyday objects are made up of shapes.

**Intermediate-Secondary:** Look at some examples of realistic art and abstract art. Have students compare their reactions to a work which is highly realistic to one which is more abstract, and discuss why the artist would have chosen to paint each the way they did.

- ***Describe what you see***
- ***Describe feelings or emotions that the artwork makes you feel***
- ***What specifically is there in the artwork (line, colour, etc.) that makes you feel that?***
- ***Describe what you think is happening in the artwork.***

# IN THE GALLERY: WHAT YOU WILL DO

## Gallery Tour

As students are led through the exhibition, we will discuss the the themes and concepts behind Landon Mackenzie's paintings. We will focus on her use of mapping, landscape, and networks, and discuss how these different elements relate to each other and the exhibition as a whole. The tour will focus on:

- Introducing students to the process of layering by which Landon Mackenzie creates her art
- Encouraging students to consider how objects and images symbolize ideas or information
- Encouraging students to consider how scale affects the way we view an artwork
- Inviting students to create their own meaning based on personal experience

## Workshops

### Preschool & Kindergarten

#### Shape & Colour

Students will create a colourful abstract painting inspired by Landon Mackenzie's use of shape and colour.

### Primary Grades

#### Map My World

What is a map, and how do artist's play with maps? Students will explore how place is represented, and will create their own piece of map art using collage and mixed media techniques.

### Intermediate Grades

#### Map My World Painting

Using Vancouver as the Centre of the Earth as inspiration, students will create colourful map paintings depicting locations of personal importance. Students will explore different painting techniques, and learn about colour theory and colour mixing.

***The students' work will need time to dry, and will be ready to be picked up the day after the workshop.***

# AFTER YOUR VISIT

## Pre-K to Primary : Movement



Landon Mackenzie, Wild Red, 2008,  
Synthetic polymer on linen

Many of Landon Mackenzie's paintings evoke the idea of **Movement**. Look at examples of artwork with movement, and discuss with students what they see and feel.

- *Is there a **focal point** where all the movement starts or ends?*
- *Does it go across the page, or into the page, or out of the page?*
- *Where does the movement start?*
- *Is it fast or slow?*
- *Which way does it go? In a circle, line, spiral, or zig zag?*

Have students create an artwork inspired by movement. Start with having students enact movement with their arms and bodies. Next, using pencil, crayon, or paint, have students create artwork that incorporates movement. This can be done to music, and is best done with students standing, not sitting, and on large paper.

## Intermediate : Experience Map

Many contemporary artists play with the idea of what information is shown in maps, and create artwork that asks us to look at a place in a new way. Discuss with students the information that is included in maps, and ask them what they would include in a map of their neighbourhood.

Start by discussing how they feel about where they live, what words would they use to describe it? Discuss memories they have about places, for example the pool where their dad taught them to swim, or the park where they play with their friends.

Create a map of your city or school neighbourhood as a collaborative class project that reflects the student's experiences of and feelings about the place they live. Project the outline of your city or neighbourhood on a large sheet of paper and transfer the major geographic outlines and roads as a starting point, and then have students add their experiences and memories of place to the map. They can create drawings of their experiences, use collage of found objects that represent events (like movie stubs, etc.) and write short stories or poems about their experiences.

# GLOSSARY

<b>Analogous Colours</b>	A colour family containing the same hue, (e.g. blue, blue-green, and blue-violet) which are adjacent on the colour wheel.
<b>Complementary Colours</b>	Three sets of colours opposite each other on the colour wheel – red/green, yellow/purple, and orange/blue. When placed side by side, they vibrate and have high intensity.
<b>Contemporary Art</b>	Artwork that is produced in this current time, generally considered to be artworks made from 1970 to the present. Contemporary art is a very broad term, including artworks made in almost any medium and incorporating many different themes and ideas.
<b>Hue</b>	The name of any colour as found in its pure state in the visual spectrum, or rainbow. (red, yellow, orange, blue, green, violet)
<b>Intensity</b>	The brightness or dullness of a colour. A pure hue is called a high-intensity colour, dulled hues are called low-intensity.
<b>Medium</b>	The material used by the artist to make an artwork. For example, paint is the medium used in a painting.
<b>Monochromatic</b>	Consisting of different values or intensities of a single colour.
<b>Movement</b>	The arrangement of elements in an artwork to create a sense of motion, or to cause the eye to move across the artwork. The movement can be implied, or actual, as in the case of a mobile.
<b>Primary colours</b>	Red, Yellow, and Blue. They cannot be mixed or formed by any combination of other colours.
<b>Secondary colours</b>	Green, Orange, Purple. These are the colors formed by mixing the primary colors together.
<b>Tertiary colours</b>	Created by mixing a primary and a secondary color. These colours have two names, such as blue-green, red-violet, and yellow-orange.
<b>Tints and shades</b>	The lightness and darkness of hues. Tint is a colour with white added to it, shade is a colour with black added to it.
<b>Value</b>	The relative lightness or darkness of a colour, related to the amount of light a colour reflects. Not all hues of the spectrum have the same value.



# RESOURCES

## Books

Carle, Eric. *My Very First Book of Shapes*. London: Puffin, 2006.

Newlands, Anne. *Canadian Paintings, Prints, and Drawings*. Firefly Books, 2007.

Panchyk, Richard. *Charting the World: Geography and Maps from Cave Paintings to GPS with 21 Activities (For Kids series)*. Chicago Review Press; 1 edition, 2011.

Topal, Cathy Weisman. *Children And Painting*. Sterling, 1992.

Yenawine, Philip. *Colours*. Museum of Modern Art; 2 edition, 2006.

## Websites

<http://www.landonmackenzie.com/index.html>

**Landon Mackenzie:** Artist's website

<http://www.goshen.edu/art/ed/art-ed-links.html>

**Art & Learning to Think & Feel:** Art education for teachers including how to set up your classroom, sample rubrics, and how to encourage creativity across the curriculum.

<http://artlex.com/>

**Artlex Art Dictionary:** A searchable database of art terms and terminology, and an excellent resource for art history background information, including longer articles on world art and artistic movements and styles.

<http://www.colormatters.com/colortheory.html>

**Colour Matters:** Basic colour theory, with pages for kids.

<http://www.webexhibits.org/colorart/>

**Colour Vision and Art:** How we perceive colour, and how this has been used by artists through the ages.

[http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/grade\\_level.html](http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/grade_level.html)

**Incredibly Art Department:** Art lesson ideas by grade level.

<http://www.kinderart.com>

**Kinderart:** Large collection of art lesson plans for Preschool – Grade 7.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### *Public Forum on the Art of Painting: Then and Now*

**Saturday September 10, 17, 23, 2:00 – 3:00 pm , Free**

In conjunction with the exhibition by artist Landon Mackenzie, and led by local art historians, artists and art professors, the gallery is hosting three sessions of discussions on the subject of Western and Eastern landscape and abstract painting, from art history to today. For more information and to reserve a space, contact Kathy Tycholis at [ktycholis@richmond.ca](mailto:ktycholis@richmond.ca).

### *Teacher's Open House*

**Thursday September 29, 4:00 – 6:00 pm , Free**

This is an event for teachers to get a preview of our exhibitions and School Workshops for the 2011-2012 school year. Includes hands-on project ideas for your classroom, and demonstrations of different techniques and projects. Relax over a glass of wine and discover all that Richmond Art Gallery has to offer your school. RSVP by September 23 by contacting Melanie Devoy at [mdevoy@richmond.ca](mailto:mdevoy@richmond.ca).

### *Chinese Canadian Stories – Recording Family History Workshop*

**Saturday October 1, 2:00 – 4:00 pm , Free**

*Chinese Canadian Stories – Uncommon Histories from a Common Past* is a project that attempts to reshape our understanding of Canada, and reclaim the forgotten histories of peoples who have long been ignored in Canadian history. Led by researchers from UBC, participants are asked to share stories of travel and migration from around the world. For more info, contact 604-231-6413.

### *An Evening of Art & Music*

**Thursday October 20, 7:00 – 9:00 pm , Free**

Landon Mackenzie and Dr. Glen Lowry will give a lecture entitled *Crossing Over: Painting a Critical Conversation*, followed by a live performance of *Soundscape to Paintings*, a musical score created by composer Dennis Burke in response to the *Crossing Over, Why Cloud the Whites* painting exhibition.

### *Art for Teachers: Professional Development Day*

**October 21, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm , \$35 per person**

Inspired by Landon Mackenzie's paintings, we will experiment with different painting and collage techniques, and explore mapmaking art in a series of projects for the classroom. Emphasis will be placed on developing cross-curricular ideas that can incorporate geography, community, history, current events, and language arts. Register online at [www.richmond.ca/register](http://www.richmond.ca/register) and quote course number #175301.

### *Family Sunday*

**September 25, October 23, November 27, 1:00 – 4:00 pm , Free**

It's fun, fabulous and free, thanks to RBC Foundation. Join us in the Gallery for a family art activity that relates to *Crossing Over, Why Cloud the Whites*.