

Thielson Galleries presents recent work by Montreal painter **Scott MacLeod** in an exhibit entitled **Ancestral Homes and Recent Landscapes**. The *Ancestral Homes* portion was shown most recently in Chicago at the **Swedish American Museum Center**. The Thielson exhibition unites a part of that show with MacLeod's Taos, New Mexico landscape paintings.

Though he hails from Canada, MacLeod felt the need to connect with his ancestral roots beyond these shores. His exploration of his Scottish and Scandinavian ancestry led to extensive travel in these regions, facilitated by an arts grant. Through his travels MacLeod investigated the links between these two northern cultures.

Where the two intersect, historically as well as personally for MacLeod, is in the wanderings of the Vikings. The Vikings, who travelled to Scotland's Outer Hebrides (where MacLeod's ancestors are from), link the Scots with the Nordic races of Scandinavia. Pursuing the Viking connection further to Canada, these fearless souls are also believed to have travelled across the Atlantic, by way of Iceland, to northernmost Newfoundland a thousand years ago!

For the series *Ancestral Homes*, MacLeod began by sketching historical sites such as ancient Bronze Age excavations on the island of Gotland, a Viking woman's burial site at Gurness in Scotland, ancient Christian manuscript depictions of Viking ships, and the varied shapes and styles of Viking ships in Scandinavia. Several of these preliminary drawings are included in the show.

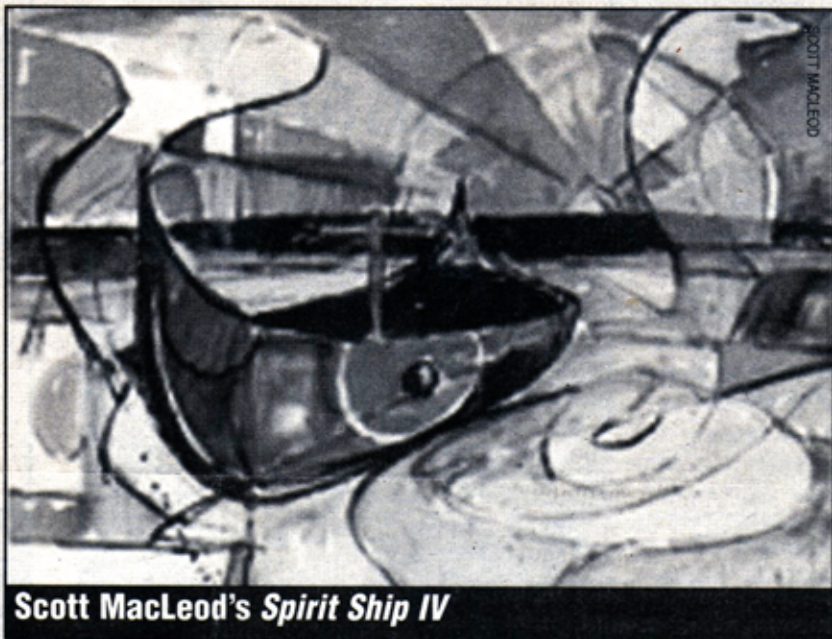
MacLeod then adopted a freer, less descriptive style for the series of mixed media works that would become the focus of *Ancestral Homes*. Fixing on the Viking ship as a motif, MacLeod created energetic, bright, drawings and paintings of the basic form of the ship, which are full of motion and color. They combine gouache, oil stick, charcoal, collage, and pastel.

"The *Ancestral Homes* pieces come from a deep place inside me," states MacLeod. "Although I started the work very academically from archaeological sites and finds in Scandinavia and Scotland, the later works are looser and come from a place we all have inside." In addition to the vessel image, these works also allude to archetypal and mythological forms, portrayed as birds and animals, which also have historical significance for the Scandinavian and Scottish cultures.

In sharp contrast to the *Ancestral Homes* pieces, but no less colourful, are MacLeod's Taos, New Mexico paintings. A two-time participant in the **Helen Wurlitzer Foundation Residency** in New Mexico, in 1996 and 2001, MacLeod produced two series of works based on the landscape, one actually painted in the field, the other, a memory series.

"There are no two sunsets alike" in Taos, says MacLeod, and if you, like me, believe that the last thing the world needs is another sunset painting, these may change your mind. When MacLeod talks of painting in Taos, he constantly refers to the light. In a matter of minutes the quality and intensity of the light can completely alter the appearance of earth, sky, and rock, hence, the variety and volume of paintings MacLeod was able to produce. They are restful, good-looking images, presented in a narrow vertical format emphasizing New Mexico's 'big sky.'

A varied and beautiful show, ***Ancestral Homes and Recent Landscapes*** runs until November 9, 2002. Hours are Tuesday to Friday 10am to 5:30 pm, Saturday, 11 am to 4 pm. **Scott MacLeod's** work can also be found at www.macleod9.com



Scott MacLeod's Spirit Ship IV

SCOTT MACLEOD