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Ancestral Homes: Paintings inspired by the Viking Age

CHICAGO—Canadian artist Scott MacLeod went in search of his roots three years ago. His journey inspired a series of approximately 50 paintings and drawings in various media that will be on display at the Swedish American Museum from June 13 to Aug. 25.

Funded by the Canadian Scandinavian Foundation, MacLeod traveled to Scotland and Scandinavia to learn about his ancient Scottish

and Viking ancestry. He began his project with a series of drawings of Bronze Age sites and Viking long ships, but these early illustrative works evolved into paintings that move beyond representations of historical places.

MacLeod painted subjects such as Viking ships and Pictish symbols using abstract motifs and mixed media, creating an interesting link to his cultural heritage. In

MacLeod's work, there is a sense of fascination with the past, and of longing for origins and home.

MacLeod, 37, has over 50 exhibitions to his credit. His work has been exhibited and collected in cities around the world, including Seville, Milan, Prague, Paris, Cologne, Dublin, Taos, Mexico City and extensively throughout Canada. His art and career have been marked by strong cultural and political awareness. For eight years, MacLeod was a member of LaRaza, an artist's collective that exhibited in alternative spaces and donated its proceeds to charity. He has steeped himself in the art traditions of other cultures, notably in a 1987 exchange with Mexican and El Salvadorian muralists. Ancestral Homes is MacLeod's first look at his own cultural origins.

However, the ancestral home MacLeod uncovered through his research was a complex, dynamic civilization, in which cultures intermingled and notions of ethnic and national identity were constantly changing. His ancestors from the Outer Hebrides of North-



ern Scotland, for example, were colonized by Vikings from Scandinavia. Several of the works in Ancestral Homes explore the similarities of Scandinavian and Scottish archetypes and symbols, evidence of the overlapping of cultures.

After its run at the Swedish American Museum, Ancestral Homes will travel to the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, Washington. More information about Scott MacLeod and his work is available on his website, www.macleod9.com.

The work of Canadian artist Scott MacLeod will be on display June 18 to Aug. 25 at the Swedish American Museum in Chicago. MacLeod's work was inspired by a geneological trip he took to trace his Scottish and Viking ancestry.