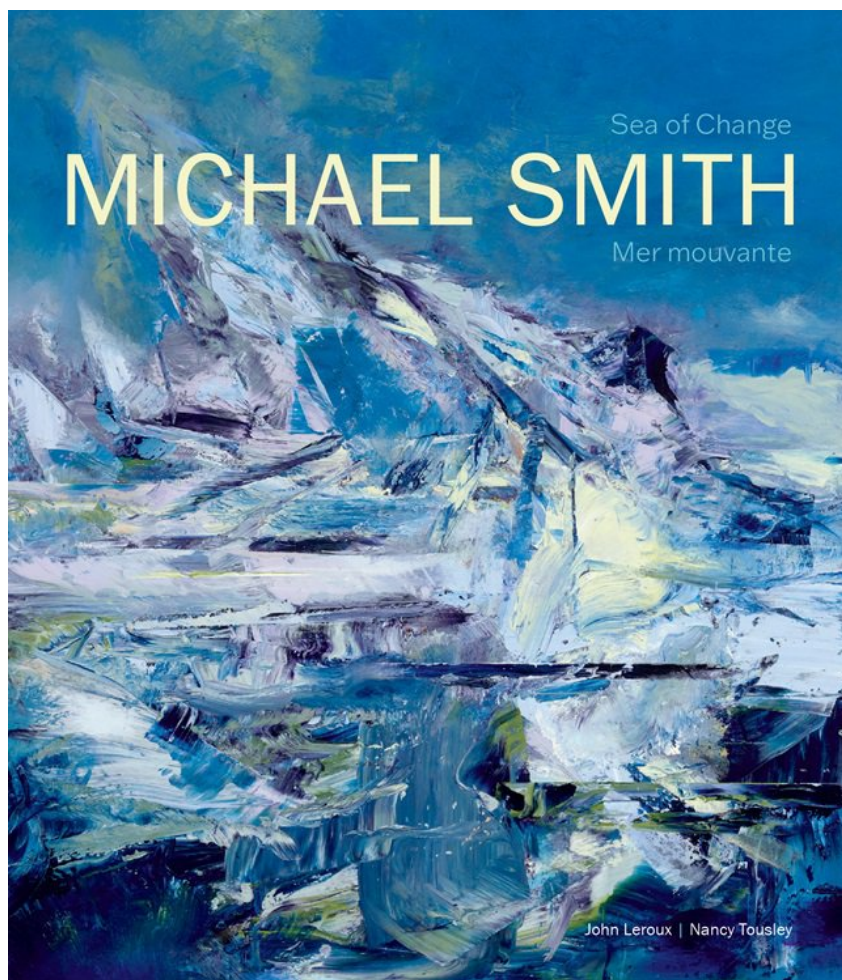


Bookmark | Michael Smith: Sea of Change

Publication “provides a valuable, intelligent entry into
Smith’s art”

by Katherine Ylitalo

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Michael Smith: Sea of Change/Mer
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TRANSLATOR [Rachel Martinez](#)

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British-born and Montreal-based painter Michael Smith, known for his large, impasto canvases, works in series with underlying powerful themes. The Beaverbrook Art Gallery recently opened the exhibition *Michael Smith: Sea of Change*. Its focus is the series of the same name and how it grew out of a 2018 residency at the Bruno Bobak Artist-in-Residence Studio, but the book that accompanies the exhibition has much broader scope.

Galleries West contributor Nancy Tousley's cogent essay navigates Smith's complex and fertile territory for a deeper understanding of his strategies of representation and abstraction. She is at the top of her game, examining relationships between material and process; memory and somatic experience; sources and references; art history and the here and now of contemporary life.

And Rachel Martinez's French translation does justice to the text with sensitivity.



PHOTO BY PAUL LITHERLAND FROM MICHAEL SMITH. COURTESY OF BEAVERBROOK ART GALLERY AND GOOSE LANE EDITIONS.

Images of 35 of his paintings, including luscious close-ups, span Smith's career from 1995 through 2024. Curator John Leroux's conversation with Michael Smith centres on the residency and how the series evolved as a response to the nineteenth century painting, *Terror* by George Chambers in the Beaverbrook's collection.

Longtime *Galleries West* readers will appreciate that the late Jeffrey Spalding is part of the story. Smith visited the Beaverbrook when Spalding was chief curator and had positioned one of Smith's paintings between a Turner and a Constable as a way to form a connection between the British nineteenth century landscape tradition and Smith's contemporary work. When Smith turned around, he noticed the Chambers painting of the warship caught in Arctic ice, and that incident would lead to the residency, the series, the exhibition and the book.

The Goose Lane publication provides a valuable, intelligent entry into Smith's art and is especially timely as the spotlight is on him. The exhibition will tour and each of the commercial galleries that represent him — Nicholas Metivier Gallery, TrépanierBaer Gallery and Michael Gibson Gallery — have recently exhibited his new work or plan to in the coming months.