

For Immediate Release – March 24, 2011

***Reckonings: Michael Cameron and Karen Maiolo opens at Whyte Museum***  
**April 9 – June 12, 2011**

Banff, Alberta – The **Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies** is pleased to present an exhibition that brings into focus the artistic practice of two very active contemporary painters living in the Bow Valley.

As contemporary artists, Michael Cameron and Karen Maiolo are ambitious and eloquent – capable of working on a large or small scale – and willing to produce some of the most challenging painting in the Canadian Rockies today. Individually, they have each experienced success as painters of landscape and wilderness, bird and animal subject matter, as well as images inspired by their long-time residency in Banff.

Nothing of what Maiolo and Cameron depict is particularly conventional for a place with a rich history of scenic landscape painting. Rather, in much of their art, a darker, less tidy environment is evoked, strikingly beautiful and unsettling at the same time.

Both Cameron and Maiolo have exhibited at the Whyte Museum before but never in the context of a *reckoning* – a summing-up of past work and the presentation of something new. Most of the earlier work was created in the last decade, including a series of smaller paintings made in response to the widespread wildfires of 2003.

From Michael Cameron, you will also see instances where dramatic scenes are re-imagined like the sad fate of a pack horse mired in swamp. More poetically, there is his use of the dog as a metaphor for the human condition.

For Karen Maiolo, the Banff ‘experience’ better known to the tourist does not engage her. Instead, nature is a silent companion rather than something that inspires awe. Ravens and Canada Geese, so common-place, are also part of this introspection. Banff itself is only present in the secluded backyards or doorways she sees while the seasons of winter and fall have a special appeal.

In the new work produced for *Reckonings*, the artists have pursued a couple of different approaches. There are new compositions which borrow or ‘quote’ from other original works of art or photography in the Whyte Museum’s collection. While, in other instances, a collaboration – with each artist taking turns in the painting of a new work. But whether done alone or together, these paintings mark a departure in composition and paint handling. Bolder, braver and filled with a sense of discovery that makes their personal milieu and that of Banff an entirely new place to be reckoned with.

Drawing on the collection of the Whyte Museum and private lenders, *Reckonings* largely features works of oil on canvas. While the exhibition surveys some of their earlier paintings, both artists have each produced a new body of work partly inspired by their investigation of the art and photography in the Whyte collection.

Guest Curator for this exhibition is **Mary-Beth Laviolette**.

## Artist's Biographies

### Michael Cameron

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Michael Cameron is a 1984 graduate from the Ontario College of Art. A participant in the 2000 *Alberta Biennial of Contemporary Art* (Edmonton Art Gallery), he has also over a dozen solo exhibitions to his credit. Most recently, they include *Intermediary* (Art Gallery of Calgary, 2009) and *Sources* (Summit Fine Art, Banff, 2008). International audiences have seen his paintings at recent art fairs in Chicago and Miami and his work is in the collections of Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Boston), and many private collections. His artwork is currently handled by Elevation Gallery, Canmore, AB.

### Karen Maiolo

Born in Hamilton, Ontario, Karen Maiolo trained at the Dundas Valley School of Art and at the Ontario College of Art. In 1990, she relocated to Banff, where she has developed and continues to have an active painting practice. In addition, she also has a background in performance with spoken word engagements at The Banff Centre and Precipice Theatre, Banff. As a painter, she has participated in a number of group shows in the Bow Valley in the last decade as well as two highly praised solo exhibitions in 2006/2008 at Summit Fine Art, Banff. Maiolo's works are in private collections throughout Canada, the United States, Australia, England and Holland.

## EXHIBITION-RELATED EVENTS

### Exhibition Opening

**Saturday, April 9, 7 to 9 PM**

Artists in Attendance

FREE

### Michael Cameron and Karen Maiolo Artist Talk

**Sunday, April 10, 2 PM**

Included with Museum admission, Members FREE

Local contemporary artists Michael Cameron and Karen Maiolo will walk you through their exhibit *Reckonings*. This exhibition features mostly landscapes, and examines a decade of what Banff has meant to them. They will share insight into their work, their unique styles, and their inspiration.

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## About the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

The Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies welcomes those who are drawn to the power and inspiration of these mountains. We are the gateway for experiencing and enjoying its art, culture and history in order to inspire and cultivate knowledge and the exchange of ideas. Visitors from near and far experience the Museum's galleries, programs, archives and library, heritage homes, museum shop, guided walks, tours, and special events.

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For more information about the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, contact:

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