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## Lone wolf stands guard on Granville

Cape Breton marble holds McEwan's iconic sculpture

By ELISSA BARNARD Arts Reporter  
Wed. Apr 28 - 4:53 AM

There's a new wolf in town.

Canadian sculptor John McEwen has installed one of his iconic steel wolves and two rock ledges of Cape Breton marble in front of Gallery Page and Strange on Granville Street. The sculpture will be outdoors for two years.

"It's a pretty major thing for the city to have such a major artist in a public space," says gallery co-owner Victoria Strange. "It's indicative of his work. The wolf shows up a lot."

McEwen, a co-founder of Toronto's A Space artist-run centre, has a blacksmith shop in Hillsdale, Ont., and since the 1980s has exhibited extensively across Canada and in Australia, Germany and England. His large commissioned public sculptures include a six-metre cast-bronze canoe for the new Canadian embassy in Berlin, Between Heaven and Earth at Toronto's Cineplex Odeon and the 2006 Valiants Memorial, created with Marlene Hilton Moore for Ottawa's Confederation Square.

McEwen brought the steel wolf in his truck with him from Ontario. To get the rock ledges, he and Nova Scotia sculptor Joe Richman drove to MacLeod Resources in River Denys for its coloured marble.

"Part of my conversation with Joe was to see what kind of stone base can come out of the geology of the province. We found some beautiful pieces of stone," says McEwen, who likes to elevate the importance of the lowly base in traditional sculpture.

He had planned to cut two pieces of marble, but when his selected rock was being lifted up, it broke into two halves. "I'm of the philosophy you have to go with the breaks. It's worked out quite nicely."

The marble was trucked from Cape Breton to Prospect. Mills Heavy Hauling Limited brought it in with a boom crane to Granville Mall.

The wolf is on one ledge and steps off into mid-air into the space between the ledges. "What it does in terms of the gesture is it walks off the rock. It moves into a space ahead of the rock and there's something wonderful about the gesture it makes. It is there and not there."

While the wolf is 113 kilograms of steel plate, "it has a gesture that has an ephemerality to it," says McEwen, who chatted over tea at Sawadee Tea House while he waited for the stone to arrive.

"If you look at the form of the animal it's quite simple, but when you look at what it's doing with the rock, then the whole becomes more than the parts.

"When you put the two things together you get a conversation about life as it exists now and life as it has always been."

The Cape Breton marble is about 600 million years old, says Richman. The wolf is related to "our time in the world," says McEwen. "Animals come and go. Dinosaurs come and go. Mastodons come and go.

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"All realities are based on the natural realities, even when they become virtual."

McEwen, who exhibits in Toronto at the Olga Korper Gallery and in Nova Scotia at Gallery Page and Strange, decided to put this piece, which is for sale, outdoors. "I'm quite interested in what happens when you move sculpture around and put it in different contexts. Some very funny things happen when you do that.

"It doesn't matter who kicks it, it won't get hurt."

( [ebarnard@herald.ca](mailto:ebarnard@herald.ca))

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