

CHRISTINA PARKER

GALLERY

MICHAEL PITTMAN THE DARK PLACES

Through the planning, plotting and execution of a journey through a remote region of central Newfoundland, I have created a body of artwork which navigates the complexities of the grieving process and attempts to contextualize it within the geography of the Exploits River watershed.

Elaborating on past work, which often presented grief as a vast or impenetrable wilderness, this project proposes to find passage through its seemingly unnavigable enormity by establishing waypoints within the environment.

The work draws upon an exploration of the region, which culminated in a 160km five-day paddling trip along the shores of Beothuk Lake and the entire length of the Exploits River.

The images are representative of conceptual "landmarks" within a personal, emotional topography that underlies the idiosyncratic terrain of sorrow, grief, and depression.

This journey is delineated by the boundaries of a changing relationship with the natural world and the evolving social and cultural milieu of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Borderwall, Acrylic, charcoal and India ink on birch panel, 40 x 40", 2024



Darker lands, Acrylic, charcoal and India ink on birch panel, 40 x 40", 2024



Cache (detail), Acrylic, charcoal and India ink on birch panel, 30 × 30", 2025

MICHAEL PITTMAN was born in Newfoundland and Labrador to parents of Indigenous and settler descent. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Memorial University, and a practice led research Master's degree on the visual culture of Newfoundland and Labrador from the South East Technological University in Waterford, Ireland. His work is included in public and private collections in North America and Europe and his paintings have been extensively exhibited at home and abroad.

Pittman has participated in multiple residencies, including the 2025 Artlink Ireland/Crux Art International Atlantic Exchange at Fort Dunree, Ireland and Fogo Island Arts' Outport Interiors Residency (2010). In 2012, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery curated a significant solo exhibition of his artwork comprised of over 5 years of visual explorations. In 2013 he was a semi-finalist for the Sobey Art Award, Canada's pre-eminent award for contemporary Canadian art, and the following year his work was included in a comprehensive

exhibition of Newfoundland and Labrador artists at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

Pittman's work was shown in Venice, Italy as part of the Benetton Foundation's *Great and North* during the 2017 Venice Biennale, and in 2018 his work was included in *Future Possible*, an exhibition resulting in a major publication marking the first comprehensive art history of the province. In 2021, he was invited to participate in the Bonavista Biennale, where his artwork was featured alongside some of the most exciting names in contemporary art. Here he began his current body of paintings, which investigates the intersection of trauma, grief and the environment through landscape painting.

Over the past decade, Michael Pittman has been the recipient of multiple grants and awards for his artwork, which frequently references the physical environment, traditional knowledge, and hidden histories of the places to which he is connected.