

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Oshawa, ON – November 18, 2015**

**The RMG presents *Ray Mead: Living Within***

This exhibition of work by Ray Mead is taken from The Robert McLaughlin Gallery's extensive collection of paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture by members of Ontario's first abstract expressionist collective, Painters Eleven.

As an overview of his career, the exhibition includes early figurative and still life drawings and paintings. It then moves to his abstract works, both geometric and expressionist. Mead's later works are luminous abstractions of simplified forms that simultaneously encompass complex compositions. Throughout his career, his work was characterized by the use of rich fields of colour. In a 1977 interview he stated: "I felt Canada gave me a sense of colour much more than a sense of horizons."

Ray Mead, a member of Painters Eleven, was born in England where he studied at the Slade School of Art. There, he was exposed to the work of Ben Nicholson and Paul Nash. He first encountered semi-abstract work in New York during World War II where he was stationed training bomber pilots. He immigrated to Hamilton in 1946 where he met Hortense Gordon. Mead was particularly influenced by Gordon acknowledging: "she educated me more than any art school." He had a successful career as a commercial artist for the MacLaren Advertising Company, in both Toronto and Montreal, returning to Toronto in 1987 to paint full time. While attracted to the works of American abstract expressionists such as Franz Kline, Mead was deeply influenced by European abstractionists such as Nicolas de Staël.

The title of the exhibition, *Living Within*, references another quote by Mead from 1979: "...a painter really must paint within the history in which he is living." In examining work that spans a time frame of three decades we have an opportunity to contemplate where Ray Mead is situated in both a Canadian and international context.

The exhibition *Ray Mead: Living Within* is curated by the RMG's Senior Curator Linda Jansma. Join the RMG for the opening event with a tour of the exhibition during RMG Fridays on December 4, 2015 from 7-10pm.

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**THE ROBERT McLAUGHLIN GALLERY**

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